

Paper 153 — The Crisis in Capernaum

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Most endnotes and Urantia Book cross-references have been deleted to enhance readability.

Sources for Paper 153, in the order in which they appear

- (1) Wm. Arnold Stevens and Ernest Dewitt Burton, *A Harmony of the Gospels for Historical Study: An Analytical Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904, 1932)
- (2) Rev. Alfred Edersheim, M.A.Oxon, D.D., Ph.D., *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Volume Two) (New York: Longman, Green, & Co., Eighth Edition, Revised, 1899)
- (3) David Smith, M.A., D.D., *Our Lord's Earthly Life* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1925)

Note: This source is coded **Smith2**.

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the UB writer pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Blue** indicates original (or “revealed”) information, or UB-specific terminology and concepts. (What to highlight in this regard is debatable. The highlights are tentative.)

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PAPER 153 — THE CRISIS AT CAPER- NAUM

153:0.1 On Friday evening, the day of their arrival at Bethsaida, and on Sabbath morning, the apostles noticed that Jesus was seriously occupied with some momentous problem; they were cognizant that the Master was giving unusual thought to some important matter. He ate no breakfast and but little at noontide. All of Sabbath morning and the evening before, the twelve and their associates were gathered together in small groups about the house, in the garden, and along the seashore. There was a tension of uncertainty and a suspense of apprehension resting upon all of them. Jesus had said little to them since they left Jerusalem.

153:0.2 Not in months had they seen the Master so preoccupied and uncommunicative. Even Simon Peter was depressed, if not downcast. Andrew was at a loss to know what to do for his dejected associates. Nathaniel said they were in the midst of the “lull before the storm.” Thomas expressed the opinion that “something out of the ordinary is about to happen.” Philip advised David Zebedee to “forget about plans for feeding and lodging the multitude until we know what the Master is thinking about.” Matthew was putting forth renewed efforts to replenish the treasury. James and John talked over the forthcoming sermon in the synagogue and speculated much as to its probable nature and scope.

Simon Zelotes expressed the belief, in reality a hope, that “the Father in heaven may be about to intervene in some unexpected manner for the vindication and support of his Son,”

III, XXXII: THE GREAT CRISIS IN POPULAR FEELING—THE LAST DISCOURSES IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF CAPERNAUM—CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE—‘WILL YE ALSO GO AWAY?’ (Edersheim² 25)

while Judas Iscariot dared to indulge the thought that possibly Jesus was oppressed with regrets that

[The five thousand] were determined to give up their pilgrimage to the Passover, and then and there proclaim the Galilean Teacher Israel’s King. If He were the Messiah, such was His rightful title. Why then did He so strenuously and effectually resist it? In ignorance of His real views concerning the Kingship, they would naturally conclude that it must have been from fear, from misgiving, from want of belief in Himself (E2 25).

“he did not have the courage and daring to permit the five thousand to proclaim him king of the Jews.”

153:0.3 It was from among such a group of depressed and disconsolate followers that Jesus went forth on this beautiful Sabbath afternoon to preach his epoch-making sermon in the Capernaum synagogue. The only word of cheerful greeting or well-wishing from any of his immediate followers came from one of the unsuspecting Alpheus twins, who, as Jesus left the house on his way to the synagogue, saluted him cheerily and said: “We pray the Father will help you, and that we may have bigger multitudes than ever.”

1. THE SETTING OF THE STAGE

153:1.1 A distinguished congregation greeted Jesus at three o'clock on this exquisite Sabbath afternoon in the new Capernaum synagogue. Jairus presided and handed Jesus the Scriptures to read. The day before, fifty-three Pharisees and Sadducees had arrived from Jerusalem; more than thirty of the leaders and rulers of the neighboring synagogues were also present. These Jewish religious leaders were acting directly under orders from the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, and they constituted the orthodox vanguard which had come to inaugurate open warfare on Jesus and his disciples. Sitting by the side of these Jewish leaders, in the synagogue seats of honor, were the official observers of Herod Antipas, who had been directed to ascertain the truth concerning the disturbing reports that an attempt had been made by the populace to proclaim Jesus the king of the Jews, over in the domains of his brother Philip.

153:1.2 Jesus comprehended that he faced the immediate declaration of avowed and open warfare by his increasing enemies, and he elected boldly to assume the offensive. At the feeding of the five thousand he had challenged their ideas of the material Messiah; now he chose again openly to attack their concept of the Jewish deliverer.

