



Timing of Jesus Ministry

Matthew 4:12-17, *Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. ¹³ And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ¹⁵ "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: ¹⁶ The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." ¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Matthew presents the ancestry of the King in His genealogy.

Then the arrival of the King in His birth.

Then the adoration of the King, as the magi came to worship. Then the anticipations of the King as He fulfilled all of the Old Testament prophecies.

Then the announcer of the King, John the Baptist.

Then the affirmation of the King in His baptism.

Now the activity of the King.

The activity of the King.

At the end of the temptation the King is established as a king. He has been tested.

Christ is the supreme King. Having proven Himself, He embarks upon His ministry.

V 12, *Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee*

Between verses 11 and 12, there is a time gap about one year.

From the time of the temptation till the beginning of the Galilean ministry, we have a full record of what happened.

John records in his Gospel John 1:19 till John 4:42.

Now Matthew doesn't deal with these things, because Matthew has a specific purpose to present Christ as King. John touches on this that happened prior to that time.

John 1.

Following that tremendous victory in the wilderness, Jesus comes back to where John the Baptist is preaching and baptizing. Jesus is ready to start His ministry.

John 1:19, *Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"*

It was important for the Jews that John point specifically to this person, Jesus.

Day one.

John 1:26-27, *John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. ²⁷ It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."*

John was saying that the Messiah is here.

He is standing among you.

John 1:29-30, *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'*

Day two Jesus is not just standing in the crowd. He is moving toward John.

First day, "He is here."

Second day, John says, "Behold Him."

John 1:35-37, *Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. ³⁶ And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*

Day one, John says, "He's here."

Day two, he says, "Behold Him."

Day three, he says, "Follow Him."

John said to his own disciples, "You follow Him." Jesus was making the transition from the days of the Old Testament to the New, from John the Baptist to Himself.

The disciples of John the Baptist followed Him and Jesus called them to be His disciples.

John 1:38-51, Jesus calls the first group of disciples. Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel. He gathers the first group, makes the first call.

Where did Jesus go from there?

He went to a wedding.

John 2:1-11, tells us that He went to Cana of Galilee.

Cana is way up north in Galilee, so He, He went all the way from where John was baptizing in the Jordan, down by Jericho, down in the desert, all the way up the plateau, all the way across the

hilltops, all the way onto the other side of the western side of those hills, on the western side of the Sea of Galilee, to the little town of Cana to the wedding.

Jesus had been there for a while.

John 2:12, *After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.*

From Cana of Galilee, have to walk another ten miles at least up the western edge of the Sea of Galilee around to the northern tip to the little town of Capernaum, and He spent a few days there.

From the Jordan to Cana to Capernaum.

John 2:13, *Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

Jesus went to Jerusalem.

When He got there He cleansed the temple. Zechariah the prophet said that the Messiah would suddenly come to His temple.

He went into the temple, made a whip, and cleaned it out and that was His official presentation of Himself.

John Chapter 3, Nicodemus.

He had a wonderful conversation with Nicodemus about being born again.

John 3:22-24, *After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. ²³ Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. ²⁴ For John had not yet been thrown into prison.*

John and Jesus simultaneously preaching and baptizing.

The transition isn't over yet.

There's still a little overlap.

John the Baptist continued his ministry till he was thrown in prison. In fact, that's the way God stopped his ministry. He was such a hard, blunt, bold, aggressive kind of a preacher. Maybe God knew nothing would stop him, so He had to put him in jail to phase him out.

John had done his work. He had heralded the King. He had pointed Him out. He had told the people to follow Him. Jesus had come to Jerusalem, proclaimed Himself. He had come to His temple. He cleansed His temple. He'd gone to Cana. He'd done a miracle to establish who He was, and then He rested a little while in Capernaum. He came back to be with His disciples, continued His ministry while John continued to preach. But now it was time for Him to begin His work.

It was time for John to phase out and Jesus to phase in. Jesus knew He had to go to Galilee to start. **John 3:30**, *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

Jesus takes over in John chapter 4.

