

"SIR, WE WOULD SEE JESUS"
John 12:20, 21

"Come to the Word of God for one purpose and that is to meet the Lord. Not to get your mind crammed full of things about the sacred Word. But come to it to meet the Lord. Make it to be a medium, not of Biblical scholarship, but of fellowship with Christ."

Miles J. Stanford

Principles of Spiritual Growth, p.26

Christ is the key to the interpretation of the Bible. He is the thematic unity of the whole span of revelation. Christ claimed on several occasions to be the central message of the whole sweep of Old Testament Scripture.

Luke 24:27, 44 "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself...He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

John 5:39 "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me"

Hebrews 10:7 "Then I said, 'Here I am--it is written about me in the scroll-- I have come to do your will, O God.'"

Matthew 5:17-18 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

THE HEARTBEAT OF JESUS - WHY HE CAME

Matthew 1:21 "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

John 1:29-30 "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'"

Luke 5:30-32 "the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Mark 10:43-45 "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

John 4:31-34 "Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

John 8:28-29 "So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."

John 17:1-4 "After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do."

Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

John 3:16-21 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

1 John 3:8 "He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

John 20:21 "Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Question: Based on the last two references in this list what is the believer's and the church's mission in this world?

The Life of Christ - Preparation Years (Birth to Dedication)

The first thirty years of Jesus' life are years about which we know very little. His birth, circumcision, dedication, and first experience in the temple at twelve years old are some of the events recorded in the Gospels. About other things the record is sparse.

I. I. JESUS' BIRTH (Luke 2:1-7)

In faraway Rome, Augustus Caesar ruled his vast empire with an iron hand. True to Roman fashion he was primarily concerned that his subjects should keep the peace and pay their taxes. In 8 BC he had inaugurated a periodical census every fourteen years in order to enroll his people for taxation.

It was probably two years later that this census was carried out in Palestine. Herod, the vassal king, would not think of disobeying Augustus. Yet, knowing the Jew's aversion to paying taxes to Rome, he delayed it as long as he dared. Even then he sought to placate the Jews by adhering to their customs in dealing with them along tribal lines. So, when the order for enrollment was finally given, it called for every Jew to be enrolled at the place where his tribal register was kept.

Thus, it was that Joseph and Mary journeyed from Nazareth to Bethlehem, for they were descendants of David and members of the tribe of Judah. Though they were peasants, royal blood flowed in their veins. By this time Mary was great with child, and this journey of approximately one hundred miles worked a great hardship upon her. Nevertheless, the decree of Caesar must be obeyed.

However, she and Joseph moved under a greater word than that of the Roman emperor, for God had said that His Son, the Messiah, should be born in Bethlehem. Augustus knew nothing of this prophecy, and cared less. But unknowingly he was an instrument in the hands of God, as his decree like an invisible cord drew the virgin mother toward her destiny.

As the crow flies Nazareth is approximately 65 miles from Bethlehem. But generally, Jewish people traveling from Galilee to Bethlehem would have traveled around Samaria going down the Jordan River valley to Jericho, up to Jerusalem and then 5 miles southwest to Bethlehem. After approximately 100 miles and 6 days of travel, late in the afternoon these weary travelers climbed down the last rocky, descent from Jerusalem into Bethlehem. Imagine yourself walking 100 miles. Add steep hills and valleys. Consider a pregnant, near-term wife with no doctors. A casual, afternoon drive for us turns into a major undertaking for them.

When they arrived the streets were crowded with hundreds of other men and women bent upon the same mission. Clouds of dust boiled up from the stirring of the hundreds of feet of people and animals. A bedlam of noise characteristic of such a scene filled the ears of the weary couple from Nazareth as laboriously they made their way to the village inn. But it was already filled to overflowing.

So, because there was no lodging to be had, Joseph bedded his wife down in the area provided for the animals. It was here that Mary “brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.” Luke 2:7

Thus, was the Son of God born. Not in a king’s palace nor in the home of the wealthy or mighty, but to a peasant mother whose delivery room was a stable. No physician stood by to assist. Only the callused hands of a village carpenter came to her aid, but they were hands made tender by a conquering love and a devotion to God. As the newborn Babe slept through the night He was under the watchful eyes of His mother and foster father, but most of all, He was secure under the never-failing gaze of His Heavenly Father.

The next morning Bethlehem roused from her sleep. It was business as usual as the bazaars rang with the noise of commerce. The enrollment was finished, and the crowds moved out to return to their homes. Caesar’s bidding had been done, and the village of David returned to normal. Only a few folks knew that on that night in this little village there had transpired the greatest event in the history of the world.

"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity." Micah 5:2

The Life and Times of Jesus, Herschel Hobbs, pages 22-24
with additions from The First Christmas by Ralph Muncaster

His Visitors

1. 1. **The shepherds (Luke 2:8-20)**

The working class (bottom of the social scale in Palestine) - announcement made to them first. “In the fields” = between April and Autumn (the sheep are in the fold in the winter).
FIRST recipients of the message.
FIRST to announce the Christ.

2. 2. **Simeon (Luke 2:25-35)**

41 days later.
A godly man who lived in the temple.

3. 3. **Anna (Luke 2:36-38)**

41 days later
A godly old woman who lived in the temple.

4. 4. **The Wise Men (Matthew 2:1-12)**

No record of how many there were. It is supposed that there were 3 because of the number of gifts presented. Christ could have been as much as 2 years old. The text uses the word for “little child” and says that they came into the house.
They came from the East of Palestine, probably Persia. They were skilled in philosophy, medicine and the natural sciences of astronomy. They were very influential in politics often being consulted for their knowledge and wisdom. (Daniel 2:2-49; note esp 2:29 and 5:11)

How did they know to come to Palestine at the time of Christ's birth? A partial answer is that Daniel had been appointed chief over the Magi during the Babylonian and Persian empires. The prophet Daniel was given a precise prophecy as to when Messiah would enter Jerusalem as King. Another prophecy foretold that a sign would indicate the coming of the Messiah. They Magi more than likely knew these prophecies. And, of course, there was the sign...the star.

II. II. JESUS' INFANCY

A. A. Circumcision and Naming (Luke 2:21; Matthew 1:25)

When Jesus was eight days old he was circumcised according to the Hebrew Law (Gen 17:9-14). This was a sign on the part of the parent that the child was under the Abrahamic Covenant (a sign of the father's faith in the fulfillment of the promises God made to Abraham).

It was at this time also that he was formally given the name of Jesus. This was the Greek form of the Hebrew word, "Joshua" or "Joshua" meaning "Jehovah saves" or "Jehovah is salvation". Thus was obeyed the word of God through Gabriel who said, "You shall call his name Jesus for He will save His people from their sins." Luke 1:31; Matthew 1:21

B. B. Dedication (Luke 2:22-24)

When Jesus was forty days old, He was presented to God in a service of dedication according to Hebrew law.

Leviticus 12:1-8: When a male child was born, the mother was considered unclean for 40 days and then had to perform a ritual of purification on the 41st day. It was at this time that Simeon and Anna saw Christ in the temple.

Exodus 13:2-16: God claimed every firstborn son in a Jewish home. This son was to be set aside as a priest unless special request followed by a ritual was made by the parents to release their son from the priesthood. This request was never made in the case of Christ; thus, he was set aside as a priest from his earliest years.

III. III. Prophecies Concerning His Birth

Born of the seed of woman	Genesis 3:15; Gal 4:4; Matthew 1:20
Born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18,24,25;
Luke 1:26f	
Son of God	Psalms 2:7; Matthew 3:17
Son of Abraham	Genesis 22:18; Matthew 1:1
Son of Isaac	Genesis 21:12; Luke 3:23,34
Son of Jacob	Numbers 24:17; Luke 3:23,34
Tribe of Judah	Genesis 49:10; Luke 3:23,33
House of David	Jeremiah 23:5; Luke 3:23,31
Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1
Presented with gifts	Psalms 72:10; Matthew 2:1,11
Herod kills children	Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:16
Shall be called Immanuel (God with us)	Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23
Preceded by a messenger	Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:1,2

IV. More About the Date of Jesus' Birth

The date of Jesus' birth is the most widely referenced date in history. B.C. means "before Christ" and A.D. is short for the Latin "anno domini" meaning "in the year of our Lord". In 532 A.D. a monk named Dionysius Exiguus estimated the year of Jesus' birth. The evidence indicates that Exiguus mis-calculated by as much as one to seven years. Nonetheless, his estimate is the basis the present day calendar.

4 BC?

This is the most commonly assumed date of Jesus' birth. The primary basis for this is the mention that the census ordered by Caesar Augustus was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. His first term as governor was from 6 - 4 BC. Another basis for this is a reference by the Jewish historian Josephus, of an eclipse "shortly before" Herod the Great's death. The presumed eclipse occurred on March 13, 4 BC even though another eclipse occurred in 1 BC. Herod was alive at the time of Jesus birth. Using that information, 4 BC would be the closest possible year to the original estimate. Many Biblical resources suggest this date.

7 BC?

A date of 7 BC for the star of Bethlehem was proposed by observations of Kepler. Kepler's timing is supported by information about historical Roman censuses which would have occurred about 7-8 BC. However some scholars suggest other censuses occurred as well, and argue there is no firm evidence which census, and what local timing actually brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. Since alternatives exist for both the star and the census, there is no certainty that 7 BC is correct.

