



Carl Bloch, "Healing the Blind Man"

## 7. The Galilean Ministry Concludes (Mark 6:6b–8:30)

*The First Mission of the Twelve, Great Deeds, Christ on the "Hollowness" of the Pharisaic Traditions, and Peter's Declaration. Christ's Mission Begins to Expand Beyond Galilee, Opposition Increases, Jesus Heals a Blind Man "In Stages," and the Disciples' Faith Grows Even as They Misunderstand.*

### "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me" (hymn 104)

1. Jesus, Savior, pilot me  
Over life's tempestuous sea;  
Unknown waves before me roll,  
Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal.  
Chart and compass came from thee;  
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

2. As a mother stills her child,  
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;  
Boist'rous waves obey thy will  
When thou say'st to them, "Be still!"  
Wondrous Sov'reign of the sea,  
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

3. When at last I near the shore,  
And the fearful breakers roar  
"Twixt me and the peaceful rest,  
Then, while leaning on thy breast,  
May I hear thee say to me,  
"Fear not; I will pilot thee."

<https://www.lds.org/music/library/hymns/jesus-savior-pilot-me?lang=eng>

## Structure of 6:6b-8:30

- “And he went about the villages, teaching.” (6:6b, transitional summary report)
- **The Twelve and John** (6:7-30, narrative)
  - **Great Deeds 1** (6:31-56, miracle stories)
    - **Christ on Pharisaic Traditions** (7:1-23, conflict narrative emphasizing the “hollowness” of the traditions sits at the center of this chiasmus)
  - **Great Deeds 2** (7:24-8:26, miracle stories)
- **Peter’s Declaration** (8:27-30, narrative with a saying of Peter)

## The Twelve and John (6:7-30)

- The Mission of the Twelve
  - “And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits...” (6:7-13, call narrative)
- **The Death of John the Baptist (6:14-29)**
  - Confusion over who Christ is—**John the Baptist revived** (preaching repentance), **Elijah** (working miracles), one of the prophets
- The Return of the Twelve (6:30)
  - Only secure use of the term “apostle” in Mark; otherwise just the Twelve or disciples . . .
  - *Closes the frame, binding the story of the end of John’s mission with the beginning of a new mission*

## Feeding the Five Thousand (6:31-44; on the Jewish side)

- In a “desert” place, once again **wilderness image** for communing with God
- **Recalls Israel's miraculous sustenance by God during the Exodus** (cf. Ex. 16:13-35; Num. 11:1-35)
- **Prefigures the great eschatological messianic feast** (Is. 25:6-8; D&C 24:5-14)
  - **12 baskets of fragments** collected suggests the **gathering of Israel in the new kingdom**



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## Walking on Water (6:45-52; second, stormy voyage to the Gentile side)



- “He cometh unto them, walking on the sea, and **would have passed them.**” (6:48)
  - **Passing by:** God's veiled self-disclosure to Moses (Ex. 33:18-23) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:11-12)
- “Be of good cheer: **it is I**; be not afraid.” (6:50)
  - Cf. John's use of the divine “**I Am**” (Ex. 3:13-15; Is. 41:4)
- “. . . **And the wind ceased**” (6:51)
  - Once again, compare to Near Eastern mythological motif of a stormy sea representing the forces of uncreated chaos—stilling the storm is an echo of YHWH's first creative act.

Ivan Aivazovsky, *Christ Walks on Water*

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## Healing the Sick at Gennesaret (6:53-56)



James Tissot, *The Sick Waiting for Jesus to Pass By*

- “The border of his garment,” the traditional fringe or tassel representing the law (Deut. 22:12; Num. 15:37-41); cf. the faith of the woman with the issue of blood (5:28-29)
- **The question of Jesus not being defiled by death, blood, leprosy, and other “ritual” impurities**
  - *Holy vs. most holy*

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## Christ on Pharisaic Traditions (7:1-23)

