The Ministry of Christ, Part 3

We are considering the year of Christ's introduction. So far Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. After the Holy Spirit came upon Him without measure, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After overcoming Satan's temptations, Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to enter into public ministry. He began by calling His first five disciples and attending a wedding feast where He turned water into wine. At His first public Passover, Jesus cleansed the Temple of the money changers and those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves. Then Jesus met Nicodemus and instructed him on what it means to be born again.

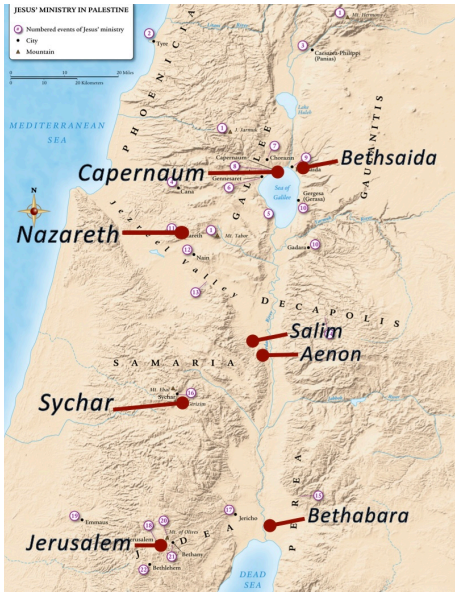
Early Judean Ministry

John 3:22 NKJV After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.

John 4:1–2 NKJV Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

During this early Judean ministry, Jesus' disciples baptized many people.

Jesus and His disciples had left Jerusalem and went east past the Jordan River near Bethabara. Not much is said about Christ's ministry that took place that led to these baptisms. John had warned the Pharisees and Sadducees to flee from the wrath that was to come and his ministry was filled with a fiery condemnation against sin. John was baptizing in the Jordan River near Aenon and Salim (John 3:23) and near Bethabara. According to John 4, the Pharisees heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.



Here in John 3:22-36, Jesus and His disciples, along with John the Baptist, were baptizing.

They were probably not far from each other baptizing in the Jordan River. When John's disciples heard that Jesus and His disciples were baptizing, they said, *"Everyone is coming to Him!"* Once again, John identifies Jesus as the Christ.

John 3:27–28 NKJV John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.'

John 3:29 NKJV He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.

John 3:30–31 NKJV He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

John 3:32–33 NKJV And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.

John 3:34–35 NKJV For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.

John 3:36 NKJV He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

John knew that he was called to be the forerunner of the Messiah and he was convinced that Jesus is the Christ. This was his public declaration and he was filled with joy that he had heard the voice of the Christ and had seen Him.

Samaria

John 4:1–2 NKJV Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

John 4:3-4 NKJV He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria.

Why did Jesus need to go through Samaria?

This side trip to Samaria led to many of the Samaritans believing in Him. Jesus and the five disciples arrived at Samaria and being wearied from His journey, He sat alone by the well while His disciples went into the city to buy food.

Samaria

The Samaritans were a distinct group in ancient Israel with at complex history and relationship to Judaism. They originated from a mix of peoples and cultures including those settled in Samaria by Assyrian kings after the fall of the northern Israelite kingdom. Shechem was the place where Abraham built his first altar upon entering Canaan and where Joseph was buried. Although they were of mixed heritage, they considered themselves to be true descendants of Israel and keepers of the Torah. Since the Samaritans considered themselves to be more conservative, they rejected the prophets and only accepted the Pentateuch as scripture. Shechem was at the base of Mount Gerizim where their religious center and temple was built. Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal were opposite each other and Shechem was in between. This is where the Levites stood and declared the blessings and cursings before Israel, (Deuteronomy 27:11-28:68; Joshua 8:33-35). The Samaritan Pentateuch declared that God's people only worship at Mount

Gerizim in Shechem. Thus, they rejected Jerusalem as a place to worship. The Samaritans were despised by the Jewish people who considered them to be “strangers.”

There was an ulterior motive for Jesus staying behind and sitting by Jacob’s well. Nothing just happens with God. It is amazing to see how far out of the way Jesus would go to encounter someone in distress and present the Good News.

The Woman at the Well, John 4:7-26

Watch how Jesus entered into a conversation with this woman and how He gave her living water. Jesus began the encounter with her by asking her for a drink of water. This was something that she could easily do, but she was surprised that He being a Jew would ask for a drink from her, since she was a Samaritan woman.

