

Jesus' Ministry Begins

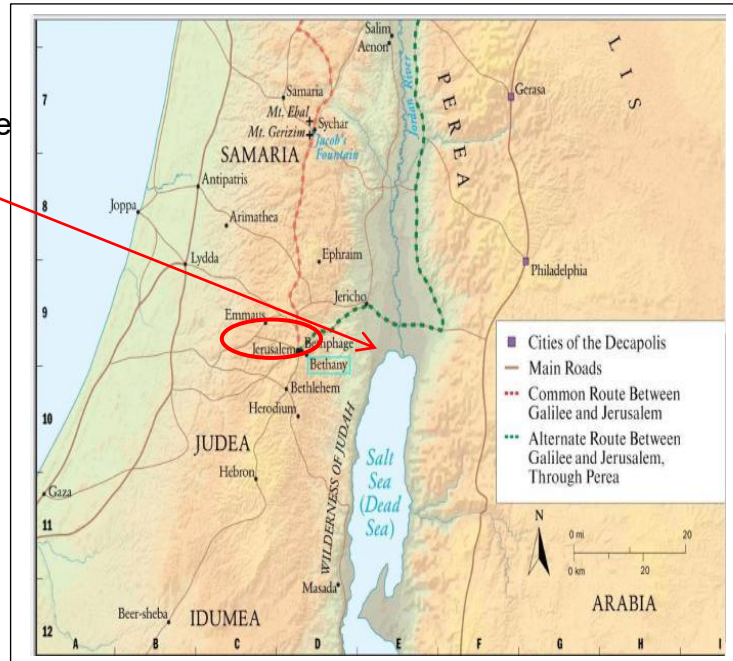
Chapter 23-Matthew, Mark, John

The Gospel of Matthew

Chapter 3-4-Jesus Baptism

- John was preaching repentance and **baptizing** in preparation for the coming Messiah.

John the Baptist-This was a full day's journey from Jerusalem.



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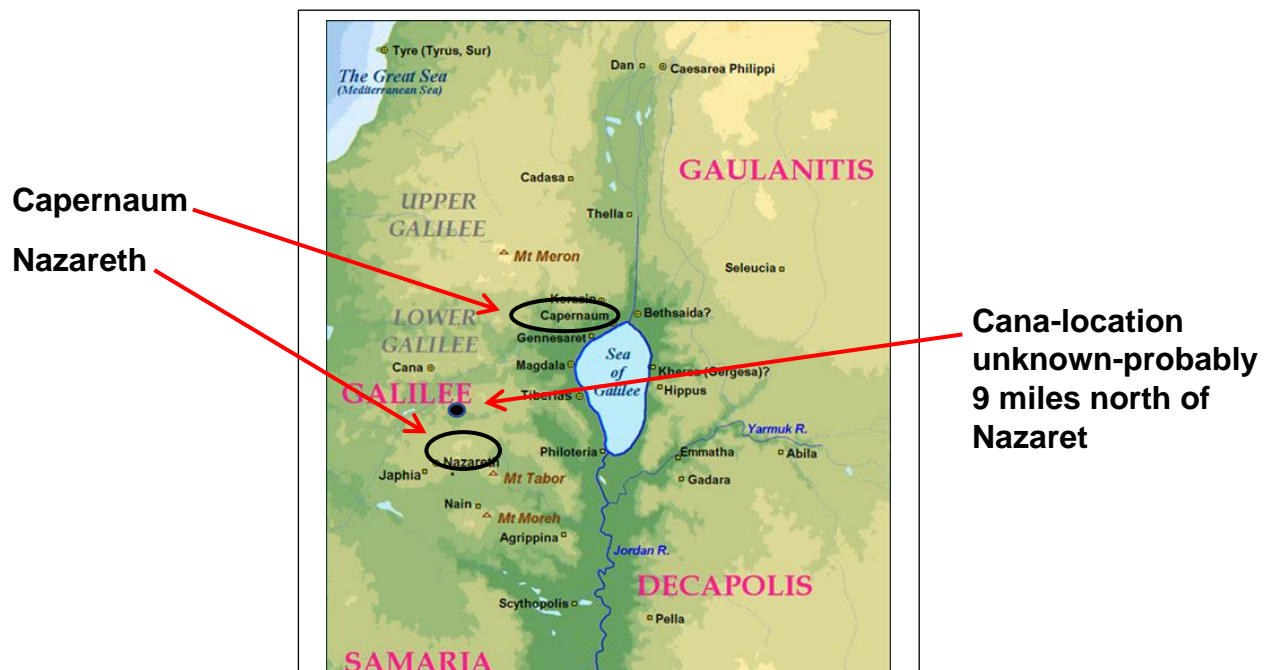
- Jesus came to John to be baptized.
- John's baptism had possible roots in Old Testament purification rituals (Leviticus 15:13).
- Jesus' baptism signified his identification with **sinner**s and it was a foreshadowing of His death, burial, and resurrection.
- We baptize believers today as a symbol of salvation and in obedience to Matthew 28:18-20
- When Jesus came out of the water, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descend as a **dove** upon him. A voice came from Heaven that said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