This crisis, which began with the feeding of the five thousand, and which terminated with this Sabbath afternoon sermon,

We can understand how the effectual resistance of Jesus to their purpose not only weakened, but in great measure neutralised, the effect of the miracle which they had witnessed. In fact, we look upon this check as the first **turning of the tide of popular** enthusiasm (E2 25).

was the outward **turning of the tide of popular** fame and acclaim.

Henceforth, the work of the kingdom was to be increasingly concerned with the more important task of winning lasting spiritual converts for the truly religious brotherhood of mankind. This sermon marks the crisis in the transition from the period of discussion, controversy, and decision to that of open warfare and final acceptance or final rejection.

153:1.3 The Master well knew that many of his followers were slowly but surely preparing their minds finally to reject him. He likewise knew that many of his disciples were slowly but certainly passing through that training of mind and that discipline of soul which would enable them to triumph over doubt and courageously to assert their full-fledged faith in the gospel of the kingdom. Jesus fully understood how men prepare themselves for the decisions of a crisis and the performance of sudden deeds of courageous choosing by the slow process of the reiterated choosing between the recurring situations of good and evil. He subjected his chosen messengers to repeated rehearsals in disappointment and provided them with frequent and testing opportunities for choosing between the right and the wrong way of meeting spiritual trials. He knew he could depend on his followers, when they met the final test, to make their vital decisions in accordance with prior and habitual mental attitudes and spirit reactions.

153:1.4 This crisis in Jesus' earth life began with the feeding of the five thousand and ended with this sermon in the synagogue; the crisis in the lives of the apostles began with this sermon in the synagogue and continued for a whole year, ending only with the Master's trial and crucifixion.

153:1.5 As they sat there in the synagogue that afternoon before Jesus began to speak, there was just one great **mystery**, just one supreme question, in the minds of all. Both his friends and his foes pondered just one thought, and that was:

[repeated from 153:0.2] If He were the Messiah, such was His rightful title. Why then did He so strenuously and **effectually** resist it?

“Why did he himself so deliberately and **effectively** turn back the tide of popular enthusiasm?”

And it was immediately before and immediately after this sermon that

Enthusiasm of this kind, once repressed, could never be kindled again. Henceforth there was continuous misunderstanding, **doubt**, and defection among former **adherents**,

the **doubts** and disappointments of his disgruntled **adherents**

growing into **opposition** and **hatred** unto death. Even to those who took not this position, Jesus, His Words and Works, were henceforth a constant **mystery** (E2 25).

grew into unconscious **opposition** and eventually turned into actual **hatred**.

[See 153:5.4, below.]

It was after this sermon in the synagogue that Judas Iscariot entertained his first conscious thought of deserting. But he did, for the time being, effectively master all such inclinations.

153:1.6 Everyone was in a state of perplexity. Jesus had left them dumfounded and confounded. He had recently engaged in the greatest demonstration of supernatural power to characterize his whole career. The feeding of the five thousand was the one event of his earth life which made the greatest appeal to the Jewish concept of the expected Messiah. But this extraordinary advantage was immediately and unexplainedly offset by his prompt and unequivocal refusal to be made king.

153:1.7 On Friday evening, and again on Sabbath morning, the Jerusalem leaders had labored long and earnestly with Jairus to prevent Jesus' speaking in the synagogue, but it was of no avail. Jairus's only reply to all this pleading was: "I have granted this request, and I will not violate my word."

2. THE EPOCHAL SERMON

153:2.1 Jesus introduced this sermon by reading from the law as found in Deuteronomy:

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God,

to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day:

that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: (Deut. 28:15)

The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies:

thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them:

and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth (Deut. 28:25).

"But it shall come to pass, if this people will not hearken to the voice of God,

that the curses of transgression shall surely overtake them.

The Lord shall cause you to be smitten by your enemies;

you shall be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known;

and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone (Deut. 28:36).

[contd] And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee (Deut. 28:37).

Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity (Deut. 28:41).

The stranger that *is* within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low (Deut. 28:43).

Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee,

in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all *things*: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee (Deut. 28:48).

[contd] The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flieth;

a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; (Deut. 28:49)

[contd] A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young: (Deut. 28:50)

And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land:

and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee (Deut. 28:52).

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And the Lord shall bring you and the king you have set up over you into the hands of a strange nation.

You shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations.

Your sons and your daughters shall go into captivity.

The strangers among you shall rise high in authority while you are brought very low.

And these things shall be upon you and your seed forever because you would not hearken to the word of the Lord.

Therefore shall you serve your enemies who shall come against you.

You shall endure hunger and thirst and wear this alien yoke of iron.