Why was she surprised?

Two things must be considered in her surprise that Jesus being a Jew would speak to her. First, this woman had five husbands and was living with someone who was not her husband. Second, she was a Samaritan and Jesus asked a Samaritan woman for a drink from Jacob’s well. Why is that significant? Jacob’s well offered temporary relief of natural thirst. Jacob’s well referred to the old order of things. Jesus offered her “living water.”

John 4:13–14 NKJV Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Later in John’s Gospel, Jesus referred to Isaiah 55:1-3 and spoke more about this water.

John 7:37-38 NKJV On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

What is the water that Jesus is referring to and where does it come from?

Living water does not come from natural or physical resources. Isaiah 55 said come to the waters that satisfies the soul. This water brings soul delight that is greater than what wine, milk, and bread can bring. This water springs up into everlasting life that has an endless duration of soul satisfying delight. “Living water” describes God’s salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit. “Living water” is so satisfying that all who drink will never thirst again. “Living water” is a spring that continuously flows to eternal life. “Living water” is tied to spiritual rebirth. This “living water” is freely given to anyone who comes to Jesus.

Why would Jesus go to Samaria to meet with this Samaritan woman to bring

this message of God's gift of eternal life and living water? This woman was an outcast in her community. Jesus came into this world to seek and to save that which is lost, (Luke 19:10).

John 4:23-24 NKJV But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

John 4:25-26 NKJV The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

John 4:28–30 NKJV The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

John 4:39 NKJV And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did."

John 4:43–44 NKJV Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

The Early Galilean Ministry — Matthew 4:12-17; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:14-15; John 4:3, 43-45

Jesus' early Galilean ministry is recorded in all four gospels. Matthew gives another reason for Jesus going to Galilee.

Matthew 4:12 NKJV Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee.

Matthew 4:13-14 NKJV And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet…

Isaiah had prophesied, *"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light."* This trip was very significant for several reasons. This was not only done to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, it is also where Jesus began to share the message and purpose for His coming.

Matthew 4:17 NKJV From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

This refers to a shift in Jesus' ministry. He turned from His home region and began preaching, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." John 4:43-45 explains what happened when Jesus went through Nazareth to Capernaum.*

John 4:45 NKJV So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

Although the people in His hometown area did not receive Him, the people in

Galilee received Him because they saw everything Jesus did at the feast in Jerusalem.

Healing Nobleman's Son in Cana of Galilee

This is the second recorded miracle in the Gospels.

John 4:46 NKJV So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.

John 4:47 NKJV When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

Watch how Jesus responded to the nobleman's request.

John 4:48 NKJV Then Jesus said to him*, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."*

Jesus was not pleased with a faith that relies on miracles rather than God's Word. Most people want to see before they believe. Jesus always taught that we should first believe and then we would see. The man continued to beg Jesus to come down before his son dies.

John 4:50–51 NKJV Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, "Your son lives!"

Jesus' word to the man tested his faith when He said, "Go your way; your son lives." This text is one of many that shows that healing and miracles can happen at a distance.

John 4:54 NKJV This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

John's Imprisonment — Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14; Luke 3:19-20

Jesus heard about John's imprisonment before He departed to Galilee, Matthew 4:12.

Mark 1:14–15 NKJV Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

There is significance in John's imprisonment and Jesus entering into full ministry. Most of Jesus' ministry occurred after John's. This is another major turning point in the ministry and life of Christ. John was in prison throughout Jesus' second year of ministry, and remained in prison until he was beheaded in the beginning of His third year of ministry. (Matthew 14:1-2, 6-12; Mark 6:14-16, 21-29; Luke 9:7-9)

Jesus' popularity continued to grow in Galilee

Luke 4:14–15 NKJV Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in

their synagogues, being glorified by all.

At the Nazareth Synagogue

Luke 4:16 NKJV So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

Luke 4:17 NKJV And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

Luke 4:18-19 NKJV "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Watch how the people in Jesus' hometown synagogue responded to what He read and said.

Luke 4:28–29 NKJV So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.

Luke 4:30 NKJV Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

This ends the first year of His public ministry.

It is notable that the first year of public ministry ends with people refusing to accept Him and casting Him out of the city.