- The identification as “**Son**” signified Jesus as one with the Father and the inheritor of all things.
- Jesus’ baptism experience was a clear expression of the Trinity: Father, Son, and **Holy Spirit**.
- After He was baptized, Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan.
- He was tempted and fasted 40 days and 40 nights (40 refers to testing, probation, trial. 40 days-Noah; 40 years-wandering in the wilderness; 40 days-Jesus fasting).
- Satan’s test was to **disqualify** Jesus as the Messiah.
- Jesus’ ability to resist all temptations showed that He was qualified to be the Messiah and that He was qualified to be the perfect sacrifice for humanity.

The Gospel of Mark

Chapter 2-3-Jesus’ Ministry

- After Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, He returned to His hometown of **Nazareth** where He declared Himself as the Messiah. The crowds attempted to murder Him, but Jesus passed through unharmed.
- Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1-2 but stopped in the middle of verse 2.
- From Nazareth, Jesus went to Capernaum. It appears that Jesus set up his **headquarters** in Capernaum. Capernaum was the hometown of Peter, Andrew, James, and John.



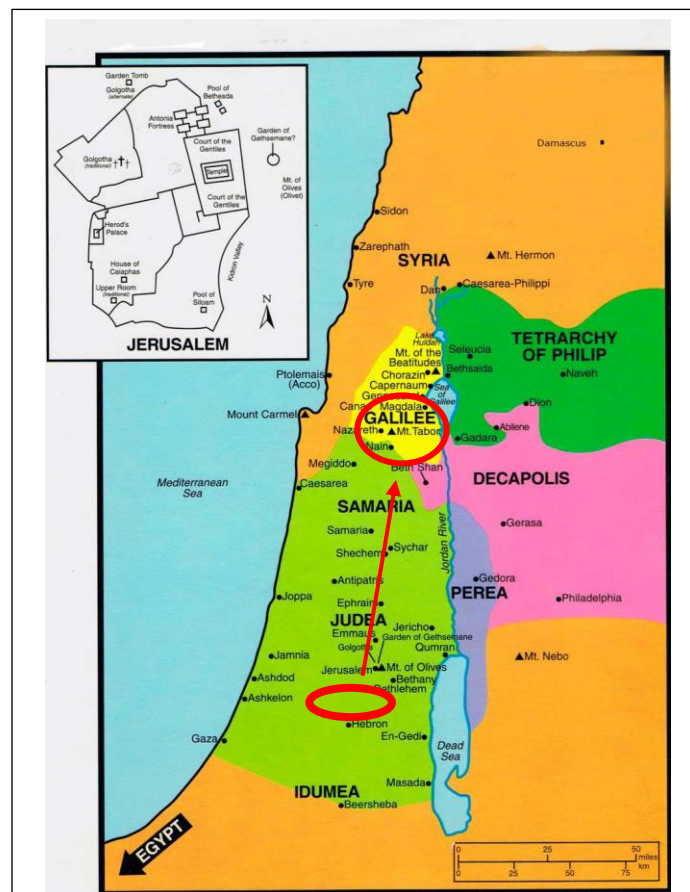
The Gospel of John

Chapter 2-The Wedding in Cana and Jesus Cleansing the Temple

Vs. 1-11-The Wedding at Cana

- It would have been very embarrassing for a host to run out of wine at a wedding (wine was a mixture of wine and water; 3:1 minimum).
- Mary, Jesus' mother, knew that He was the Messiah and was possibly asking for Him to **reveal** Himself by performing a miracle. Knowing this, Jesus stated that His hour had not yet come. The time for Jesus to reveal Himself was yet to happen. Jesus revealed Himself when He entered **Jerusalem** on the donkey prior to His death. The nation of Israel rejected Him.
- John referred to Jesus' miracles as "**signs**." There at least six words in Greek for miracles. This word, "sign", translates as *Semeion*. It means the miracle was an indication of some power with a meaning behind it.