The Lord shall bring against you a nation from afar, from the end of the earth,

a nation whose tongue you shall not understand,

a nation of fierce countenance, a nation which will have little regard for you.

And they shall besiege you in all your towns until the high fortified walls wherein you have trusted come down;

[contd] And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege,

and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: (Deut. 28:53)

And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you,

To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you,

both rising up early, and sending *them*, but ye have not hearkened; (Jer. 26:4-5)

[contd] Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth (Jer. 26:6).

[contd] So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD (Jer. 26:7).

[contd] Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak unto all the people,

that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die (Jer. 26:8).

[contd] Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD (Jer. 26:9).

and all the land shall fall into their hands.

And it shall come to pass that

you will be driven to eat the fruit of your own bodies, the flesh of your sons and daughters, during this time of siege,

because of the straitness wherewith your enemies shall press you.”

153:2.2 And when Jesus had finished this reading, he turned to the Prophets and read from Jeremiah:

“If you will not hearken to the words of my servants the prophets whom I have sent you,

then will I make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.’

And the priests and the teachers heard Jeremiah speak these words in the house of the Lord.

And it came to pass that, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people,

the priests and teachers laid hold of him, saying, ‘You shall surely die.’

And all the people crowded around Jeremiah in the house of the Lord.

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[contd] When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD's house (Jer. 26:10).

And when the princes of Judah heard these things, they sat in judgment on Jeremiah.

[contd] Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying,

Then spoke the priests and the teachers to the princes and to all the people, saying:

This man *is* worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears (Jer. 26:11).

'This man is worthy to die, for he has prophesied against our city, and you have heard him with your own ears.'

[contd] Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying,

Then spoke Jeremiah to all the princes and to all the people:

The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard (Jer. 26:12).

'The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words which you have heard.

[contd] Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God;

Now, therefore, amend your ways and reform your doings and obey the voice of the Lord your God

and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you (Jer. 26:13).

that you may escape the evil which has been pronounced against you.

[contd] As for me, behold, I *am* in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you (Jer. 26:14).

As for me, behold I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right in your eyes.

[contd] But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof:

But know you for certain that, if you put me to death, you shall bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this people,

for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears (Jer. 26:15).

for of a truth the Lord has sent me to speak all these words in your ears.'

[contd] Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man *is* not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God (Jer. 26:16).

Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that *was* in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire (Jer. 38:6).

153:2.3 “The priests and teachers of that day sought to kill Jeremiah,

but the judges would not consent,

albeit, for his words of warning,

they did let him down by cords in a filthy dungeon until he sank in mire up to his armpits.

That is what this people did to the Prophet Jeremiah when he obeyed the Lord’s command to warn his brethren of their impending political downfall. Today, I desire to ask you: What will the chief priests and religious leaders of this people do with the man who dares to warn them of the day of their spiritual doom? Will you also seek to put to death the teacher who dares to proclaim the word of the Lord, and who fears not to point out wherein you refuse to walk in the way of light which leads to the entrance to the kingdom of heaven?

153:2.4 “What is it you seek as evidence of my mission on earth? We have left you undisturbed in your positions of influence and power while we preached glad tidings to the poor and the outcast. We have made no hostile attack upon that which you hold in reverence but have rather proclaimed new liberty for man’s fear-ridden soul. I came into the world to reveal my Father and to establish on earth the spiritual brotherhood of the sons of God, the kingdom of heaven.

And notwithstanding that I have so many times reminded you that my kingdom is not of this world, still has my Father granted you many manifestations of material wonders in addition to more evidential spiritual transformations and regenerations.

153:2.5 “What new sign is it that you seek at my hands? I declare that you already have sufficient evidence to enable you to make your decision. Verily, verily, I say to many who sit before me this day, you are confronted with the necessity of choosing which way you will go; and I say to you, as Joshua said to your forefathers,

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (Josh. 24:15).

‘choose you this day whom you will serve.’

Today, many of you stand

[Here, then, we are at the parting of the two ways; and, just because it was the hour of decision, did Christ so clearly set forth the highest truths concerning Himself, in opposition to the view which the multitude entertained about the Messiah (Edersheim² 36).]

at the parting of the ways.

XIX: THE CRISIS AT CAPERNAUM. (4
History of the Gospels 103)

§68. DISCOURSE ON THE BREAD OF LIFE. John 6:22-71.

[See John 6:22-24.]

[They searched for Him in vain, and in the morning, finding on the beach a number of boats belonging to Tiberias—probably a fishing fleet which had put in for shelter from the storm—they had themselves conveyed by these across the Lake and so got home to Capernaum (Smith2 177).]