2 BC?

The most exhaustive evidence may support 2 BC. There are several indications that point to this date:

1. Both the *Magillath Ta'anith* (an ancient Jewish scroll contemporary with Jesus) and *Judaeos* (c. 8 AD) indicate Herod died on January 14, 1 BC.
2. Tertullian (160 AD) indicated that Augustus died 15 years after the birth of Jesus and began ruling 41 years prior to his birth. The historical death of Augustus on August 19, 14 AD would place the birth of Jesus in 2 BC. (Note: there is no year zero, which must be taken into account in all calculations.)
3. Irenaeus indicated Jesus was born in the 41st year of Augustus Caesar.
4. The "father of church history", Eusebius (265-340 AD) seemed to agree with the Augustus references above and also tied the birth of Jesus to the deaths of Anthony and Cleopatra which further confirms 2 BC.
5. Working backwards from the beginning of the ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist an estimate of 2 BC would seem most likely. We know the ministries began in the 15 year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, which historically pinpoints 29 AD (Luke 3:1). Jewish law required men be 30 years old before starting ministry and Luke indicates Jesus was "about 30 years old" (Luke 3:23). Working backwards this would place Jesus' birth in 2 BC.

Bottom line: In final analysis the exact date of Christ's birth may never be known for sure. What is crucial is that he was born and that his birth was "in the fullness of time" (Galatians 4:4).

PREPARATION YEARS

Herod's Pursuit to Concluding Years in Nazareth

III. III. JESUS' EARLY CHILDHOOD

A. A. Flight Into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-18)

The next significant event in the life of Christ was occasioned by actions of a madman - Herod the King.

The words of the Magi, "he that is born King of the Jews," struck a note of terror in the heart of Herod. Though he was in the twilight of his years, still he held tenaciously to his throne. To hold on to it he had killed too often to let any impending threat go without notice. He had even killed members of his family, insomuch that Augustus Caesar himself had declared that it was better to Herod's sow (hus) than his son (huios), for the sow had a better chance to live. So feigning a desire to pay homage to this child he asked the Magi to bring him tidings as to the child's whereabouts. Homage indeed! At the hand of a sword! Therefore, when he learned that the Magi had avoided him, he sent troops to dispatch the infant King. To insure that they did so they were to slay every child up to two years of age in the area around Bethlehem.

The Life & Times of Jesus,

Herschel Hobbs

That all of this was instigated in the mind of Herod by Satan as a plot to do away with Christ is mentioned in the book of Revelation:

"And the (great red) dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child." Revelation 12:4

Tradition tells us that Herod may have killed as many as 14,000 children in this wild rampage to do away with Jesus who was to become "King of the Jews".

Prior to this event, however, God warned Joseph to take his family and flee to Egypt. They remained there until the death of Herod (Matthew 2:15) or, for approximately one year. Christ was about three years old at this time. Thus, Christ lived for about one year with his family in the land of Egypt.

B. B. Home in Nazareth (Matthew 2:19-23; Luke 2:39,40)

Jesus was often referred to as a Nazarene because Nazareth is where he was brought up by His parents. After leaving Egypt, by the instigation of another dream to Joseph, his parents returned to their former home in Nazareth where they remained for the rest of Christ's early life. At this point a

curtain of silence falls upon the life of Jesus for more than twenty-five years and is parted only once to give us a glimpse of the young lad Jesus in the temple at 12 years old. We might yearn for more information on the early life of Christ, but scripturally we are only left with the statement:

“And the Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.” Luke 2:40

Any nonsense about Jesus traveling to India or any other country and studying under a Hindu master is pure fabrication. There is no hint of this in the Bible. Nor is there any evidence to this effect in any historical document. This is new age revisionism.

IV. IV. JESUS' LATER YOUTH

A. A. Visit to the Temple (Luke 2:41-50)

Jesus was an extra-ordinary twelve year old. When a Jewish lad reached the age of twelve he became a “son of the covenant” or a “son of the Law,” and began to observe the ordinances of Jewish worship. Thus, we are given a glimpse of Christ at this point in his life and see that already he had a keen awareness of His divine mission:

“And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" Luke 2:49

This same Jesus had designed the worship of the temple through Moses and had by His Spirit inspired the writings of the Scriptures that were being discussed by the intellectual teachers. Is it any wonder then that all who heard him were “amazed at this understanding and answers” (Luke 2:47). How else could they have responded to the mind of God in the body of a twelve year old. From his earliest years Jesus demonstrated that he was more than just a boy or a man – He was the Son of God in human flesh.

B. B. From Age Twelve to Thirty (Luke 2:51,52)

“And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” Luke 2:51-52 Although we are not told any of the specifics concerning the life of Christ during His teen and twenty years, we can assume a number of things from what we know of his family, neighborhood and culture:

1. He had brothers and sisters (half-brothers: James, Jude, Joseph, Simon and half-sisters: at least two whose names are not given). Matthew 12:46f; 13:55, 56 and Mark 6:3)
2. He learned and engaged in the trade of his father – carpentry. Every Jewish lad had to learn a trade. Mark 6:3; Matthew 13:55
3. His parents were Godly people. Therefore, he grew up in an atmosphere of respect and love for God. Matthew 1:19; Luke 1:30, 45
4. He parents where poor. Their offering at his dedication was inexpensive. Therefore, he he received a poor man’s education (home and synagogue).
5. His father probably died prematurely because during Christ’s ministry we read of Mary but never of Joseph. Therefore, being the first born, he probably assumed the role of breadwinner while still a teenager or young adult.
6. It is quite evident that Jesus spoke at least three languages: Hebrew (the language of the Jewish Scriptures), Aramaic (the current tongue of the Jews at that time), Greek (the

commercial language of the Roman world).

7. He probably spent much time outdoors, for he was a lover of nature. His teachings abound with illustrations from nature and agricultural life. Note also, Jesus did not live far from the Sea of Galilee, where he must have often gone fishing in His younger years. Remember that Jesus prepared “shore lunch” for the disciples after his resurrection (John 21). Also note that He is the Creator and that it was His idea to place Adam and Eve in a garden.
8. He often saw the corruption and sin of human nature. Nazareth was known as a wicked town because of the immorality and social evils that were there. A Roman garrison was stationed there and the town was known as a “red light” district. John 1:46
9. He also saw a great cross section of human life including: Jews, neighbors in his village; Romans, a garrison of soldiers was stationed in Nazareth; World travelers, a caravan route ran through Nazareth and brought a constant stream of people.
10. He did no miracles as a young man. His first miracle was when he was thirty years old (John 2:11). Therefore, he lived a very normal life.

CHRIST’S PUBLIC MINISTRY: AN OVERVIEW

I. I. AN OVERVIEW

The public ministry of Jesus lasted about three and a half years, with the first as the year of “obscurity.” During this year Jesus emerged from virtual obscurity into public notice, gradually rising to a peak of popularity. the second year was spent wholly in Galilee, where His most extensive work was accomplished. Toward the end of this year His popularity waned and His enemies became more numerous and persistent. The third year, the “year of opposition”, was when He fulfilled those ministries which needed to be done before He was to die, such as training His disciples to carry on the work after He was gone.

As we begin our study of the various years of Jesus’ public ministry, it will help us in our understanding if we first get a perspective of the whole. The following chart gives this perspective.

P U B L I C M I N I S T R Y

SECONDYEAR

THIRDYEAR

FIRSTYEAR

Popularity

Opposition

Obscurity

The record of these yearly celebrations are the means by which we can figure the length of Christ's ministry. He celebrated the first Passover mentioned about two months after He began His public ministry -- and He was crucified during the celebration of the last Passover. (John 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 11:55 = four successive Passovers.)

II. GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE

Jesus' ministries carried him throughout the land of Palestine as he traveled by foot from city to city. He talked with real people, walked down real roads, visited real cities, and experienced real events. Thus, for any study who would desire to know the life of Christ it becomes imperative to study the people, places, things and events of the times of Jesus. An acquaintance with the geography makes any biography come alive and helps the study visualize the action and retain it in his memory.

A. Physical Features

Traversing the length of the land of Palestine is a chain of low mountains called the Cis-Jordan hills (or, the Judean hills). The average elevation of these hills is two thousand feet and it is along this range of hills that most of the cities of Christ's ministry lie. Stretching to the west of these hills are the coastal plains bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. East of the hills the Jordan valley (the entire length of which is below sea level) flows from the northern Sea of Galilee south to the Dead Sea. this is the basic geographical pattern of the land of Palestine which should form the basis for learning about each of the local topographical features of the specific areas where Christ ministered.

B. B. Climate

The climate of Palestine is controlled generally by the prevailing westerly winds from the Mediterranean Sea. However, because of the varied configuration of the physical features of Palestine, the climate varies considerably from place to place. Generally speaking, there are two seasons: warm and dry summers, and mild and wet winters. The rainy season lasts from November to March. Average temperatures for Jerusalem, representing recent records, are forty-one to fifty-four degrees in January and sixty-five to eighty-five degrees in August. the climate of Galilee, where Jesus lived most of His life and accomplished most of His public ministry, was more pleasant in the summer months than that of Judea and the south Jordan valley.