- The sign of turning water into wine symbolized Christ **deity** (being God) and His power over nature. This miracle caused His disciples to put their faith in Him. The pure wine symbolized Christ's ultimate blood sacrifice as the perfect atonement for sin.

Vs. 12-25-Jesus Cleansing the Temple



- This **Passover Feast** was Jesus first Passover in Jerusalem since His ministry began. As Jesus entered the temple, He observed the moneychangers desecrating it by unscrupulously selling animals for sacrifice. This was a moneymaking business for the Jews since they probably were overcharging and selling blemished animals.
- Jesus demonstrated His **zeal** for God's house when He overturned the money tables and drove the sellers out from the temple.
- The Jews asked for a sign to show His authority. His response was prophetic which referred to His death and resurrection. The people, as well as His disciples, misunderstood what Jesus was saying.

Chapter 3-Nicodemus

- Nicodemus was a member of the **Sanhedrin** and a Pharisee. The fact that Nicodemus came to Jesus at night possibly indicated that he wanted to keep the meeting a secret.
- Jesus explained that a second **birth** was necessary to inherit the kingdom of God. Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus was saying. The Jews felt that they had automatically inherited the kingdom due to their physical Jewish birth.
- Jesus stated that birth by the flesh did not guarantee one's entrance into **heaven**. Only a spiritual birth would qualify one for heaven (Spiritual birth through faith in Christ).

Vs. 22-36-John's Disciples

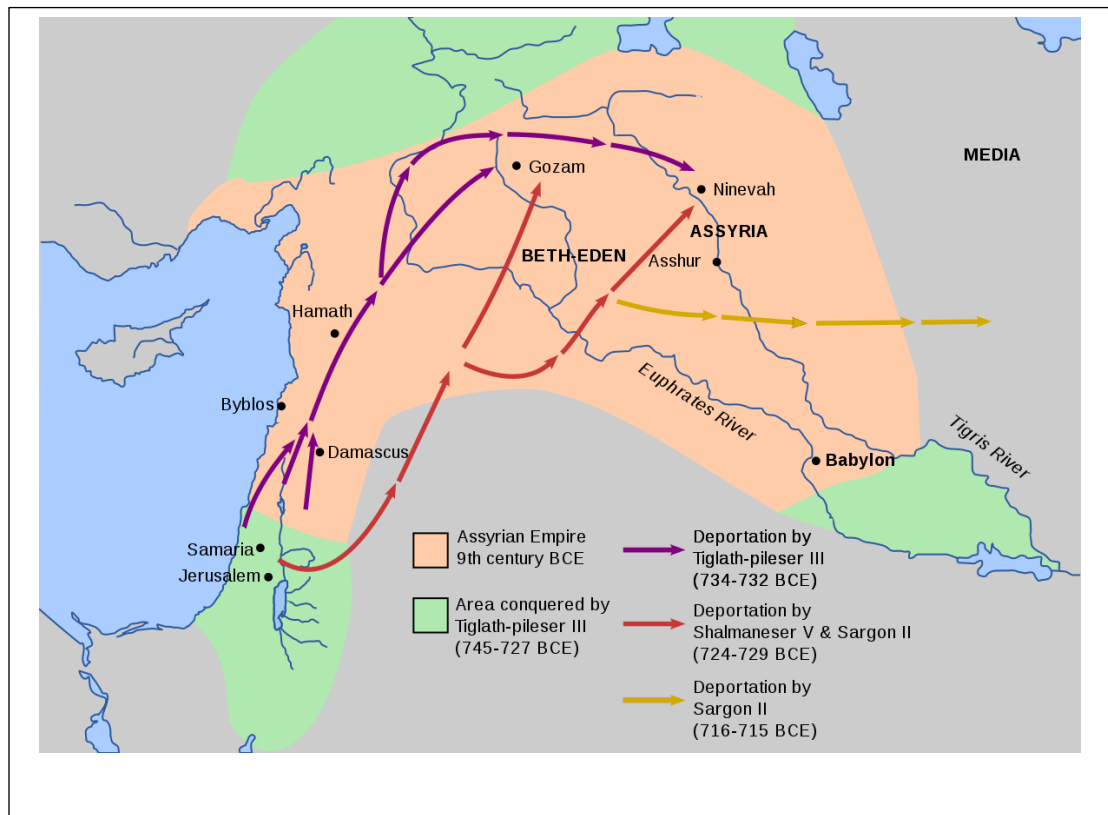
- John's disciples were concerned that more people were coming to Jesus to be baptized than to John. John stated, "He must increase, but I must **decrease**." John also stated, "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
- John knew that Jesus was the Messiah after he saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Him. It was foretold that John would know the Messiah when he saw the Spirit descend upon Him.