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs,

but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled.

[See 152:3.2.]

27 Work not for the meat [ARV. txt.: food] that perisheth,

but for the meat [ARV. txt.: food] which abideth unto eternal life,

153:2.6 “Some of you, when you could not find me after the feasting of the multitude on the other side,

hired the Tiberias fishing fleet, which a week before had taken shelter near by during a storm, to go in pursuit of me,

and what for?

Not for truth and righteousness or that you might the better know how to serve and minister to your fellow men!

No, but rather that you might have more bread for which you had not labored.

It was not to fill your souls with the word of life, but only that you might fill the belly with the bread of ease. And long have you been taught that the Messiah, when he should come, would work those wonders which would make life pleasant and easy for all the chosen people. It is not strange, then, that you who have been thus taught should long for the loaves and the fishes. But I declare to you that such is not the mission of the Son of Man. I have come to proclaim spiritual liberty, teach eternal truth, and foster living faith.

153:2.7 “My brethren,

hanker not after the meat which perishes

but rather seek for the spiritual food that nourishes even to eternal life;

which the Son of man shall give unto you:

for him the Father, *even* God, hath sealed.

28 They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

[It is a remarkable circumstance, that among the ruins of the Synagogue of Capernaum the lintel has been discovered, and that it bears the device of a pot of manna, ornamented with a flowing pattern of vine leaves and clusters of grapes (Edersheim² 29).]

30 They therefore said to him, What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? what workest thou? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness;

as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.

and this is the bread of life

which the Son gives to all who will take it and eat,

for the Father has given the Son this life without measure.

And when you asked me,

‘What must we do to perform the works of God?’

I plainly told you:

‘This is the work of God, that you believe him whom he has sent.’”

153:2.8 And then said Jesus, pointing up to

the device of a pot of manna which decorated the lintel of this new synagogue, and which was embellished with grape clusters:

“You have thought that

your forefathers in the wilderness ate manna—

the bread of heaven—

but I say to you that this was the bread of earth.

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32 Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven;

but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven.

33 For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven,

and giveth life unto the world.

34 They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life:

he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, that ye have seen me,

and yet believeth not.

37 All that which the Father giveth me shall come unto me;

and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will,

While Moses did not give your fathers bread from heaven,

my Father now stands ready to give you the true bread of life.

The bread of heaven is that which comes down from God

and gives eternal life to the men of the world.

And when you say to me, Give us this living bread,

I will answer: I am this bread of life.

He who comes to me shall not hunger, while he who believes me shall never thirst.

You have seen me,

lived with me, and beheld my works,

yet you believe not

that I came forth from the Father.

But to those who do believe—fear not.

All those led of the Father shall come to me,

and he who comes to me shall in nowise be cast out.

153:2.9 “And now let me declare to you, once and for all time, that

I have come down upon the earth, not to do my own will,

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but the will of him that sent me.

but the will of Him who sent me.

39 And this is the will of him that sent me,

And this is the final will of Him who sent me,

that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing,

that of all those he has given me I should not lose one.

but should raise it up at the last day.

40 For this is the will of my Father,

And this is the will of the Father:

that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life;

That every one who beholds the Son and who believes him shall have eternal life.

and I will raise him up at the last day.

Only yesterday did I feed you with bread for your bodies; today I offer you the bread of life for your hungry souls. Will you now take the bread of the spirit as you then so willingly ate the bread of this world?"

153:2.10 As Jesus paused for a moment to look over the congregation, one of the teachers from Jerusalem (a member of the Sanhedrin) rose up and asked:

"Do I understand you to say that

41 The Jews therefore murmured concerning him, because he said, I am the bread which came down out of heaven.

you are the bread which comes down from heaven,

and that the manna which Moses gave to our fathers in the wilderness did not?"

And Jesus answered the Pharisee, "You understood aright."

42 And they said,

Then said the Pharisee:

Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph,

"But are you not Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, the carpenter?"

whose father and mother we know?

Are not your father and mother, as well as your brothers and sisters, well known to many of us?

how doth he now say, I am come out of heaven?

How then is it that you appear here in God's house and declare that you have come down from heaven?"

43 Jesus answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

153:2.11 By this time there was much murmuring in the synagogue,

and such a tumult was threatened that Jesus stood up and said:

"Let us be patient; the truth never suffers from honest examination. I am all that you say but more. The Father and I are one; the Son does only that which the Father teaches him, while all those who are given to the Son by the Father, the Son will receive to himself.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God.