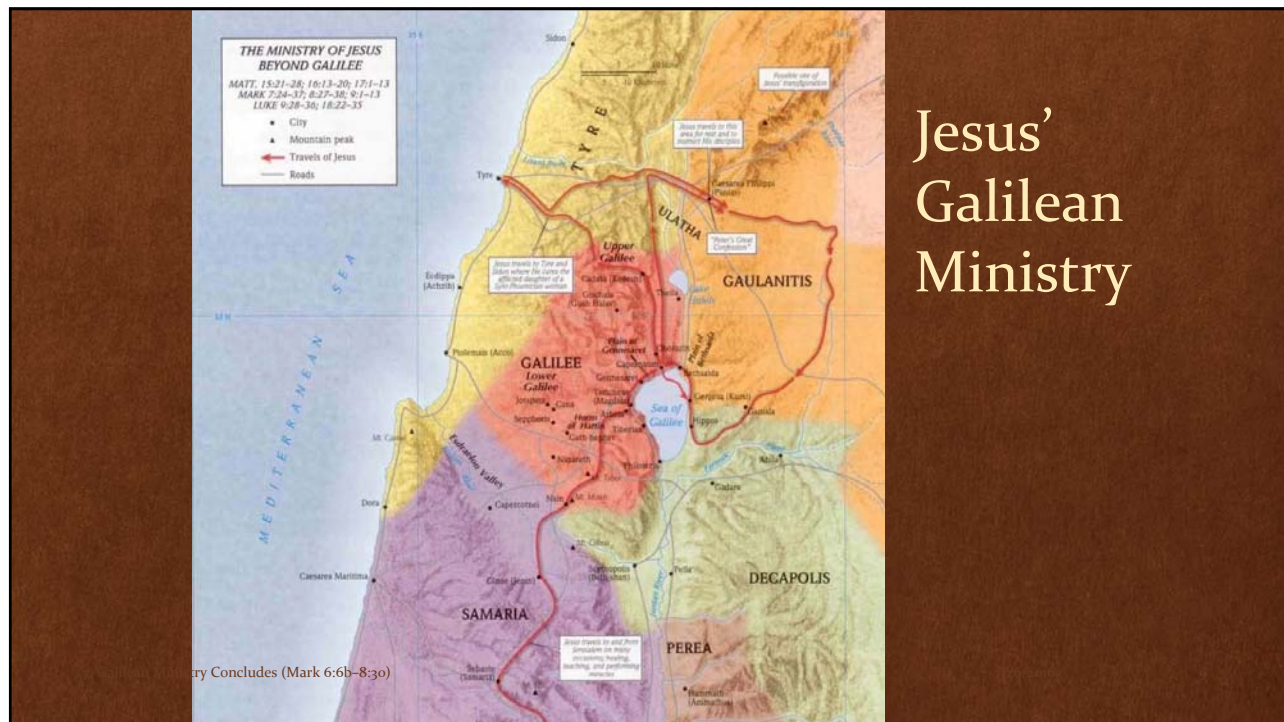
- Extended **conflict** or **controversy narrative** with Pharisees and scribes “come from Jerusalem”
- Offending action: disciples **eat bread** with unwashed hands (7:2)
- **Tradition of the elders = the Pharisaic oral law**
  - “Howbeit in vain do they worship me, **teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**” (7:7, **condemnation story**)
  - The example of *corban* (dedicating something as a religious gift)
- “There is nothing from without, that entering into a man, can defile him, which is food; but **the things which come out of him; those are they that defile the man, that proceedeth forth out of the heart.**” (7:15 JST)
- Transition Back to Deeds (7:24, **transition narrative**)
  - 7:22-23 JST “And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into a house, and would that no man should come unto him. But he could not deny them; **for he had compassion upon all men.**”

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## Jesus' Galilean Ministry



Harold Copping, *The Woman of Canaan*

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### Great Deeds 2 (7:24-8:26, miracle stories)

- **Exorcizing the Daughter of the Syrophenician Woman** (7:24-30; Tyre and Sidon were Gentile)
  - The woman and her faith
  - Who though she was “a dog”—Jesus, the Pharisees, the other disciples?
  - The question of the suffering of innocents
- **Curing the Deaf Man** (7:31-37; Decapolis, still Gentile)
- **Feeding the Four Thousand** (8:1-9)
  - 70 and 7 “Gentile” numbers? (see Gen. 10; Deut. 7:1-2)
  - Greek word for basket as opposed to the Jewish word used in the 5,000
  - **Controversy with the Pharisees and the Disciples** (8:10-22)
    - Jesus travels back to the “Jewish side” of the Sea of Galilee
    - **Demand for a sign** (8:11-13)
    - **The Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod** (8:14-16)
    - **The Blindness of the Disciples** (8:17-21)

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## Jesus Cures a Blind Man at Bethsaida . . . *In Stages* (8:22–26)



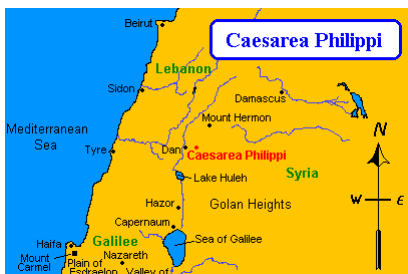
Brian Jekel, *Healing of the Blind Man*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdYYxVRQbmY>
- Connects with the spiritual **blindness of the disciples in the previous pericope**
- *the only example where Jesus needs to “fine tune” a miracle*
- *Looks forward to the disciples’ gradually seeing and understanding who Jesus is and what he will do*

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## Peter's Declaration (8:27–30)

- Peter and the disciples here serve as the end frame for this section, looking back to the opening pericope of The Twelve and John (6:7–30)
- Set in Caesarea Philippi, outside of Herod Antipas' Galilee in the tetrarchy of Philip
  - A gentile city at one of the headwaters of the Jordan, it had a temple to Augustus and many pagan shrines . . .
- “And he saith unto them, ‘But whom say ye that I am?’ And Peter answereth and saith unto him, **‘Thou art the Christ.’**”
  - *First time in this gospel that Jesus is designated “Christ”*
  - Peter knows *who* Jesus is *but does not yet fully understand what he will do (he is still somewhat “blind”)*

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