John 4:1-4, *Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John ² (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), ³ He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. ⁴ But He needed to go through Samaria.*

Jesus will begin His official ministry in Galilee. He has made His presentation in Jerusalem. He has gathered together His disciples in part. He has done a miracle to establish in their minds by the miracle at Cana was for the disciples' benefit.

Now He had gone back to wait until God's proper time to phase out John and phase His ministry in. When it came time for that to happen, John was taken to prison, and Jesus moved to Galilee.

On His way to Galilee, He met a woman at the well. She was the most despised of all people by the Jews. She was a Samaritan, half-Jew and half-Gentile. Anybody they thought that would corrupt their pure Judaism by marrying a Gentile was the worst of all people.

It was to this woman that Jesus declared Himself to be the Christ. That is the first person recorded in the Bible that He ever told He was the Christ.

He met with the woman there, and the first little village where a revival ever broke out was the little village of Sychar where that woman lived.

From the village of Sychar Jesus continued on His journey.

John 4:46-47, *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. ⁴⁷ 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.*

Jesus is moving north. He has gone through Samaria.

He came to Cana again.

Nobleman son was sick at Capernaum. That's even further north, and the nobleman was there.

Jesus is moving to Galilee to begin His ministry.

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

John records the leading of the Samaritan woman to, to Himself. He healed the nobleman's son on His way into Galilee.

All of that interval there took approximately one year of the life of Jesus.

Isn't it amazing that the first people that He really evangelized with the message of His messiahship were not even Jews?

Matthew leaves all that, because his focus was on the King starting His official ministry. For Matthew, the official ministry begins when the herald goes to jail, when the heralding is done, and the King arrives.

John is cast into prison, and Jesus begins His ministry. The ministry officially began in Galilee where the Light dawned, where the day star arose, where the bright and morning star was first to shine.

Why?

Because Galilee was the place of the greatest darkness, and the place of the greatest darkness always has the greatest need for light.

One of my favourite glimpses of the incomparable majesty of Jesus Christ is His character revealed as light.

Matthew 4:16,

It is a favourite designation of the writers of Scripture to view Jesus Christ as light.

Our most favourite gospel of John.

John uses, a picture of Jesus Christ, is the concept of light.

John 1:4-5, *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

John 1:7-9, *This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. ⁸ He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. ⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.*

John 3:19-21, *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."*

John 9:5, *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."*

John 12:35-36, *Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."* These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

John 12:46, *I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.*

John then selects those times and those places when Jesus called Himself the light.

John 8:12, *Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

This was a tremendous statement.

Where was this statement made?

John 8:20, *These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.*

The temple treasury was the court of the women, the outer court of the temple.

The time of the year was just at the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles. During the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, the people of Israel commemorated what they called the illumination of the temple. They put in the middle of the temple a massive series of candelabras, and every night and all night long, they lit them so that right out of the middle of the court of the women in the temple came streaming this massive light all night long and they did it for a week.

It was to commemorate the cloud of light, the pillar of fire that led them in their wilderness wanderings. This was the commemoration of the great light that had led them in the Exodus.

Jesus enters the court of the women, the light is out. The Feast of Tabernacles is over, but the remnant is still there. All the candelabra apparatus sits there. But there's nothing lit, and Jesus walks in in the midst of that scene and captures the moment for Himself. All the people are very aware of this great light that has been going on in Jerusalem for the seven days prior. They are all aware of this, and Jesus steps up into the midst of the moment and says, *"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

In other words, He captures the scene for Himself.

Jesus is the Light. The Bible tells us that man is in darkness.

It tells us that repeatedly. It tells us that from one end of the Scripture to the other, that man is engulfed in darkness.

Proverbs 2:13, *From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness;*

That is man's approach to life. He cannot know. He cannot see the Light.

Proverbs 4:19, *The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know what makes them stumble.*

Proverbs 4:18, *But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.*

So sinful men, the society of the world, is pictured as walking in darkness.

Matthew 6:23, *But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*

Luke 22:53, *When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."*

Christ recognizes that,
the power behind the antagonism,
the power behind His arrest,
the power behind His crucifixion,

is the power of darkness - the power of Satan himself.