You have read where it is written in the Prophets, 'You shall all be taught by God,'

17

and that 'Those whom the Father teaches will hear also his Son.'

Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me.

Every one who yields to the teaching of the Father's **indwelling spirit** will eventually come to me.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father,

Not that any man has seen the Father,

but the Father's spirit does live within man.

save he who is from God,

And the Son who came down from heaven,

he hath seen the Father.

he has surely seen the Father.

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47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life.

And those who truly believe this Son already have eternal life.

48 I am the bread of life.

153:2.12 "I am this bread of life.

49 Your father did eat the manna in the wilderness, and they died.

Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven,

But this bread which comes down from God,

that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

if a man eats thereof, he shall never die in spirit.

I repeat,

51 I am the living bread which came down out of heaven:

I am this living bread,

if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever:

and every soul who attains the realization of this united nature of God and man shall live forever.

yea and the bread which I will give

And this bread of life which I give to all who will receive

is my flesh,

is my own living and combined nature.

The Father in the Son and the Son one with the Father—

for the life of the world.

that is my life-giving revelation to the world

and my saving gift to all nations.”

153:2.13 When Jesus had finished speaking, the ruler of the synagogue dismissed the congregation, but they would not depart. They crowded up around Jesus to ask more questions while others murmured and disputed among themselves. And this state of affairs continued for more than three hours. It was well past seven o'clock before the audience finally dispersed.

3. THE AFTER MEETING

153:3.1 Many were the questions asked Jesus during this after meeting. Some were asked by his perplexed disciples, but more were asked by caviling unbelievers who sought only to embarrass and entrap him.

153:3.2 One of the visiting Pharisees, mounting a lampstand, shouted out this question: "You tell us that you are the bread of life.

52 The Jews therefore strove with one another, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

How can you give us your flesh to eat or your blood to drink?

What avail is your teaching if it cannot be carried out?"

53 Jesus therefore said unto them,

And Jesus answered this question, saying:

"I did not teach you that my flesh is the bread of life nor that my blood is the water thereof. But I did say that my life in the flesh is a bestowal of the bread of heaven. The fact of the Word of God bestowed in the flesh and the phenomenon of the Son of Man subject to the will of God, constitute a reality of experience which is equivalent to the divine sustenance.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. 54 He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him.

You cannot eat my flesh nor can you drink my blood,

but you can become one in spirit with me even as I am one in spirit with the Father.

You can be nourished by the eternal word of God, which is indeed the bread of life, and which has been bestowed in the likeness of mortal flesh; and you can be watered in soul by the divine spirit, which is truly the water of life. The Father has sent me into the world to show how he desires to indwell and direct all men; and I have so lived this life in the flesh as to inspire all men likewise ever to seek to know and do the will of the indwelling heavenly Father.”

§69. DISCOURSE ON EATING WITH UNWASHEN HANDS. Matt. 15:1-20. Mark 7:1-23.

Matt. 15:1 Then there came to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying,

2 Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

[Mark 7:2 and had seen some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashen, hands.]

[Mark7:7 washings of cups, and pots, and brasen vessels.]

3 And he answered and said unto them,

153:3.3 Then one of the Jerusalem spies who had been observing Jesus and his apostles, said:

“We notice that neither you nor your apostles

wash your hands properly before you eat bread.

You must well know that such a practice as

eating with defiled and unwashed hands

is a transgression of the law of the elders.

Neither do you properly wash your drinking cups and eating vessels.

Why is it that you show such disrespect for the traditions of the fathers and the laws of our elders?”

And when Jesus heard him speak,

he answered:

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

URANTIA PAPER 153

Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?

“Why is it that you transgress the commandments of God by the laws of your tradition?

4 For God said,

The commandment says,

Honour thy father and thy mother: and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death.

‘Honor your father and your mother,’

and directs that you share with them your substance if necessary; but you enact a law of tradition which permits undutiful children to say that

5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given *to God*; 6 he shall never honour his father.

the money wherewith the parents might have been assisted has been ‘given to God.’

The law of the elders thus relieves such crafty children of their responsibility, notwithstanding that the children subsequently use all such monies for their own comfort.

And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition.

Why is it that

you in this way make void the commandment by your own tradition?

Mark 7:6 And he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, saying:

This people honoureth me with their lips
But their heart is far from me.

‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 But in vain do they worship me, Teaching *as their* doctrines the precepts of men.

In vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.’

8 Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.

9 And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition.

13 making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many like such things do you do.