(Studies in the Life of Christ,

Irving Jensen)

C. C. Cities and Villages

Jesus ministered mainly in three of the provinces of Palestine: Judea to the south, Galilee to the north, and Samaria in between. The bulk of His time, however, was spent in the province of Galilee with a great deal of His time centering around the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum (on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee) because headquarters of His public ministry from which he journeyed to other areas of Palestine. Jesus ministered in many cities and villages on His tours throughout the land, but only about twenty of them are mentioned by name in the Gospels. Fifteen of those important cities and villages are included on the attached map.

D. D. Political Regions

The government of Palestine during the life of Christ was under the direct control of Rome. Caesar, in turn, parceled out the major districts to various rulers each of whom had a direct bearing on the life of Christ. (Also, see attachment)

Judea and Samaria: Herod the Great (died while Christ was in Egypt)
Archelaus (reigned for 2 years after Herod)

Caponius

Ambivius

Successive

rulers for next 20 years

Rufus

Gratus

Pontius Pilate (procurator during the times of

Christ's ministry;

condemned Him

to death.)

Galilee and Perea: Herod Antipas - 4 BC to AD 39 (killed John the Baptist and
figured in

the trials of Jesus.)

PUBLIC MINISTRY

-1st Year -

The records of this year which we possess are extremely meager, comprising only two or three incidents. It is called the *Year of Obscurity*, both because the records of it are scanty, and because He seems during it to have been only slowly emerging into public notice.

I. I. THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS

A. A. Jesus is introduced (Matt. 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-20; John 1:6-8; 15-28)

It was John the Baptist who formally introduced Jesus to the multitudes as Jesus began His public ministry. This ministry of John as the forerunner in introducing Christ was predicted 400 years earlier by the last Old Testament prophet, Malachi:

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple...” Malachi 3:1

B. B. Jesus was baptized by John (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21, 22; John 1:29-34)

John introduced Christ to the people. God introduced Christ to John.

"And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' "And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." John 1:33-34

Besides being the introduction of Christ to John, Christ's baptism was the important beginning point of Christ's public career as the Great High Priest who would atone for the sins of the world.

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. John knew that Christ did not need to repent so initially he refused to baptize him. (Matthew 3:14) *Christ's baptism* was to “fulfill all righteousness”. (Matthew 3:15) Christ replied to John that he needed to be baptized to fulfill the righteous demands of the law with reference to entering the priesthood (Ex 29:4-7; 40:12). A priest had to be ceremonially washed upon entering the office of priest. John the Baptist was a Levite and thus, qualified to perform this requirement of the Law.

It is also true that Jesus Christ came to *stand with us* or identify with us. He took our sin upon Himself. So, what better picture of this than to stand in line with sinners who needed cleansing and were repenting?

C. C. The Temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12,13; Luke 4:1-13)

Immediately after being introduced by John and having been baptized as the first step in His public ministry, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by Satan. The nature of Christ's temptation became clearer by the Greek word used. *peirazo* (*peirazo*) meaning: 1. to put to the test, to demonstrate; 2. to tempt with evil. Satan knew that God could not be tempted with evil (James 1:13). But he had never before seen a “God-Man”. Thus, his purpose was to see if God had weakened himself by becoming a man. Therefore, he was tempting Christ with evil and he was attempting the impossible.

Jesus was tempted like we are and yet without sin. Therefore, He knows what we go through.

“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:15-16

“Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, *the lust of the flesh* and *the lust of the eyes* and *the boastful pride of life*, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.” John 2:15-17

Jesus was tempted in all areas as we in that He was tempted in the three categories in which we face temptation. **He was also tempted in His humanity - the lust of the flesh.** This was a test of Christ’s loyalty to the will of God. The idea behind this test was that man’s happiness comes from gratifying physical appetites. Christ’s answer was from Deut 8:3 which says our happiness comes from submission to the will of God. Man is more than a body. he is spirit which must be dependent on God to be happy.

He was tested in His Messiahship -pride of life. The wall of the temple was 450’ high. The test was this: so, you trust in God. Well then how much? Show us what you can do. God will take care of you. (Psalm 91) Again, this seeks to get Christ to live independently of God’s will.

He was tested in His mission - lust of the eyes. Satan is the ruler of this world. He gave Christ a genuine offer to give his the kingdoms of this world. The test was to bypass the cross and get the crown. If you come my way, Satan says, you can avoid the cross. For Christ to have done this He would have had to worship Satan. His answer is that only God is to be worshipped.

God’s purpose for allowing this temptation was different. The Spirit *led* Christ into the temptation experience. Not to see if Christ would yield to temptation and sin but to demonstrate to the universe (men, angels, and Satan) that Christ was the perfect, sinless Son of God who is both capable and worthy to be the sacrifice for our sin and the indestructible way for lost people to get to God. His victory over temptation demonstrates His *moral* right to rule.

Thus, at the outset of Christ’s public ministry he was put to the test to demonstrate His complete ability to perform the task of becoming the Savior of the world.

D. D. Jesus chooses his first disciples (John 1:35-51)

As Jesus began his public ministry, John the Baptist told people that Christ was the Messiah they had been looking for. As a result of this proclamation two of John’s disciples left him to follow after Jesus. They were Andrew and, probably the apostle John. They in turn brought their brothers, Simon Peter and James.

The next day Jesus left the Jordan valley to return to Galilee. Along the way he called Philip to follow him, and Philip led Nathaniel (also known as Bartholomew) to become a disciple of Jesus. These six men then followed Jesus back to Galilee where they returned to their fishing trade for the rest of that first year. It wasn’t until a year later that Jesus called them to leave their fishing trade (Matthew 4:18-22) and also called the other six men who were also to become his disciples (Matthew 9:9; Luke 6:13-16).

E. E. His First Miracle (John 2:1-12)

After having won his first disciples, Jesus headed back from the Jordan River toward his home area in Galilee. As they came to Cana, Jesus attended a marriage feast (which in Jesus' time often lasted several days). There he turned the water into wine as his first miracle.

F. A Brief Stay in Galilee (John 2:12)

The next few months were spent in Galilee, especially in the city of Capernaum, which was to be the future headquarters of his extended Galilean ministry during his second year.

II. II. THE NEXT EIGHT MONTHS

This period of time is known as the Early Judean Period, and lasted from the time he came to Jerusalem from Galilee (John 2:13) to the time he returned to Galilee (John 4:4).

The annual Passover, most important of the Jewish holidays, brought Jews to Jerusalem from all over the world. It was celebrated in the middle of the first month of the religious calendar, Nisan (our April). The first Passover to be held during Jesus' public career brought him from Galilee to Jerusalem, where he launched his Early Judean Ministry. During this period, which lasted about eight months, Jesus thrust himself openly and vigorously upon the crowds who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the very feast which anticipated his own death. Most of what we know about Christ's Early Judean ministry is supplied only by John's Gospel.

A. A. The trip from Galilee to Jerusalem (John 2:13)

"And the Jew's Passover was at hand, and Jesus when up to Jerusalem."

B. B. First cleansing of the Temple (John 2:14-22)

When Jesus viewed the desecration of the temple by the sellers of animals and money-changers, who had introduced their businesses into the temple court yard, he drove out the merchants, severely rebuking them for defiling his Father's house. This was the beginning of Christ's reformatory work against the religious abuses of the time.

C. C. Performing of miracles in Jerusalem (John 2:23-25)

Jesus did many miracles in Jerusalem during this time as a sign of who He was. Many people believed (pisteuo - Greek) in Christ because of the miracles. They were attracted to him because of what he was doing. But Jesus did not commit (Greek = pisteuo) himself to them because he knew that their belief was only surface and selfish.

D. D. Interview with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21)

There was at least one Jewish leader who did not reject Jesus. This was Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, the 71 member ruling body or Supreme Court among the Jews. He was a man of position, power, wealth, and righteous character. He sought out Jesus and Jesus explained to him the way to obtain eternal life.

Whether or not Nicodemus accepted Jesus as his Savior at that meeting we are not told. But it is certain that Nicodemus openly defended Jesus in the Sanhedrin (John 7:50-52) and that he did become a believer eventually because of his identification with Christ at his burial (John 19:38-42). Nicodemus is an example of a religious person whose personal faith in Jesus Christ is a growing thing. The actual point in time when he became a Christian is not clear nor is that something to be worried about.

E. E. Brief ministry in Judea (John 3:22-4:2)

Following the interview with Nicodemus, Jesus enjoyed a brief but fruitful ministry in Judea. During this time Jesus' disciples (4:2) baptized many people in the same manner as John the Baptist was baptizing—implying that their baptism was also a baptism unto repentance in view of the coming Kingdom that Christ was offering.

F. F. His departure for Galilee (John 4:3)

Christ finally left Jerusalem and Judea to go back to Galilee due to increasing hostility.

G. G. Interview with the woman of Sychar (John 4:5-42)

The Samaritan village of Sychar was about twenty-five miles from Jerusalem. Nearby was Jacob's well where the women of the city would come to get water. There Christ confronted a Samaritan woman and showed her the way to obtain eternal life. Her response is almost immediate and indicates a clear point in time when she crossed the "border of personal faith" in Christ.

From Sychar Jesus went on into Galilee and there he began his great Galilean ministry (John 4:43-45). This brings us to the second year of Christ's three and one half year public ministry.

PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELISM: Using both John 3 and John 4 think through some evident principles of evangelism.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

How do people experience and express spiritual hunger?

Using John 4:10, 14 brainstorm the concept of inner thirst and hunger.

What personal prejudices or ill feelings must you and I overcome if we are to follow Jesus' interest in people?

