

Summary Handout

“They Straitway Left Their Nets”

Lesson

6

Summary

Luke 4:14-32; Jesus fasts forty days and is tempted of the devil—He announces his divine Sonship in Nazareth and is rejected—He casts out a devil in Capernaum, heals Peter's mother-in-law, and preaches and heals throughout Galilee.

Luke 5; 6:12-16; Peter, the fisherman, called to catch men—Jesus heals a leper—He forgives sins and heals a paralytic.

Matthew 10; Matthew is called. Christ instructs, empowers, and sends the Twelve Apostles forth to preach, minister, and heal the sick—Those who receive them, receive the Lord.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Most of Jesus' Ministry at Capernaum: It is estimated that of his thirty-six-month ministry, eighteen to twenty months were centered at Capernaum. Nowadays, many Christians call it the “City of Jesus.” As Capernaum is on the Sea of Galilee, it served as a fishing center. Five of the apostles of Jesus were said to be fishermen from Capernaum.

Scripture Verifies “Roman Built” Synagogue: One of the reasons scholars date the synagogue to after Jesus' life is because of its beautiful Roman architecture. Yet there are some simple, convincing evidences that connect the building to Jesus' time. First, Luke tells us about the builder. “. . . a certain centurion's servant . . . when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant . . . they came to Jesus . . . saying . . . he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.”

(Luke 7:1-5)

“Star of David” - Symbol of Urim and Thummim - Before & After Temple Destruction: Second, the artistic renditions of the “Magen David” (Star of David) always show two interloping triangles. Joseph Smith describes the “Urim and Thummim” as a silver bow holding two triangular diamond shaped stones – one pointing up and the other pointing down. There are two “Magen David” symbols at Capernaum. However, one of them is straight up; the other (like most of these symbols everywhere else), is at a slight right slant. The fact that the symbol is slanted denotes the destruction of the temple. The one at Capernaum and a few others that are straight seem to indicate that they were carved while the temple was still standing. Incidentally, all synagogues face toward Jerusalem.

Direction of Synagogues: Third, there are two doorways in and out of the synagogue. After the temple was destroyed, all synagogue entrances (coming from Jerusalem) were closed and a back door was opened. The symbolism may mean that we are now coming from the Diaspora into the place of worship and must return to the Diaspora. Jews' synagogue prayers used to end with the hopeful words, “Next year in Jerusalem.” Now that Jerusalem is restored, the prayers read, “Next year in Jerusalem - rebuilt.” The Capernaum synagogue has both a pre and post-temple destruction entrance.

Reason for Three Year Ministry? It is the custom to read the scriptures, the Law and the Prophets, three times a week. That occurs on Mondays, Thursdays and Sabbaths (Saturdays). It takes one year and the entire “Old Testament” is completed. Although they lack a “correlation department” (as the Latter-day Saints have), every congregation reads the same sections on the same day. That is why a lad anticipating his Bar Mitzvah selects a date and practices reading the section appointed for that day. In Jesus' day, it seems apparent that the Jews read the scriptures publicly in the synagogue only on the Sabbath day. Since they read only once a week, it stands to reason that it would take three years to read through the entire Law and the Prophets. It is interesting to note that the Savior's ministry was three years in length. Perhaps He chose that time frame so that He could personally teach his Disciples all of the Law and the Prophets. The public scriptural reading once a week is corroborated by Luke's account. “. . . as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.” *(Luke 4:16)*

“Sea of Galilee,” a Lake: The central geographic highlight of the Galilean area is the Sea of Galilee. Small as a lake, it is referred to as a sea because in ancient Hebrew, there were fewer words and the word for body of water was simply, Yam, (pronounced yum). Hence, we have the Yam Hatichon (Mediterranean), Yam HaMelach (the Salt Lake) and Yam Kinneret (Sea of Galilee). “The Kinneret is a fresh water lake in northeast Israel. It covers an area of 64 square miles; its maximum length (north to south) is 15 miles and its maximum width (east to west) is 10 miles. The surface of the lake is approximately 696 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea and, at its deepest, the water is about 144 feet deep. The Kinneret is fed by a number of fresh water streams. In 1964 the National Water Carrier was completed to bring sweet

water to the more southern sections of Israel; Lake Kinneret is the main reservoir from which the water is taken.”
(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Sea of Galilee’s History: “Because of its abundant water supply, warm climate and surrounding fertile area, Lake Kinneret has attracted man since prehistoric times. The most ancient human remains and artifacts found in Erez Israel come from an area not far from Lake Kinneret's shores. In the Early Bronze Age some of the largest cities of Canaan were situated nearby and the *Via Maris* ("Maritime Route") passed its shores contributing to the wealth of the cities. In fact, Egyptian documents mention the hot springs on the shores of Lake Kinneret and their beneficial effects. In Bible times, Kinneret served as a prominent boundary mark: in the Canaanite era, it was the border of Sidon, king of the Amorites, and after Israel's conquest of the land, it marked the boundary between the territories of Naphtali on its western shores and Manasseh on its eastern shores.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Lesson on Fishing: To this very day, fishermen ply their craft on the waters of this beautiful lake. Often, they use two boats. One is larger and has a main mast with a pulley to lift the nets up and out of the water. The other end of the net is connected to a smaller boat. The fish (there are more than twenty varieties in the lake) swim through the nets; only the larger ones are caught and are then plucked out of the net as it is lifted into the larger boat. Fishermen still prefer to fish at night and during the hours just before dawn. They use lanterns to attract the fish. Imagine fishing all night and catching nothing; then a “perfect” stranger embarks on your boat and tells you to cast the net on the other side. And it changes your life! “And he entered into one of the ships . . . Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets . . . Simon answering said . . . Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” (*Luke 5:4-8*)

Fishers of Men: Note that this was probably the largest catch they had ever encountered in their professional life, yet they could not quite bring it in. They were also told to let it go, for now they were to become fishers of men. “And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.” (*Matthew 4:19-20*)

Getting Hooked by Fishing: In a subsequent lesson, we will study the repeat of this event as a chiasmus: the first catch before their training, and three years later, the last catch after their training. The first catch failed; the second catch succeeded. Seeing these as patterns of the way Jesus taught – is getting hooked . . . by Him!

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