14 And he called to him the multitude again, and said unto them, Hear me all of you, and understand:

Matt. 15:11 Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man;

but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man.

[15 And Peter answered and said unto him, Declare unto us the parable.]

12 Then came the disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying?

13 But he answered and said,

153:3.4 “You can see how it is that

you desert the commandment while you hold fast to the tradition of men.

Altogether willing are you to reject the word of God while you maintain your own traditions.

And in many other ways do you dare to set up your own teachings above the law and the prophets.”

153:3.5 Jesus then directed his remarks to all present.

He said: “But hearken to me, all of you.

It is not that which enters into the mouth that spiritually defiles the man,

but rather that which proceeds out of the mouth and from the heart.”

But even the apostles failed fully to grasp the meaning of his words,

for Simon Peter also asked him:

“Lest some of your hearers be unnecessarily

offended,

would you explain to us the meaning of these words?”

And then said Jesus to Peter:

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

URANTIA PAPER 153

[16 And he said, Are ye also even yet without understanding?]

“Are you also hard of understanding?

Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up.

Know you not that

every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up?

14 Let them alone: they are blind guides.

Turn now your attention to those who would know the truth. You cannot compel men to love the truth.

Many of these teachers are blind guides.

And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit.

And you know that,

if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the pit.

But hearken while I tell you the truth concerning those things which morally defile and spiritually contaminate men. I declare it is not that which enters the body by the mouth or gains access to the mind through the eyes and ears, that defiles the man. Man is only defiled by that evil which may originate within the heart, and which finds expression in the words and deeds of such unholy persons.

19 For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts,

Do you not know

it is from the heart that there come forth evil thoughts, wicked projects of murder, theft, and adulteries,

together with jealousy, pride, anger, revenge,

false witness, railings:

railings, and false witness?

20 these are the things which defile the man:

And it is just such things that defile men,

but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man.

and not that they eat bread with ceremonially unclean hands.”

153:3.6 The Pharisaic commissioners of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin were now almost convinced that Jesus must be apprehended on a charge of blasphemy or on one of flouting the sacred law of the Jews; wherefore their efforts to involve him in the discussion of, and possible attack upon, some of the traditions of the elders, or so-called oral laws of the nation.

BACK IN CAPERNAUM (Smith2 177)

[Compare Smith2 183.]

“It is better for me to die than to transgress the commandments of the Elders” (S2 183).

[Jesus transcended all the teachings of his forebears when he boldly substituted clean hearts for clean hands as the mark of true religion (149:2.11).]

[Years after Peter still clung to his Jewish prejudice (Marginal note: Acts x. 9-15.) (Smith 246).]

No matter how scarce water might be, these traditionally enslaved Jews would never fail to go through with the required ceremonial washing of the hands before every meal.

It was their belief that

“it is better to die than to transgress the commandments of the elders.”

The spies asked this question because it had been reported that Jesus had said,

“Salvation is a matter of clean hearts rather than of clean hands.”

But such beliefs, when they once become a part of one’s religion, are hard to get away from.

Even many years after this day the Apostle Peter was still held in the bondage of fear to many of these traditions about things clean and unclean, only being finally delivered by experiencing an extraordinary and vivid dream.

Eating with unwashed hands was likened to **commerce with an harlot.**

It was **punishable with excommunication,** and it exposed the polluted dwelling to the visitation of the nocturnal fiend Shibta who suffocated children in their beds (S2 183).

XXXI: THE CAVILS OF THE PHARISEES CONCERNING PURIFICATION, AND THE TEACHING OF THE LORD CONCERNING PURITY—THE TRADITIONS CONCERNING ‘HAND-WASHING’ AND ‘VOWS’ (**Edersheim** 2 3)

[T]he ordinances of the Scribes were declared more precious, and of **more binding** importance than those of Holy Scripture itself (E2 15).

All of this can the better be understood when it is recalled that

these Jews looked upon eating with unwashed hands in the same light as **commerce with a harlot,**

and both were equally **punishable by excommunication.**

153:3.7 Thus did the Master elect to discuss and expose the folly of the whole rabbinic system of rules and regulations which was represented by the oral law—the traditions of the elders,

all of which were regarded as more sacred and **more binding** upon the Jews than even the teachings of the Scriptures.

And Jesus spoke out with less reserve because he knew the hour had come when he could do nothing more to prevent an open rupture of relations with these religious leaders.