Write an "I urge you" email to the believers in your church family.

PUBLIC MINISTRY

- 2nd Year -

Popularity: “And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit; and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.” Luke 4:14-15

After the year spent in the south (Judea), Jesus shifted the sphere of his activity to the north of the country (Galilee). Jesus spent about twenty months of his total public ministry in Galilee. About fourteen months of this time are called the Extended Ministries Period, because this is when most of his public work was accomplished. This period is also called the year of popularity, for he reached a peak of favor during this time, though the popularity gradually diminished, giving way to open opposition, which continued to the end of his life.

I. I. THE PLACE

All of Jesus’ ministries during this second year took place in the regions of Galilee.

1. 1. General location - Galilee was the northernmost section of the Jewish homeland. It borders the Sea of Galilee.
2. 2. Size - Galilee was about sixty miles by thirty miles, with a population estimated by some to be over three million.
3. 3. Main Cities - There were over two hundred cities and villages in Galilee. Those where Jesus spent most of his time were Nazareth, Cana, Capernaum, Magdala, Chorazin and Nain. Capernaum was the center of his Galilean campaigns.
4. 4. Terrain - Most of Galilee is an elevated plateau with irregular mountain masses. Most of Jesus’ ministries were along the western shores of the Sea of Galilee.

“As one travels across Galilee eastward from the Mediterranean he passes from the rich coastal plains into the sloping hills which rise and fall until he comes to the eastern edge where it drops precipitously into the deep trough of the Jordan valley. There, stretched out like a large pear thirteen miles long and seven miles wide at the broadest point.

Unlike the barren hills of Judea it was a fertile, well-watered land which yielded abundant crops of wheat, grapes, olives, figs and pomegranates. In the semi-tropical climate along the shores of the Sea of Galilee oranges and other tropical fruits were plentiful. Quite naturally this compact area boasted a large population. About the time of Jesus, Josephus estimated it at about three million people. In addition to its principle cities such as Capernaum, Bethsaida, Tiberias and Chorazin, these people were crowded into numerous villages which studded the landscape in every direction. It is no wonder then, that immense swarms of people followed Jesus wherever he went.”

The Life and Times of Jesus,

Herschel H. Hobbs

II. II. THE EVENTS

A. A. General Scriptures Comprising the Second Year

There are of course too many events and circumstances concerning the second year of Christ's ministry to be included in this short study series. Therefore, only the Scripture references which describe the events of this period are given with the hopes that the truly interested student will find the time to study this important area of the life of Christ.

Matthew 4:12-14:36; Mark 1:14-6:56; Luke 4:14-9:17; John 4:43-6:71

B. B. General Divisions of the Second Year

The events of the second year of Christ's public ministry can be divided into two major periods. The first is called the *Early Galilean Period* (4 months) and the second is called the *Middle Galilean Period* (10 months). In between these two periods, Jesus made a quick visit to Jerusalem in order to celebrate the annual Passover feast (John 5:1). His Galilean ministry continued on into the first six months of his third year which has consequently become known as the *Later Galilean Period*. Following this period he returned to Jerusalem for the final months of his life.

1. Early Galilean Period (4 months)

Matthew 4:12-24; 8:2-4, 14-17; 9:2-17

Mark 1:14-2:22

Luke 4:14-5:39

John 4:43-54

Quick Visit to Jerusalem:

Matthew 12:1-14; Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 6:1-11; John 5:1-47

2nd Year

2. Middle Galilean Period (10 months)

Matthew 5:1-8:1; 8:5-13, 18-34; 9:1, 18-38; 11:1-14:36

Mark 3:7-6:56

Luke 6:12-9:17

John 6:1-71

3rd Year

3. Later Galilean Period (6 months)

Matthew 15:1-18:35

Mark 7:1-9:50

Luke 9:18-50

John - nothing

III. III. THE TYPE OF MINISTRY

The two great means which Jesus used in his work in Galilee, and which created such attention and enthusiasm, were his miracles and his preaching.

A. A. His Miracles

Perhaps his miracles excited the widest attention. We are told how the news of the first one which he did in Capernaum spread like wildfire through the town, and brought crowds to the house where he was. And whenever he performed a new miracle the excitement grew intense and the rumor of it spread on every hand. Some of the miracles where he performed were:

1. 1. Miracles of Physical Healing

A leper (Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-15)
A paralytic (Matthew 9:2-8; Mark 2:3-12; Luke 5:18-26)
Fever (Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31)
Nobleman's son (John 4:46-53)
Physical infirmity (John 5:1-9)
A withered hand (Matthew 12:9-13; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11)
Deafness and dumbness (Mark 7:31-37)
Blindness (Mark 8:22-25; John 9; Mark 10:46-52)
Ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19)
Restoring Malchus' severed ear (Luke 22:47-51; John 18:10)
Hemorrhage (Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48)
Dropsy (Luke 14:2-4)

2. 2. Miracles of Resurrection

Jairus' daughter (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:35-43; Luke 8:43-48)
Widow's son (Luke 7:11-15)
Lazarus of Bethany (John 11:1-44)

3. 3. Miracles of casting out demons

Demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum (Mark 1:21-28)
Dumb demoniac (Matthew 9:32-34)
Daughter of the Syrophenician woman (Matthew 15:21-28)
Gadarene demoniacs (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39)
Blind and mute demoniac (Matthew 12:22; Luke 11:14)
Epileptic child (Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43)

4. 4. Miracles in the Natural Realm

Water to wine (John 2:1-11)
Stilling of a storm (Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25)
Supernatural catch of fish (Luke 5:1-11)
Multiplied food: 5000 fed (Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:34-44; Luke 9:11-17)
4000 fed (Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 8:11-9)
Walking on water (Matthew 14:24-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21)

5. 5. Unrecorded Miracles

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

4:23-24	1:32-34	4:40-41
21:25		
8:16	1:39	5:15
9:35	3:10,11	6:19
12:15	6:5	
14:14	6:56	
14:34-36		
15:29-31		

B. B. His Preaching (or teaching)

This was by far the most important of the two. His miracles were only the bell tolled to bring people to hear his words. The two major teaching principles that Jesus used were 1) direct discourse, and 2) parables.

1. 1. Direct Discourse

Jesus often spoke out directly in words clearly understandable concerning man's spiritual relationship to god and concerning the principles and nature of the coming Kingdom. He did this both with crowds of people and with individuals. Sometimes his teaching took on the nature of answering questions and rebuking errors within the present religious system.

The Gospels contain three major discourses of Christ—one of which is included in the second year of his ministry and the other two coming at the end of his public ministry.

a. a. Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) “Second Year” Christ's description of the principles

which will govern the Kingdom Age when Christ rules over Israel and over the world.

The Sermon on the Mount – an Outline

Building on the Rock

I. Kingdom Citizens, 5:1-16

- A. A Paradoxical People: the Beatitudes, 5:1-12 (God's rebuilding process in my soul.)
- B. A Witnessing People – The influences of those with these qualities, 5:13-16

II. The Kingdom and the Spirit of the Law, 5:17-48

- A. Christ's relationship to the Law, 5:17-20
- B. The Spirit of Reconciliation, 5:21-26 (Understanding anger)
- C. The Spirit of Marriage, 5:27-32 w/ 19:1-12 (Understanding lust)
- D. The Spirit of Promising, 5:33-37
- E. The Spirit of Love, 5:38-48 (Dealing with Dorks)

III. The Kingdom and Spiritual Practice – Jesus' Advice About How to Practice Your Religion, 6:1-34

- A. Covert Christianity - Giving Without Receiving, 6:1-4
- B. Covert Christianity - Prayer and Fasting Without Being Seen, 6:5-18
- C. Covert Christianity - Materialism, 6:19-34
 - 1. An Eternal Investment Strategy, 6:19-24
 - 2. Temptation to Worry, 6:25-34

IV. Discernment in the Kingdom, 7:1-29

- A. Judging: the pleasure of playing God, 7:1-6
- B. Asking in Faith, 7:7-12
- C. Discerning the True Way, 7:13-29

b. b. **Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24,25)** “Third Year” A sermon of Christ delivered on the Mount of Olives where he explained the nature and signs of his coming.

c. c. **Upper Room Discourse (John 13-16)** “Third Year” This discourse was spoken in the upper room just prior to Christ’s death. It involves the basic principles of the spiritual life.

2. 2. Parables

Parables were a somewhat more indirect method of teaching whereby Christ would tell stories designed to illustrate the truth he was communicating. He often taught this way both because it served to clarify the truth to those who really sought to know it and because it hid the truth from those who were rejecting his as the Messiah. (Matthew 13:10-16)

“And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. "For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

"Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. "And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says,

'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.'

"But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.”

THE TRAINING OF THE TWELVE

Three Stages:

1. 1. **EARLY IN THE 1ST YEAR OF CHRIST’S MINISTRY:** The disciples were simply believers in Him as the Christ, and were His *occasional* companions at convenient, particularly festive occasions, seasons and holidays. Examples include:

Marriage at Cana	John 2:1f
Passover in Jerusalem	John 2:13,17,22
Encounter with John the Baptist	John 3:22
Return from Jerusalem through Samaria	John 4:1f

His early disciples were: Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and John.

2. 2. EARLY IN THE 2ND YEAR: Fellowship with Christ took the form of an *uninterrupted attendance* with Christ that involved leaving their vocational occupations.

