

13 Part II: Mark 3:7-12 Jesus Extends His Ministry

Discussion: Excluding Jesus, for whom would you travel hundreds of miles just to hear them speak? By the way, you have access to a time-travel machine.

Mark 3

Crowds Follow Jesus
3:7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed.
8 When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon.
9 Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. **10** For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him.
11 Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." **12** But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

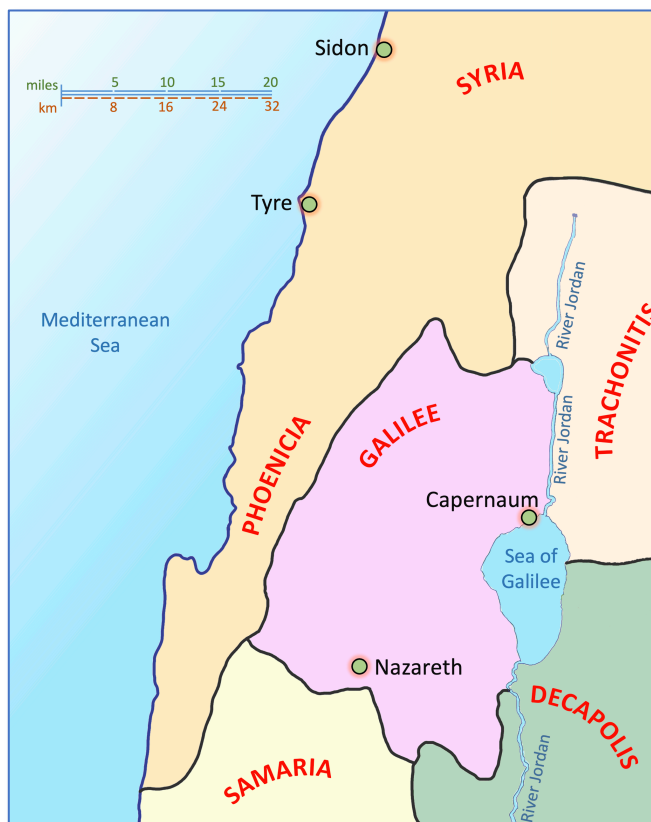


Figure 11: People also travel from the Gentile north

Context

- This introduces the second major section of Mark's Gospel and represents a turning point in Jesus' ministry. It is unique to Mark's Gospel and summarises the situation at this point before Jesus appoints the twelve disciples and extends his ministry.

Key Points

- The ethnic diversity of the crowd is remarkable. People are arriving from the regions outside Galilee, including Idumea and Transjordan (located about 120 miles to the south of Galilee) which had a mixed Jewish and Gentile population, and from Tyre and Sidon (some 50 miles to the north) with an almost entirely Gentile population.²²

Bible Study of Mark's Gospel

- There is no meaning to be derived by the omission of neighbouring territories such as Samaria or the Decapolis. The point is to highlight the great distances people travelled and how far the word had reached about Jesus.²³
- Some Bible translations suggest a “great multitude”, so many, in fact, that Jesus needed to withdraw not just to the Sea of Galilee, but out onto a boat.²⁴
- The crowds press forward, knowing that simply touching Jesus will be enough to gain a healing, even if they don't quite understand who this miracle worker is.²⁵ This is not a response of faith but of hope. The Greek words describing them crowding Jesus and pushing forward might be better translated as *crushing, pressing, or mobbing* him.²⁶
- Again, we see the demons are silenced to keep his messianic identity a secret until the appropriate future time. The reader of Mark's Gospel is permitted to hear this and observe how the demons could do nothing except fall before Jesus and confess him as the Son of God, but this is not how the people themselves will discover his identity. Similarly, any misunderstanding by the crowds that fanned their revolutionary hopes would have brought Jesus into immediate conflict with the Roman authorities. Ultimately, his conflict with the religious and political authorities will lead Jesus to the cross.²⁷

Going Deeper: “Every knee shall bow”.

We hear in Scripture of the irresistible response when Jesus finally returns in glory:

Phil.2:10-11 So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

See also **Rom. 14:11, Is.45:23, Rev.3:9**

Discussion: Does it surprise you that, so early in his ministry, people are arriving from far and wide to seek healing and to listen to Jesus; not just the Jews but people from other faiths as well?