4. LAST WORDS IN THE SYNAGOGUE

XVI: A DAY OF TEACHING BY THE SEA OF GALILEE. (*A Harmony of the Gospels* 77)

§55. WARNINGS TO THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES: "AN ETERNAL SIN." Matt. 12:22-45. Mark 3:20-30.

Matt. 12:22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb:

and he healed him, insomuch that the dumb man spake and saw.

153:4.1 In the midst of the discussions of this after meeting,

one of the Pharisees from Jerusalem brought to Jesus a distraught youth who was possessed of an unruly and rebellious spirit.

Leading this demented lad up to Jesus, he said: "What can you do for such affliction as this? Can you cast out devils?" And when the Master looked upon the youth, he was moved with compassion and, beckoning for the lad to come to him, took him by the hand and said: "You know who I am; come out of him; and I charge one of your loyal fellows to see that you do not return."

And immediately the lad was normal and in his right mind.

And this is the first case where Jesus really cast an "evil spirit" out of a human being. All of the previous cases were only supposed possession of the devil; but this was a genuine case of demoniac possession, even such as sometimes occurred in those days and right up to the day of Pentecost, when the Master's spirit was poured out upon all flesh, making it forever impossible for these few celestial rebels to take such advantage of certain unstable types of human beings.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

URANTIA PAPER 153

23 And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, Is this the son of David?

153:4.2 When the people marveled,

one of the Pharisees stood up and charged that Jesus could do these things because he was in league with devils; that he admitted in the language which he employed in casting out this devil that they were known to each other; and he went on to state that the religious teachers and leaders at Jerusalem had decided that

24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

Jesus did all his so-called miracles by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils.

Said the Pharisee: "Have nothing to do with this man; he is in partnership with Satan."

Mark 3:23 And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables,

153:4.3 Then said Jesus:

How can Satan cast out Satan?

"How can Satan cast out Satan?"

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom will not be able to stand.

A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand;

Luke 11:17 Be he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house *divided* against a house falleth.

if a house be divided against itself, it is soon brought to desolation.

Matt. 12:[25] and every city or house divided against itself cannot stand:

Can a city withstand a siege if it is not united?

26 and if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself;

If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself;

how then shall his kingdom stand?

how then shall his kingdom stand?

Mark 3:27 But no one can enter into the house of the strong *man*, and spoil his goods,

except he first bind the strong *man*; and then he will spoil his house.

Matt. 12:27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?

therefore shall they be your judges.

28 But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.

Matt. 12:30 He that is not with me is against me;

and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

Mark 3.28: Verily I say unto you, All theirs sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men,

and their blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

But you should know that

no one can enter into the house of a strong man and despoil his goods

except he first overpower and bind that strong man.

And so, if I by the power of Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?

Therefore shall they be your judges.

But if I, by the spirit of God, cast out devils, then has the kingdom of God truly come upon you.

If you were not blinded by prejudice and misled by fear and pride, you would easily perceive that one who is greater than devils stands in your midst.

You compel me to declare that

he who is not with me is against me,

while he who gathers not with me scatters abroad.

Let me utter a solemn warning to you who would presume, with your eyes open and with premeditated malice, knowingly to ascribe the works of God to the doings of devils!

Verily, verily, I say to you, all your sins shall be forgiven,

even all of your blasphemies,

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

URANTIA PAPER 153

29 but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit

but whosoever shall blaspheme against God with deliberation and wicked intention

hath never forgiveness,

shall never obtain forgiveness.

[Compare Edersheim² 199 and Smith¹ 178.]

Since such persistent workers of iniquity will never seek nor receive forgiveness,

but is guilty of an eternal sin:

they are guilty of the sin of eternally rejecting divine forgiveness.

30 because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

153:4.4 “Many of you have this day come to the parting of the ways; you have come to a beginning of the making of the inevitable choice between the will of the Father and the self-chosen ways of darkness. And as you now choose, so shall you eventually be.

[See 153:2.5, above.]

Matt. 12:33 Either make the tree good, and its fruit good;

You must either make the tree good and its fruit good,

or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt:

or else will the tree become corrupt and its fruit corrupt.

I declare that in my Father’s eternal kingdom

for the tree is known by its fruit.

the tree is known by its fruits.

34 Ye offspring of vipers,

But some of you who are as vipers,

how can ye, being evil, speak good things?

how can you, having already chosen evil, bring forth good fruits?

for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

After all, out of the abundance of the evil in your hearts your mouths speak.”

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

URANTIA PAPER 153

38 Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying,

Teacher, we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said unto them,

An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign;

and there shall be no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: 40 for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

153:4.5 Then stood up another Pharisee, who said:

“Teacher, we would have you give us a predetermined sign

which we will agree upon as establishing your authority and right to teach.