Chapter 4

Vs. 1-42-The Samaritan Woman

- The Pharisees were making trouble for Jesus, therefore, He left Judea (southern portion of Israel) and went toward Galilee (northern portion of Israel). To reach Galilee, Jesus had to go through **Samaria** (middle portion of Israel).

- The Samaritans were despised by the Jews and considered them defiled. The Samaritans were former Jews that lived in Israel (the northern Jewish kingdom). They were captured by the Assyrians in **722 B.C.** The Assyrians took the Jews to the far east. However, they left a small population to intermarry with the Assyrians. The intent was to dissolve the Jewish heritage and make the Jews submissive to the Assyrian empire.
- The Jews of Jesus' day looked upon the Samaritans as being **half-breeds** thus, defiled people.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyrian_captivity

- Jesus was in full control of His itinerary and deliberately went into Samaritan territory. Jesus was about to offer salvation to a rejected people.
- Jesus explained that he would give the woman "**living water**." Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit that would be available only by faith in Him.
- Jesus clearly presented Himself to the woman as the Christ (**Messiah**). The woman believed and spread the news about Him throughout her city. Many of the Samaritans came out and heard Jesus. Vs. 41 states that the Samaritans believed Jesus' words. The Samaritans did not ask for a **sign** but believed in their heart that Jesus was the Christ.

- This contrasted with the Pharisees who wanted Jesus to show them a “sign” (proof) that He was the Messiah. Those who sought after signs often displayed disbelief even after a sign was given.

Vs. 43-54-Jesus Heals a Royal Official’s Son

- Jesus continued His journey into Galilee (northern part of Israel). A royal official came to Jesus and asked that He heal his son. The official was from **Capernaum**. Jesus responded, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe.” The people of Galilee did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah and wanted proof by performing “signs.” This was a contrast to the Samaritans who took Jesus at His word.
- Jesus told the official to go home that his son would be healed.
- It is interesting to note that the royal official believed Jesus and did not require a **sign** from Him. As the official approached Capernaum, his slaves met him and told of his son’s healing. The man and his entire household believed in Jesus.
- Jesus demonstrated that it was by faith in Him that would bring, not only physical life, but **spiritual** life.

The Gospel of Mark

The Paralytic-Mark 2:1-12

- This miracle apparently took place at Peter and Andrew’s **home** (Capernaum 1:29).
- Jesus proclaimed Himself as the Messiah and as God (2:5,10).
- Jesus used several names to identify Himself as the Messiah.
 - Son of God-Jesus’ **divine name** (heavenly name)
 - Son of David-His Jewish name
 - Son of Man-His **earthly name**
- The healing of the paralytic was important in that it demonstrated that Jesus could forgive sins.

Mark 2:13-20-The Tax Collector

- Jesus went out by the sea (probably near or at Capernaum) and encountered Levi-a **tax collector**.
 - Levi is Matthew, the writer of the Gospel of Matthew.
 - The Gospel of Mark and Luke used Matthew’s former name, Levi, when describing his sinful past.
- Matthew used his new name when referencing himself in his Gospel. Matthew demonstrated **humility** and spiritual transformation by directly identifying himself to his readers. (Matthew 9:9).
- Jesus uttered one of the most powerful phrases in the Bible, “**Follow Me**” (2:14).
- Jesus singled Matthew out from the crowd.