2 Corinthians 4:6, *For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

Ephesians 5:11, *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*

Ephesians 6:12, *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of ^[c]the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

1 Peter 2:9, *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;*

So the world is seen in darkness.

Moral darkness,
Spiritual darkness,

Ignorance,
Inability to know God,
Inability to know truth,
Inability to change its behaviour to that which is right.

God has given to man two little candles.
One is the candle of creation, and
the other is a candle of conscience.

But before very long, man blows them out and then he's in total darkness.

Romans 1:19-21, *because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

Man, in his sinfulness, extinguishes the only two faint lights that he has to give him any sense of where God is and the truth.

He blows out the only hope that he has by the wilful sin in his life.

V 12, "Now when Jesus heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee."

The sense of timing in the life of Jesus Christ is absolutely amazing. He was always on a divine timetable.

Jesus had in His heart an eternal clock clicking away, with sovereign hands ticking off His destiny with unfailing accuracy. He moved gracefully in accord with a divine timetable. Everything at its exact moment.

Throughout the gospel of John, particularly, He talks about His hour has not yet come.

Later all of a sudden Jesus beginning to say His time has come.

John 13:1, *Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*

John 17:1, *Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,*

He had a sense of timing that was divine.

Matthew has this, this aspect of the Holy Spirit's inspiration to set up as a real feature here for us that we might see the incredible and amazing accuracy of God's historic plan. It was the hour for Jesus to begin.

"When Jesus had heard."

Did Jesus had to wait for the report that John was in prison?

He who knew what was in the heart of every man.

He never used His supernatural knowledge to bypass ordinary means that could accomplish the same thing. That was part of His becoming human.

Earlier Matthew informed us that all of Jerusalem and all of Judea was going out there, and the Pharisees were there. The Sadducees were there. Everybody was coming to him to be baptized and repenting of their sin and hearing the message.

He was popular, and he was riding a crest, and he was riding a wave of popularity.

What happened?

Weren't the Jews supportive?

How did he ever get in prison?

After all, wouldn't the leaders be a little bit tense if this man was so popular with myriads of people to dare to throw him in prison?

Luke 3:19-20, *But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, ²⁰ also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.*

Herod is just a, just a big name. It's just a name that encompasses all kinds of people. There were a several Herod's.

They all are like Caesar.

They all are like Pharaohs.

"But Herod the tetrarch"

A ruler over a fourth of something.

Real name was Herod Antipas.

Herod the tetrarch, Herod Antipas.

It wasn't even the Pharisees,

It wasn't even the Sadducees, and

It wasn't even the people.

It was this foreign Idumaeen, non-Jewish king who had been appointed by his father, Herod the Great, who had been appointed by the Romans as a quasi-king in Israel.

The Romans had allowed this Idumaeen, non-Jewish man named Herod the Great, to be the king over this part of the world. But when Herod the Great, who was the king of the whole Israel died and he had several sons.

Herod the Great split up the whole area among his sons.

The first one is Archelaus became the ruler of the area in the south called Judea and Samaria.

The second one is Philip, who is called also Philip the tetrarch, took over the area of Iturea.

The third one is Antipas, became the ruler of Galilee and Peraea.

Judea and Samaria's in the south.

Iturea is way up here in the north, and

Galilee and Peraea in the middle.

So Herod Antipas was the guy in charge of the area of Galilee and Peraea.

Herod the Great had a several wives, and his children all had different mothers, and they all intermarried with each other in sort of a half-baked incest.

Anyone study the family tree are going to have great pain in understanding the family of Herod the Great.

Herod Antipas, who was the ruler of the Galilee area, was the son of Herod the Great by a woman named Malthace. Now, one of Herod's other wives named Mariamne — Mariamne I, he had a later Mariamne II.

Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great and Malthace. He had a half-brother named Herod Philip. That is not the same as Philip the tetrarch. He named two sons Philip, just to go with the two wives named Mariamne, so nobody could ever figure out anything.

Herod Antipas had a half-brother by a different mother, but the same father, by the name of Philip. Now, Philip was such a rotten kid that he was rejected by his father, and he didn't get a piece of anything. He end up in Rome living as a private citizen. He was extremely wealthy, but he had no royalty. He was not given any kind of kingdom. He was simply a private citizen.