Will you agree to such an arrangement?”

And when Jesus heard this, he said:

“This faithless and sign-seeking generation seeks a token,

but no sign shall be given you

other than that which you already have, and that which you shall see when the Son of Man departs from among you.”

153:4.6 And when he had finished speaking, his apostles surrounded him and led him from the synagogue. In silence they journeyed home with him to Bethsaida. They were all amazed and somewhat terror-stricken by the sudden change in the Master’s teaching tactics. They were wholly unaccustomed to seeing him perform in such a militant manner.

5. THE SATURDAY EVENING

153:5.1 Time and again had Jesus dashed to pieces the hopes of his apostles, repeatedly had he crushed their fondest expectations, but no time of disappointment or season of sorrow had ever equaled that which now overtook them. And, too, there was now admixed with their depression a real fear for their safety. They were all surprisingly startled by the suddenness and completeness of the desertion of the populace. They were also somewhat frightened and disconcerted by the unexpected boldness and assertive determination exhibited by the Pharisees who had come down from Jerusalem. But most of all they were bewildered by Jesus' sudden change of tactics. Under ordinary circumstances they would have welcomed the appearance of this more militant attitude, but coming as it did, along with so much that was unexpected, it startled them.

153:5.2 And now, on top of all of these worries, when they reached home, Jesus refused to eat. For hours he isolated himself in one of the upper rooms.

[See 152:2.5.]

It was almost midnight when Joab, the leader of the evangelists, returned and reported that about one third of his associates had deserted the cause. All through the evening loyal disciples had come and gone, reporting that the revulsion of feeling toward the Master was general in Capernaum. The leaders from Jerusalem were not slow to feed this feeling of disaffection and in every way possible to seek to promote the movement away from Jesus and his teachings. During these trying hours the twelve women were in session over at Peter's house. They were tremendously upset, but none of them deserted.

153:5.3 It was a little after midnight when Jesus came down from the upper chamber and stood among the twelve and their associates, numbering about thirty in all.

XIX: THE CRISIS AT CAPERNAUM. (*A Harmony of the Gospels* 103)

§68. DISCOURSE ON THE BREAD OF LIFE. John 6:22-71.

61 But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said unto them,

He said:

“I recognize that this sifting of the kingdom distresses you, but it is unavoidable.

Still, after all the training you have had, was there any good reason why

Doth this cause you to stumble?

you should stumble at my words?

Why is it that you are filled with fear and consternation when you see the kingdom being divested of these lukewarm multitudes and these halfhearted disciples? Why do you grieve when the new day is dawning for the shining forth in new glory of the spiritual teachings of the kingdom of heaven?

If you find it difficult to endure this test,

62 *What* then if you should behold the Son of man **ascending** where he was before?

what, then, will you do when the Son of Man must return to the Father?

When and how will you prepare yourselves for the time when I **ascend** to the place whence I came to this world?

153:5.4 “My beloved, you must remember that

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth;

it is the spirit that quickens;

the flesh profiteth nothing:

the flesh and all that pertains thereto is of little profit.

the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life.

The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

Be of good cheer! I have not deserted you. Many shall be offended by the plain speaking of these days. Already you have heard that

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray him. 65 And he said, For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father.

66 Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

many of my disciples have turned back; they walk no more with me.

From the beginning I knew that these halfhearted believers would fall out by the way.

Did I not choose you twelve men and set you apart as ambassadors of the kingdom?

And now at such a time as this

67 Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, Would ye also go away?

would you also desert?

Let each of you look to his own faith, for one of you stands in grave danger."

And when Jesus had finished speaking,

68 Simon Peter answered him,

Simon Peter said:

Lord, to whom shall we go?

"Yes, Lord, we are sad and perplexed, but we will never forsake you.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

URANTIA PAPER 153

[They were indeed sorely perplexed, since His premonition of suffering and death was so contrary to their dream of an earthly triumph ... (Smith2 182).]

thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 And we have believed

and know that thou art the Holy One of God.

70 Jesus answered them, Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?
71 Now he spake of Judas *the son* of Simon Iscariot, for he it was that should betray him, *being* one of the twelve.

You have taught us the words of eternal life.

We have believed in you

and followed with you all this time. We will not turn back, for

we know that you are sent by God.”

And as Peter ceased speaking, they all with one accord nodded their approval of his pledge of loyalty.

153:5.5 Then said Jesus: “Go to your rest, for busy times are upon us; active days are just ahead.”