- His heart was **ready** for salvation.
- Jesus initiated the invitation.
- Jesus revealed his role as **Messiah**.
 - His first coming was to die for the sins of the world.
 - His second coming would be to rule as **King**.
 - Jesus proclaimed himself as the bridegroom. Who is the bride? The Church-(Ephesians 5:25-32).

Mark 2:23-3:6-Jesus Transformed the Meaning of the Sabbath

- The purpose of the Old Testament Sabbath was to demonstrate a need for restoration.
- God instituted the **Sabbath** in Genesis 2:2-3.
- Sabbath means to rest.
 - God was not weary and did not need to rest physically.
 - God rested because there was nothing more to do-everything was **complete**.
 - God's creation was perfect and there was nothing to add.
 - God saw what He had made, and it was **very good** (Genesis 1:31a)
 - God blessed this rest day to demonstrate perfection.
- God instituted the Sabbath under the **Law of Moses** (Deuteronomy 5:13-15).
 - The Jews were to stop all work on the seventh day.
 - This was a time of reflection as the Jews compared their Sabbath rest to God's Sabbath rest (Genesis 2:2-3).
 - The Jews could not rest on their Sabbath and say, "all was **very good**" because it wasn't.
 - The Sabbath was a day of reflection upon God's perfection and their **imperfection**. The only way for the Jews to deal with their spiritual imperfection was to obey the Law of Moses.
- God did away with the Law of Moses and instituted a new Sabbath rest through **Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 4:1-10).
 - This new Sabbath is not a **day** but is **Jesus Christ**. Jesus is our Sabbath, our perfection. He is our rest. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we enter His rest of completeness. God looks upon us and declares us "very good."
- Jesus' healing of the man's hand on the Sabbath **foreshadowed** His intent to be the world's true Sabbath.

Summary

Jesus gave "signs" to reveal Himself to the Jewish nation. The Jews did not recognize the signs and as a result, rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Does Jesus give signs to us in our everyday life? Have we missed them? Do we recognize when Jesus works in our life and do we give Him praise for what He has done?

Jesus took residence in the home of a fisherman, he proclaimed to be God (Jehovah), he reached out to the worst of sinners, and he offered Himself as our eternal Sabbath-

our eternal rest through faith in Him. As Christians, we need to trust and to rest in the knowledge that we are right with God through Jesus Christ. God looks at each Christian and says, "You are very good; you have entered into My rest!"

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and I ask that you forgive me of my sins. I invite you into my life and to take control of all that I am. I give myself into your hands and ask that the Holy Spirit will guide me each day. I pray this as sincerely as I know how in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Discussion Questions

Chapter 23

1. John's Baptism signified the repentance of sins.
 - a. How does John's Baptism differ from a believer's Baptism today?
 - b. How is the Trinity represented in Baptism?
 - c. Share your Baptism experience with those in your group.

2. Read Hebrews 4:15-16
 - a. In what ways do you think Satan tempted Jesus?
 - b. Can we have confidence that Jesus understands our temptations? How about our failures?
 - c. What does God promise if we draw near to Him?
 - d. Why is it difficult for many Christians to accept God's forgiveness?

3. Jesus performed His first miracle at Cana.
 - a. Was there any significance for this being Jesus' first miracle?
 - b. Why do you think so many people refused to recognize Jesus' miracles as "signs" during His ministry?
 - c. How do you think people would react if Jesus were to perform these signs today?
 - d. Does God work miracles today? Are they accepted/rejected?

4. After Jesus overturned the money tables and drove the sellers out of the temple, the Jews asked for a sign to prove His authority.
 - a. Do you find their request somewhat amusing? Explain.
 - b. Can we use Jesus' anger to justify the times when we get angry? Explain.
 - c. What did Jesus mean in John 2:18-10?

5. Find Samaria on your map. It was often necessary to pass through Samaria to get to Galilee. Since the Jews despised the Samaritans, they had very little to do with them. However, it is possible that travel necessitated interaction between both groups.
 - a. What was the distance from Jerusalem to Galilee (see map pg. 3)?
 - b. How do you think the Jews might have interacted with the Samaritans?
 - c. How did the Samaritans react to Jesus? Explain?