Matthew 4:19 "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Luke 5:27-28 "And after that He went out, and noticed a tax-gatherer named Levi, sitting in the tax office, and He said to him, "Follow Me."
And he left everything behind, and rose and began to follow Him.
Other verses: Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32; 7:36

PRINCIPLE: A committed disciple is willing to pay any price to have the will of God fulfilled in his life. He will give up pet sins and begin to follow the Spirit to control every area of his life.

3. 3. MIDDLE OF 2ND YEAR: The disciples entered the third stage when Christ selected them from among the mass of followers to be apostles (sent ones).

Matthew 10:1-4

Mark 3:13-19 "That they might be with Him."

Luke 6:12-16

Acts 1:21,22 Requirements of an apostle.

PRINCIPLE: Only in the intimacy of a daily fellowship with Christ can we learn what the Savior wants us to be, to do, believe and teach.

PRINCIPLE: A committed disciple is one who drops old hostilities toward former enemies.
Mark 3:18

OBSERVATIONS:

1. Jesus began very early to gather around him a group of disciples with a view to training them to carry out His mission. They were all associates of Jesus within the first year.
2. People were His method. Not advertising or publicity primarily. Not great crowds primarily. Not loads of money. BUT PEOPLE trained in daily association, one on one and in small groups.
3. All those who followed, followed willingly and publicly. No one can be brought farther in their relationship with Christ than they want to be.
4. None of the men Christ chose would impress you as being key men (Acts 4:13). But they were hungry and teachable and were looking for the Messiah.

Christ's Inner Circle

by Don Closson

Introduction

Matthew 10:2-4 records:

"These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him."

Christians hold in high esteem (excluding Judas Iscariot) those who were personally called by Jesus and who walked with Him during His ministry on Earth. That is especially true of the twelve Apostles. The Greek words used for apostle convey both the notions of sending or dispatching (apostolos) as well as the idea of commissioning someone with divine authorization (apostello). The idea of apostleship might be traced back to the Hebrew notion of an envoy. This Jewish institution would have been familiar to Jesus and is well documented in the rabbinic writings where it refers to "one who has been authorized to carry out certain functions on behalf of another." A well-known Jewish adage is "a man's envoy is as himself."

It is interesting to note that Jesus called to Himself those whom He wished (Mark 3:13-14). There were no volunteers. They were to travel, share food, and live with Jesus, experiencing firsthand His life and ministry. They were then sent out to proclaim that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand, and that they had been commissioned to act as Jesus' representatives with His authority.

Lists of the Twelve are found in four places in the New Testament, and comparisons of the lists can reveal important information about the apostles. Peter is always mentioned first and Judas Iscariot last. The twelve are also listed in three groups of four, the first four always being Peter, Andrew, James, and John. This group of four apostles had a special relationship with Christ and will be the focus of this article.

Another interesting insight into the make-up of the group can be found in the process used to replace Judas Iscariot after his death. The first chapter of Acts states that Judas' replacement must have accompanied the apostles from the beginning. In other words, he must have been present at John's baptism of Christ and still around to see Jesus' ascension into heaven. It was also noted that he must have been an eyewitness to the resurrection. The apostles were eyewitnesses to the life, teachings, miracles, and finally the death and resurrection of our Lord. This was essential for them to have a clear and accurate testimony of the Messiah.

In this article we will look at the inner circle of Christ's apostles: Peter, Andrew, James and John. We will see how God changed the lives of these ordinary men forever.

The Apostle Peter

In every one of the four lists of the Apostles found in the New Testament, Peter is always mentioned first. Peter is often called the *primus inter pares* or the first among equals. It is obvious that he plays a leadership role among his fellow apostles and is recognized by Christ as a foundation of the church. Although we might debate what this leadership role is, we cannot deny its existence.

The New Testament gives Peter four names. His Hebrew name was Symeon, which in Greek is Simon. Peter was probably a bilingual Jew who was influenced by the Greek culture in Galilee at the time. John records that Jesus gave him the Aramaic name Cephas which translates as Peter in Greek and means "a rock." This new name given by Jesus is an indication of how Peter would change while under the Lord's influence. Peter's early impetuosity would be transformed into that of a stable, charismatic witness for Christ.

Unlike many of the other Apostles, the New Testament gives us some background information about Peter's family life. His father's name was Jonah or John and we know that he was married. Jesus

healed Peter's mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14), and Paul mentions that Peter took his wife with him on journeys to various churches (1 Cor. 9:5). Peter probably lived with his brother, Andrew, in Bethsaida and later moved to Capernaum as he followed Jesus in ministry.

Peter became a disciple in the very early days of Jesus' ministry. John mentions an early encounter with Jesus after Andrew introduces the two. Later, perhaps a year or so, Matthew and Mark record Jesus calling Peter to full-time ministry as a fisher of men.

As an apostle, Peter plays a significant role among the Twelve. Peter is often singled out and the rest are mentioned as a group with him (Mark 1:36). He also acts as a spokesman for the group. In Luke 12 he asks Jesus about the meaning of a parable. In Matthew 16 he affirms Jesus as the Messiah, and then in chapter 19 he reminds Jesus of the sacrifices made by the apostles as a group. He is often the first to act as well. Matthew 14 records Peter's attempt to meet Jesus on the water, even though he loses heart midway.

Peter's leadership role lends added significance to a number of events in the Bible. For instance, the detail given of Peter's denial of Jesus has its impact precisely because of Peter's prominence in the group. Also, the account in John chapter 21 of Jesus questioning Peter's love and admonishing him to "feed my sheep" takes on poignancy.

The Apostle Peter and His Brother Andrew

The Roman Catholic Church has long used Matthew 16:17-19 as justification for the office of the Pope and the succession of popes starting with Peter. Protestants have reacted by tending to downplay Peter's significance as a leader among the apostles and any special office that he might hold in the body of Christ. As I mentioned previously, Peter is clearly represented as the leader of the apostles. However, the use of this passage in Matthew to justify the modern office of the Pope reads too much into the Scriptures.

For instance, Matthew 16 says nothing about Peter's successors, their infallibility, or their authority. Part of the problem with ascribing these attributes to Peter's successor is that he would have had authority over a still living apostle, John. Peter is the first to make a formal confession of faith (Matt. 16:16), but he continues on as a very fallible part of the team Christ has assembled. He is sent, along with John, by the apostles to Samaria, when word had come that some had accepted the word of God there. In Acts 11 the church in Jerusalem took issue with Peter's entering a gentile's home. Although they eventually agreed with his explanation, they still had the authority to question Peter's actions. In Galatians, Paul writes that he rebuked Peter to his face for separating himself from the Gentiles when accompanied by Jews from Jerusalem (Galatians 2:11). The New Testament allows us to claim Peter as the leader of the apostles, but not the first in a line of infallible popes.

Where Peter is outspoken and prominent, his brother Andrew was happy to play a background role among the Twelve. Andrew worked in his father's fishing business with Peter in Bethsaida and probably shared a home with Peter until Peter's marriage.

Although Andrew is listed as one of the inner circle closest to Jesus, we do not have a lot of information about his ministry. He is first mentioned as a follower of John the Baptist. When John directs his followers towards Jesus, Andrew is quick to seek time with the Lord. After listening to

Jesus for a few hours, Andrew is convinced that Jesus is the messiah and immediately begins to tell others, starting with his brother Peter.

Andrew has been called "the apostle who shared Christ personally." Andrew was recorded as one who brought people to Christ. First he brings Peter to the Lord, then at Passover he introduces searching Greek Gentiles to Jesus. When food is needed to feed the multitude, Andrew brings a child with bread and fish.

Andrew may not have had the leadership qualities of his brother Peter. He is never noted for his eloquent speech or his bold actions. However, one can imagine Andrew's heart when his brother, whom he introduced to the Lord, preached in the power of the Spirit in Jerusalem, resulting in thousands of new believers. Andrew may have played a background role among the inner circle of Christ's followers, but it was a vital role just the same.

The Sons of Zebedee

James and John make up the other pair of brothers who were part of Christ's inner circle. Like Peter and Andrew, they were also from Bethsaida and worked together with them in the fishing industry. They were known as the "sons of thunder" because of their fiery temperaments, which would occasionally give rise to some awkward moments (Mark 3:17). Their father, Zebedee, and mother, Salome, were probably well off materially. The family is mentioned to have had servants (Mark 1:20) and Salome ministered to Jesus with her resources (Matthew 27:55-56). John implies that Salome is Mary's sister, making James and John cousins to Jesus (John 19:25).

Both James and John are members of the first group of four apostles, always mentioned first in lists of the Twelve. But they are also part of what might be called the inner three, those into whom Christ poured special time and teachings.

It is widely recognized that the designation "the disciple whom Jesus loved" refers to the apostle John. John stands out among the apostles as being the only one to have witnessed the crucifixion and afterwards, took Jesus' mother home to live with him (John 19:25-27). He was also the first of the twelve to see the empty tomb.

John was first a follower of John the Baptist. That meant that he was seriously seeking God prior to meeting Jesus and was primed to make a commitment to the Messiah. He and Andrew had an early encounter with Jesus before becoming full time disciples. Both had spent time listening to the Lord and becoming convinced of His authenticity. While with Jesus, their temperaments became evident on a number of occasions. Luke describes an incident in which John asks Jesus if they should call down fire on a Samaritan village that had refused them hospitality (Luke 9:54). Having just experienced the transfiguration of Jesus, John was indignant at the lack of proper respect for his Lord.