Now, he had a wife who was just a horrible, immoral, awful woman by the name of Herodias. So you have this man named Philip, who is a non-ruling member of Herod the Great's family, living in Rome. He's got this wife, Herodias, who eventually gets her daughter, Salome, to dance and get

John the Baptist's head on a plate. She's a rotten, incredible woman who literally destroyed everything she touched.

Herodias was the granddaughter of Herod the Great by another mother. Philip married his niece. What happened was Herod the Great had a son who had this daughter Herodias. One of his other sons married his own half-brother's daughter, or his own niece. It was just incredible what was going on in that family.

Herod Antipas visited Rome to see his half-brother, who was married to his father's son's daughter, Herodias. To make it worse, he seduced his half-brother's niece, Herodias, committing some kind of horrible incest to add to what was already a horrible debacle. He literally seduced Herodias, committed adultery and led her to divorce Philip and marry him.

John the Baptist didn't think that was right.

He was a bold, blunt, powerful, godly man.

Herod Antipas grabbed him and threw him in prison, and it wasn't very long, and it is Matthew 14 that Salome did her dance, and they went in there, and they cut his head off, and brought it in on a plate. He was imprisoned in a dungeon, in a castle of Machaerus.

That was all a part of God's timing because when John was cast into prison, Jesus departed to Galilee.

When Jesus heard that John was cast into prison, He departed into Galilee.

Was Jesus afraid?

Did He run to Galilee because He feared what Herod Antipas might do to Him?

Herod Antipas was the ruler of Galilee. Then He went the wrong way. He should run into the territory of Archelaus, or the territory of Philip the tetrarch.

Jesus didn't run because he was afraid of Herod. No Herod ever put fear in Jesus' heart. No man ever did that.

Why did Jesus go?

what the Jewish leaders felt when John was imprisoned by Herod? They were thrilled. They didn't try to stop it. They were 100 percent thrilled that John the Baptist got put in prison. Jesus knew it. They wouldn't have done it, because it would've feared the people but when it was done.

John 4:1-3, *Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John² (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),³ He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.*

They hated John for making so many disciples and they were glad when Herod did put him in prison. When Jesus heard that they knew He did more than John did, then He knew well what would be coming for Him.

It wasn't His hour.

It wasn't time for Him to be captured in Jerusalem.

It wasn't time for Him to have a conflict with the Pharisees.

It wasn't on God's clock or God's calendar yet.

When the time came, Jesus would face those Pharisees, Sadducees and religious leaders.

When they came to get Him in the garden in John 18.

He didn't run because He was afraid of Herod, and He didn't run because He was afraid of the Pharisees. He went to Galilee because He was avoiding a premature crisis.

The same thing happened in Nazareth when they tried to kill Him in His own city, and He passed away from them, and they didn't even see Him. He disappeared in their midst. It was too soon for Him to be taken to trial and to death. So when Jesus knew how they felt about John, and He knew that they were so glad John was incarcerated, and they knew that they hated John.

So He moved to Galilee.

When He got to Galilee, first place where did He go?

Nazareth little town on the brow of that hill.

He went to Nazareth, and Luke tells us exactly what happened.

Luke 4:16, *"And 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 He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ¹⁸ "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; ¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." ²⁰ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." ²² So all bore witness to Him, and marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.*

Luke 4:31, *Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths.*

Nazareth's on a hill. Capernaum, right down on the water on the north - top - north point of the Sea of Galilee. He avoided the crisis, because He was on a divine schedule, on a divine timetable.

Matthew 4:13, *"And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum."*

Capernaum wasn't any more gracious to Jesus than was Nazareth.

Jesus beginning His ministry. He begins it when John's ends. He begins it in Galilee, called Galilee of the Gentiles, because His gospel is for everybody.

His first convert is a Samaritan woman.

His first village, Sychar in Samaria.

The first miracle, a wedding in Cana, not Jerusalem.

The first healing, a Galilean nobleman's son.