There is also the well-known incident when Salome asks Jesus to place one of her sons at His right hand when He establishes His kingdom (Matthew 20:21). Jesus responds sharply to the request by telling them that they do not know what they are asking. He asks them, "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" (Matthew 20:22) With their typical bravado, they answer, "We can." They were still hoping that Jesus was about to establish a political kingdom in Israel. They did not realize that

His kingdom would begin with His sacrificial, atoning death on the cross. It is somewhat fitting that James becomes the first martyr from among the Twelve. Acts 12 records that Herod Agrippa had James put to death by the sword probably around 42 A.D. (Acts 12:2)

The apostle John was an interesting combination: the disciple Jesus loved, and yet one who could be intolerant and self-seeking. James would be the first to die a martyr, and yet his brother would live the longest of all the apostles. Next we will look at the legacy left by the inner circle of Jesus and what we can learn from their lives.

The Legacy of Those Closest to Jesus

John writes in Revelation 21:10, 14:

"And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. . . . The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

Whether this verse refers to an actual city as many argue, or to the church or body of Christ, as others hold, it portrays the remarkable honor allotted to the Twelve Apostles. And among the Twelve, Jesus poured His life into an inner circle that had a key role in establishing the church. Peter, Andrew, James and John were privileged to be with Jesus when He healed Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:37), and at the Transfiguration of Christ (Mark 9:2). They were the audience at the Olivet Discourse (Mark 13:3) and were with Jesus during His time of agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37).

These four men left quite a legacy. Peter is credited with providing the material for the book of Mark and the two epistles given his name. He was the leader of the church in Jerusalem during the first 15 years covered in the first twelve books of Acts, after which James, the brother of Jesus, took over. Peter then became a missionary to the Jews and to a lesser degree, the Gentiles. Although tradition gives Peter credit for leading the church at Rome, it is unlikely. Yet he did go there near the end of his ministry and probably suffered martyrdom there.

The last mention we have of Andrew is in the upper room with Jesus. The book of Acts is silent regarding him. Tradition has Andrew traveling as a missionary to Russia and meeting martyrdom by crucifixion at Patras in Greece around 60 A.D.

We know that James was the first of the Twelve to be put to death. Thus he left no writings. Tradition has it that the officer guarding James was so taken by his testimony that he repented and was beheaded with the apostle.

Finally, we have the apostle John. Along with internal evidence from the book of John, early church fathers Irenaeus and Polycrates identify the apostle John as the "disciple Jesus loved." Having lived the life of an apostle the longest, John wrote the fourth gospel, the remarkable book of Revelation, and three epistles to the church. Of all Christ's followers, John conveys the majesty of Christ the most clearly. According to tradition, John spent his last days in Ephesus, traveling there after the death of Domitian (who had exiled him to the Isle of Patmos). John's followers, Polycarp, Papias, and Ignatius, would become pillars in Christ's church, just as John had been.

Ordinary fishermen, these four men are a testimony to the life changing impact that walking with our Savior can have on anyone who chooses to be His disciple.

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PUBLIC MINISTRY

-3rd Year

Opposition:

“As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore.” John 6:66

“And after these things Jesus was walking in Galilee; for He was unwilling to walk in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.” John 7:1

For a whole year Jesus pursued his work in Galilee with incessant energy, moving among the pitiable crowds that asked for his miraculous help and seizing every opportunity of pouring his works of grace and truth into the ears of the multitude or of the solitary anxious inquirer. In hundreds of homes, to whose inhabitants he had restored health and joy, his name must have become a household word; in thousands of minds, whose depths his preaching had stirred, he must have been cherished with gratitude and love. Wider and wider rang the choirs of his fame. For a time it seemed as if all Galilee were to become his disciples and as if the whole land were to be enveloped in an enthusiasm of love for the Healer and of obedience to the teacher.

But the twelve months had scarcely passed when it became sadly evident that this was not to be. The Galilean mind turned out to be stony ground, where the seed of the kingdom rushed quickly up,

but just as quickly withered away. The change was sudden and complete, and at once altered all the features of the life of Jesus . He lingered in Galilee for six months longer; but these months were very unlike the first twelve. The voices that rose around him were no longer the ringing shouts of gratitude and applause, but voices of opposition, bitter and blasphemous. He was no longer to be seen moving from one populous place to another in the heart of the country, welcomed everywhere by those who waited to experience or to see his miracles, and followed by thousands eager not to lose a work of his discourses. He was a fugitive, seeking the most distant and outlandish places and accompanied only by a handful of followers. At the six months' end he left Galilee forever. He did indeed labor for six months more in the southern part of the land - in Judea and Perea - but the most which he effected was to add a few to the company of his faithful disciples. He did indeed, from the day he left Galilee, set his face steadfastly towards Jerusalem: and the six months he spent in Perea and Judea may be regarded as occupied with a slow journey to there; but the journey was begun in the full assurance, which he openly expressed to his disciples, that in the capital he would not be received with triumph and enthusiasm, but would instead meet with a final national rejection, and be killed instead of crowned. (The Life of Jesus Christ by James Stalker)

I. LATER GALILEAN PERIOD

A. General Overview of this Period

For six more months Christ remained in Galilee fulfilling what is called the Specialized Ministry. This is so called because during this time Jesus generally avoided the public, dealing with such special groups as his twelve disciples, scribes and Pharisees, and Gentiles of northern cities. His major ministry at this time was to instruct his disciples.

Matthew 15:1 - 18:35; Mark 7:1 - 9:50; Luke 9:18-50

B. Specific Ministries

A simple way to see the pattern of Jesus' specialized ministry is to recognize the geographical movements. With Capernaum as the natural starting point, He went into the northwest (Tyre and Sidon); then to the southeast (Decapolis region): then to the northeast (Caesarea Philippi). The secret return through Galilee anticipated His journey to Judea.

Events	Matthew	Mark	Luke
TO THE NORTHWEST (Tyre and Sidon)			
1. 1. Dispute over traditions (Capernaum)	15:1-20	7:1-23	
2. 2. To Tyre and Sidon (Daughter healed)	15:21-28	7:24-30	
TO THE SOUTHWEST (Decapolis)	15:29a	7:31	
1. 1. Many healed	15:29b-31	7:32-37	
2. 2. Four thousand fed	15:32-39a	8:1-10a	
TO THE NORTHEAST (Caesarea Philippi)			
1. 1. Event on the way			
a. a. Near Dalmanutha (or Magdala) dispute w/ Pharisees-Sadducees	15:39b-16:4a	8:10-12	

b. b.	Near Bethsaida (with disciples)	16:4b-12	8:13-21	
c. c.	In Bethsaida (blind man healed)		8:22-26	
2. 2.	Distract of Ceasarea Philippi			
a. a.	Peter's great confession	16:13-20	8:27-30	9:18-21
b. b.	Prophecy of death by Jesus	16:21-28	8:31- 9:1	9:22-27
c. c.	Jesus is transfigured	17:1-13	9:2-13	9:28-36
d. d.	Demoniac healed	17:14-21	9:14-29	9:37-43
SECRET RETURN THROUGH GALILEE				
-- disciples given more instruction				
1. 1.	Prophecy of death and resurrection	17:22,23	9:30-32	9:43-45
2. 2.	Tax	17:24-27		
3. 3.	Greatness in the kingdom	18:1-35	9:33-50	9:46-50

II. LATER JUDEAN AND PEREAN PERIODS (6 months)

Jesus' Galilean ministry was completed; now he had an appointment with death, resurrection, and ascension. But until the hour to surrender to the enemy was fully come (six months thence), He would minister to towns and villages of Judea and Perea, as well as to the multitudes gathering at Jerusalem for the feasts. This part of Christ's public ministry is called concluding ministries, comprising the two three-month periods known as later Judean and Perea.

A. Later Judean Period (3months)

1. 1. Overview of the Period

PART ONE (1 Week)	PART TWO (2 months)	PART THREE (1 week)
Jerusalem Feast of Tabernacles	Regions of Judea	Jerusalem Feast of Dedication
Jesus and Jewish rulers	Evangelism (Special tour of the 70)	Jesus and Jewish rulers

2. Scripture for this Period

Matthew 10:1-42; Luke 10:1 - 13:21; Mark Nothing; John 7:2 - 10:39

3. Explanation of this Period

During this period Jesus spent much of his time in discussions with the Jewish rulers; but the emphasis of the period is upon the evangelistic tour of the seventy disciples sent out by Christ.

Feast of Tabernacles - the last of Israel's seven annual feasts that commemorated the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. (Leviticus 23:33-34)

Feast of Dedication - held for 8 days beginning December 25th. This feast was not carried over from the Old Testament times but was rather a celebration of the anniversary of the rededication of the temple by the Maccabees in 164 BC.

B. B. LATER PEREAN PERIOD (3 months)

1. 1. Overview of the Period

PART ONE	INTERRUPTION	PART TWO
Regions of Perea	Bethany	Regions of Perea
Evangelism	Miracle of Raising Lazarus	Evangelism

2. 2. Scripture for this Period:

Matthew 19:1 - 20:34; Mark 10:1-52; Luke 13:23 - 19:27; John 10:40 - 12:11

3. 3. Explanation of this Period

Jesus went to Perea (“beyond the Jordan” John 10:40) after the Feast of Dedication, which ended January 1. He arrived back in Bethany, which would be his home until his death, six days before Passover (John 21:1), on April 8th. Thus, the Perea ministry lasted about three months.

Jesus’ ministries in Perea consisted mainly of teaching and performing miracles of healing. Toward the end of this period his ministry in Perea was interrupted, by his own choice, by a trip to Bethany in Judea to raise Lazarus from the dead.

The raising of Lazarus from the dead: This was perhaps one of the most significant and well known miracles of the earthly ministry of Christ. Many people witnessed this great event and yet, even this did not turn the tide of opposition that had been gathering against Christ.

saw
Jerusalem
by
to
Herschel Hobbs

“What strange and diverse reactions there were to this miracle! Some who
it believed in Jesus, but others, unmoved by it, simply hastened to nearby
to tattle to the Pharisees about what Jesus had done. But so blinded were they
their hatred for Jesus, the miracle was lost to them - instead it only called them
diabolic action.”

The Life and Times of Jesus,

III. III. JESUS AND THE OPPOSITION

The religious leaders were Jesus’ main opponents. It was they who eventually stirred up the people to demand Jesus’ death. Of the various groups of opponents, the Pharisees were the most antagonistic. Yet, they were the ones who supposedly knew the Old Testament Scriptures and should therefore have been best able to tell that Jesus was actually what he was claiming to be, the Messiah. Why then did they reject Christ? The answer lies squarely in the fact that these men were allowing their own egotistical desires for wealth, power, and prestige to blind their eyes to the plain teaching of God’s Word.

Some of the main reasons why they rejected Jesus were:

- 1. 1. His humble origin** - (John 1:46) They were looking for a Messiah who would come in a tremendous display of kingly glory and power to set up a kingdom with them as its leaders.
- 2. 2. His choice of disciples and company** - (Luke 15:1,2) His disciples were crude and unlearned men as opposed to the Pharisee's high learning and culture. Christ also spent most of his time among sinners to present himself as their Savior and the Pharisees did not like this.
- 3. 3. His spiritual interpretation of rites and holidays** - (Matthew 12:1-14) The religious leaders had added many things to the laws of God insomuch that the Jewish religion had become a burden to the people of Israel. Christ proceeded to ignore these external additions of the Pharisees and endeavored to keep the laws of God only as God had intended them. This was a rebuke to the Pharisee's ego because they regarded them- selves as the highest interpreters of the Law.
- 4. 4. His bold claim to be the promised Messiah** - (Matthew 26:63-66) Claiming to be the Messiah meant claiming to be God. The Pharisees were too spiritually corrupt to see the spiritual character of Christ that he actually was the Son of God. Therefore, they assumed that He must be guilty of blasphemy.

Perhaps the most difficult thing for the Pharisees to explain was the miracles of Christ. If He were not the Messiah, which they were assuming to be true, then how could He do much miraculous things? The explanation they gave to these miracles was:

"But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." Matthew 12:24

The Pharisees tried to explain the miraculous Christ by saying that He was a representative of Satan himself. They accused Christ of being Satanically empowered. Christ's answer to the Pharisees is found in Matthew 12:25-42 and 23:13-33.

THE LAST WEEK OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

SUNDAY

Christ enters Jerusalem triumphantly

Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19

Jesus weeps over Jerusalem

Luke 19:41-44

MONDAY

Jesus curses the fig tree: Matthew 21:18-20; Mark 11:12-14, 20-21

Jesus cleanses the temple: Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46

TUESDAY

He teaches in parables in the temple: Matthew 21:23-22:14; Mark 11:27-12:9; Luke 20:1-16

He confounds the religious leaders: Matthew 22:15-23:36; Mark 12:13-40; Luke 20:20-47

He delivers the sermon we call the "Olivet Discourse"

Matthew 24:1-25:36; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36

WEDNESDAY

Jesus is anointed at Bethany: Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8

Judas plots with the Sanhedrin to betray Jesus

Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16; Mark 14:1-2, 10-11; Luke 22:1-6

THURSDAY

Jesus eats the Passover meal (Last Supper): Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-20

Jesus delivers his last words to his disciples: John 13-17

Jesus prays in the garden and is betrayed

Matthew 26:36-56; Mark 14:32-52; Luke 22:39-51; John 18:1-13

FRIDAY

Brought before Annas: John 18:12-14, 19-23

Brought before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin

Matthew 26:59-68; Mark 14:55-65; Luke 22:63-71; John 18:19-24

Brought before Pilate: Matthew 27:1-2, 11-14; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-38

Sent to Herod Antipas: Luke 23:6-12

Condemned by Pilate and mocked

Matthew 27:15-30; Mark 15:6-19; Luke 23:13-25; John 19:16-30

Crucified at Golgotha: Matthew 27:31-56; Mark 15:20-41; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:16-30

Buried in Joseph's tomb: Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-55; John 19:31-42

SATURDAY

Pilate seals the tomb and appoints a guard: Matthew 27:62-66; Luke 23:56

SUNDAY

Jesus rises from the dead and appears to Mary Magdalene: Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18

Jesus appears to the women: Matthew 28:8-11; Mark 16:8; Luke 24:9-11

Jesus appears to Peter: Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5

Jesus appears to two men on the road to Emmaus: Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-35

Jesus appears to the disciples without Thomas present

Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-24

Jesus appears to the disciples with Thomas present: John 20:25-29

NOTE In preparing such a chronology, there is certain to be some disagreement on the dating of certain events. It is readily admitted that some godly believers hold that the crucifixion occurred on Wednesday or Thursday. The above chart has been thoroughly researched and represents the views of the vast majority of New Testament scholars. For a defense of the above chronology see *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, by Dr. Harold W. Hoehner.

WHO IS THIS MAN, JESUS?

INTRODUCTION:

"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

He said[^] to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." Matt 16:13-17

See also: Mark 4:35-41; Matthew 8:18,23-27; Luke 8:22-25

I. His Birth Announcement Made His Identity Clear

Matthew 1:20-23 "an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."

Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

II. Christ's Claimed to be God

A. His Direct Claims to Deity

1. His trial: Mark 14:61-64; John 19:7; Matthew 26:63-64

Irwin Linton, a lawyer, says concerning this trial, "Unique among criminal trials is the one in which not the actions, but the identity of the accused is the issue. The criminal charge laid against Christ, the confession or testimony, or rather, act in the presence of the court, on which He was convicted, the interrogation by the Roman governor and the inscription and proclamation on His cross at the time of execution all are concerned with the one question of Christ's real identity and dignity. 'What do you think of Christ? Whose son is He?'"

The one-time skeptic, Frank Morrison said, "Jesus of Nazareth was condemned to death, not upon the statement of His accusers but upon an admission extorted from Him under oath."

Mark 14:61-65 "But He kept silent, and made no answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." And tearing his clothes, the high priest said[^], "What further need do we have of witnesses? "You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. And some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers received Him with slaps in the face."

Matthew 26:63-68 "But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said[^] to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; what do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death!" Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, and said, "Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?"

2. His Other Claims

a. Equality with God

John 10:27-33 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. "I and the Father are one."

The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

John 5:17-23 "But He answered them, "***My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.***" For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, ***making Himself equal with God.*** Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for ***whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does*** in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel. ***For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.*** For ***not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,*** in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."

b. "I am" John 8:58

Exodus 3:13-14 "Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Deuteronomy 32:39 "See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; And there is no one who can deliver from My hand."

Isaiah 43:10-13 "You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, In order that you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me. "I, even I, am the LORD; And there is no savior besides Me. "It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And I am God. "Even from eternity I am He; And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?"

c. "Son of God" and "King of the Jews"

Luke 22:70--23:3 And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am." And they said, "What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

23:1 Then the whole body of them arose and brought Him before Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." And Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "It is as you say."

3. Jesus was worshipped and accepted it.

a. We are only to worship God

Matthew 4:10 "Then Jesus said[^] to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP (proskunew) THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

b. But Jesus was worshipped and accepted it.

Matthew 8:1-3 "And when He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came to Him, and bowed down to Him (proskunew)), saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

Matthew 22:33 "And immediately He made the disciples get into the boat, and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And after He had sent the multitudes away, He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. But the boat was already many stadia away from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were frightened, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said[^] to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped. And those who were in the boat worshiped (proskunew) Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"

Matthew 28:16-20 "But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him (proskunew); but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

John 9:33-38 "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered and said to him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they put him out. Jesus heard that they had put him out; and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered and said, "And who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him (proskunew)."

John 20:27-28 "Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord (Jehovah) and my God (Elohim)!"

Compare: Isaiah 40:3; John 1:19-23

If John the Baptist was "a voice crying in the wilderness" what does this make Jesus who came after John? Jesus is Jehovah and Elohim!

Hebrews 1:1-6 "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say, "THOU ART MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE"? And again, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"? And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP (proskunew) HIM."

c. Others were worshipped but they rejected it.

Acts 10:25-26

Acts 14:11-18

d. What Others Said About Jesus

Paul - Philippians 2:9-11; Titus 2:13

Peter - Matthew 16:15-17; Acts 2:36

Thomas - John 20:28

Stephen - Acts 7:59

B. Indirect Claims to be God

1. He claimed the attributes which only God has:

Authority - Matthew 28:18

Works - John 11:43-44

Names - John 8:58 "I AM"

2. He claimed to be associated with God equally

Equal trust - John 14:1

Due equal honor - John 5:23-24

To know the Son is to know the Father - John 8:19

To have seen the Son is to have seen the Father - John 14:9

III. The Meaning of the Titles "only begotten son" and "first born"

A. "Only begotten Son" (the Son, the only begotten)

1. Verses

Psalm 2:7 "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee.'" See also Hebrews 5:5

Acts 13:30-35 ""But God raised Him from the dead; and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. "And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'THOU ART MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE.' And as for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE blessings OF DAVID.' "Therefore He also says in another Psalm, 'THOU WILT NOT ALLOW THY HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.'

Romans 1:1-4 "Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,"

John 1:14, 18

John 3:16, 18

1 John 4:9-10 "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Genesis 22:2

Matthew 3:17; 12:18; 17:5;

Ephesians 1:6; Colossians 1:13; 2 Peter 1:17

2. Meaning of the terms involved

"ONLY" Literally: "one of a kind", "only", "unique"

The emphasis in John: The "only" Son of God who has no equal and is fully able to reveal the Father. Jesus was unique in kind. Who is above all earthly and heavenly beings.

"BEGOTTEN" To beget, to be born. Used chiefly of men begetting children. Examples: Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38. But it is also used of the act of God in the birth of Christ. References: Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; Psalm 2:7

It is interesting to note that in the Gospels only John uses this term in relation to Christ. Matthew and Mark both use the term "beloved". Matt 3:17; 17:5; Mk 1:11; 9:7

But when used in reference to Christ it clearly relates to his resurrection from the dead. Acts 13:33-34; Romans 1:4; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5.

B. "First born"

1. Verses

Romans 8:29

Colossians 1:15, 18
Hebrews 1:6
Revelation 1:5

2. Meaning

a. One emphasis is clearly that Christ is the first to experience permanent resurrection and that others will therefore follow.

b. The other emphasis is PRIORITY and SOVEREIGNTY above all creation.

Colossians 1:15 and Hebrews 1:6

c. Conclusion: The "first born of creation" does not imply that He Himself was a part of creation. The word "first" does not require this interpretation and the context absolutely denies this meaning. He is above all creation and is therefore the absolute Heir and Sovereign Lord of all creation.

IV. The Meaning of the term "son of God"

A. In Matthew 26:63, 64 Jesus' claimed to be the Son of God. The High Priest understood Jesus to be claiming to be God.

B. "Son of" emphasizes two things in relation to Christ:

1. Jesus was the son of God, not the son of Joseph.

2. Son of means in some cases "the same as" or characterized by the same quality as. For instance, in Mark 3:17 James and John are called "sons of thunder" because thunder was the quality that characterized their personality.

(See also Acts 4:36)

The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ

"At the heart of every major religion is a leading exponent. As the exposition is studied something very significant emerges. There comes a bifurcation, or a distinction, between the person and the teaching. Mohammed to the Koran. Buddha to the Noble Path. Krishna to the object lessons. Zoroaster to his ethics.

Whatever we may make of their claims, one reality is inescapable. They are teachers who point to their teaching or show some particular way. In all of these, there emerges an instruction, a way of living. It is not Zoroaster to whom you turn. It is Zoroaster to whom you listen. It is not Buddha who delivers you, it is his "Noble Truths" that instruct you. It is not Mohammed who transforms you, it is the beauty of the Koran that woos you.

By contrast, Jesus did not only teach or point or expound on His message. He was identical with His message. "In Him," say the Scriptures, "dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily." He did not just proclaim the truth. He said, "I am the Truth." He did not just show a way. He said, "I am the Way." He did not just open up vistas. He said, "I am the door." "I am the Good Shepherd." "I am the resurrection and the life." "I am the I am."

In Him is not just an offer of life's bread. He is the bread. That is why, for a Christian it is not just a way of feeding and living. Following Christ begins with a way of relating and being.

Ravi Zacharias, Jesus Among Other Gods

He is the First and Last, the Beginning and the End!

He is the keeper of Creation and the Creator of all!

He is the Architect of the universe and

The Manager of all times.

He always was, He always is, and He always will be...

Unmoved, Unchanged, Undefeated, and never Undone!

He was bruised and brought healing!

He was pierced and eased pain!

He was persecuted and brought freedom!

He was dead and brought life!

He is risen and brings power!

He reigns and brings Peace!

The world can't understand him,

The armies can't defeat Him,

The schools can't explain Him, and

The leaders couldn't ignore Him.

Herod couldn't kill Him,

The Pharisees couldn't confuse Him, and

The people couldn't hold Him!

Nero couldn't crush Him,

Hitler couldn't silence Him,

The New Age can't replace Him, and

Donahue can't explain Him away!

He is light, love, longevity, and Lord.

He is goodness, Kindness, Gentleness, and God.

He is Holy, Righteous, mighty, powerful, and pure.

His ways are right,

His word is eternal,

His will is unchanging, and

His mind is on me.

He is my Redeemer,

He is my Savior,

He is my guide, and

He is my peace!

He is my Joy,

He is my comfort,

He is my Lord, and

He rules my life!

I serve Him because His bond is love,
His burden is light, and
His goal for me is abundant life.
I follow Him because He is the wisdom of the wise,
The power of the powerful,

The ancient of days, the ruler of rulers,
The leader of leaders, the overseer of the over-comers, and

The sovereign Lord of all that was and is and is to come.
And if that seems impressive to you, try this for size.
His goal is a relationship with ME!

He will never leave me,

Never forsake me,
Never mislead me,
Never forget me,
Never overlook me, and
Never cancel my appointment in His appointment book!
When I fall, He lifts me up!
When I fail, He forgives!
When I am weak, He is strong!
When I am lost, He is the way!
When I am afraid, He is my courage!
When I stumble, He steadies me!
When I am hurt, He heals me!
When I am broken, He mends me!
When I am blind, He leads me!
When I am hungry, He feeds me!
When I face trials, He is with me!
When I face persecution, He shields me!
When I face problems, He comforts me!
When I face loss, He provides for me!
When I face Death, He carries me Home!
He is everything for everybody, everywhere,

Every time, and every way.
He is God, He is faithful.
I am His, and He is mine!
My Father in heaven can whip the father of this world.

So, if you're wondering why I feel so secure, understand this...
He said it and that settles it.
God is in control, I am on His side, and

That means all is well with my soul.
Everyday is a blessing for GOD Is!
He is my source of existence and my Savior.
He keeps me functioning each and everyday.
Without Him, I will be nothing.
Without Him, I am nothing but with Him I can do all things.
Philippians 4:13

The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ

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Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

We all know that Jesus died for the sins of the world. What we may not understand is why. How could a loving God allow His son to die. To put the question a bit more vividly consider this. In the Garden of Gethsemane in agony Jesus prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

The atmosphere was emotionally charged. His request was made with sweat of blood and tears. The Son is pleading with His father. What if your child came to you in such agony, pleading, asking, begging with a submissive heart wouldn't you do everything you could to grant your child's request? Remember the words of Jesus? "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!" Do you see the dilemma now?

Why couldn't the problem of our sin be dealt with in another way? Why couldn't God just forgive everyone with a "divine pardon" without Christ having to die? God can do anything, right!? Well, anything as long as it is consistent with His character, design and purpose. When we look at

the cross we see just how serious our sin is. We see His standard of sinlessness and perfection. Whether I am a murderer or a gossip I miss the mark of God's standard. Here is a story that illustrates God's dilemma.

A scene from *Camelot* may help. King Arthur's wife, Queen Guenevere and his most trusted knight, Lancelot have had an adulterous relationship. They are caught in their encounter. Lancelot gets away but Queen Guenevere does not. She is tried and sentenced to execution by fire. People from miles around come with a question: *will King Arthur let her die?* He loves her very much. Mordred expresses the dilemma this way: "Arthur! What a magnificent dilemma! Let her die, your life is over; Let her live, your life's a fraud. Which will it be Arthur? Do you kill the queen or kill the law?" King Arthur's heart tells him to set her free. But by bending justice and showing partiality, he would call into question His right to rule.

As the story goes Guenevere enters the courtyard. Arthur decides, "Treason has been committed! The jury has ruled! Let justice be done!" A herald mounts the tower where Arthur has withdrawn. "The queen is at the stake, Your Majesty. Shall I signal the torch?" The king is silent. Again the herald, "Your Majesty...! Your Majesty!" Broken hearted, King Arthur says, "I can't! I can't! I can't let her die!" Seeing the agony of the King, Mordred says, "Well, you're human after all, aren't you, Arthur? Human and helpless."

We used to have a dog. Occasionally, we'd take her to the vet. She never forgot her first visit to the doc to get shots. From then on as soon as we put her in the car and the car neared the vet's Rusty would go into shock with severe tremors. With pleading eyes she'd beg us to turn around. Why take her? Because we know the agony of disease is worse than the agony of a shot. Ever have children bargain and plead with you not to take them to the doctor? "I'm all better now. We can go home now."

Change the scene a bit. Fact is, God in Christ got out from behind the bar of justice, left the safety of the castle to live on earth. We were his beloved "Guenevere". God took our place. We so often focus on the love of God to the exclusion of the justice and holiness of God. The same holiness that turned its back on sin on the cross "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" is the same holiness that rejects every particle of sin in my heart. And when the love of God and the justice of God collide, it is only the cross that offers a happy ending. That's what Easter is all about. (Adopted from article entitled *Where Love and Justice Collide*, by Ken Gire.)