

## Transcript

### The Jesus Story - Early Galilean Ministry

The more we read of what the bible has to tell about the Life of The Lord Jesus Christ, the more we realise just how little we really know.

What I would like to do today is to look at the beginning of the Early Ministry of Jesus in Galilee. To really understand the ministry of Jesus we need to look at the timescales involved.

The ministry of Jesus is divided up by most commentators into three separate segments: the Year of Inauguration; the Year of Popularity, and the Year of Opposition.

There is very little recorded about the early life of Jesus. These are referred to by most commentators as 'The Silent Years'. These would include the story of His birth; His visit to the Temple when He was twelve years old.

Perhaps the most important thing that we read concerning 'The Silent Years of Jesus' we find in Luke chapter two. Luke in just two verses describes the growth and development of Jesus after his visit to the temple. Verse 51 tells us:

***51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.***

Now verse 52 tells us:

***52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.***

That was the childhood testimony of Jesus. He was subject to his parents and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men. After the growth and quiet development of Jesus in that small town of Nazareth, everything changed.

Jesus Christ has impacted the world more than anyone who has ever lived. Without question He is in a category all by Himself.

Remember, He was a thirty-year-old carpenter from an obscure town called Nazareth who hung up His tools and began a teaching ministry, a ministry that only lasted three and a half years.

After thirty years of silence and insignificance in Nazareth, Jesus was to step out on to the public stage. Jesus had only three years to accomplish His life-work, yet He was able to ultimately influence billions of lives. No one has done that before or since.

This is what we know of His early Public Ministry. In the first year of his Public Ministry we read of his baptism. This was performed by John the Baptist in the River Jordan.

This was followed by his Temptation by Satan in the Wilderness. It is only in John's gospel account that we find a record of The Early Ministry of Jesus in Judea. We find this in John Chapter 2.

His first recorded miracle (Jn 2v1): turning water into wine at Cana. Then he cleared the temple of those who were desecrating it by (Jn 2v14) selling oxen, sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business.

Then in John chapter 3 we read the story of the meeting between Jesus and a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. Here we have the whole plan of salvation revealed with a perfect description of the Love of God (Jn 3v16).

This was followed by his meeting the Samaritan woman at a well, a meeting that had a great impact on not only the woman but also the village that she came from (Jn 4v7). Finally in chapter 4 we have the story of the miracle of the healing of the nobleman's son (Jn 4v46).

After the healing of the nobleman's son, all the gospels come together with their own accounts. Matthew 4v12 simply tells us: "He departed to Galilee." Mark 1v14 in his account tells us: "Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God." John 4v3 tells us: "He left Judea and departed again to Galilee."

It is only in Luke's account that we have the full details of just what happened there. This is what we read in Luke 4v14:

***14 Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.***

***15 And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.***

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

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

We need to take this one step at a time. He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. This was his hometown where everybody knew him as the carpenter's son. They had known him for thirty years and in that time he had not done anything remarkable except mend chairs and tables.

Now, suddenly they are hearing that he is doing extraordinary things about twenty miles away in Capernaum. So they are very keen to see him. But the people of Nazareth just could not believe that the carpenter's son who they had known all his life was really chosen by God to fulfil the glorious prophecies of Isaiah.

Jesus begins by reading a very specific prophecy, one that outlines what His earthly life and ministry will be influenced by.

The story really begins after the Baptism and Temptation of Jesus. This is where we will start today. All the gospels come together with their own accounts but, it is only in Luke's account that we have the full details of just what happened there, we need first of all to see just what happened before Jesus arrived in Galilee.

Luke 4 verses 13 and 14 tells us:

***13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.***

**14 Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.**

Between verses 13 and 14 there is a gap of about one year. During this time Jesus ministered in Judea. We have just looked at that ministry in John's gospel.

When Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee this was to begin the second year of His public ministry, His fame spread through all the surrounding region, and as He taught in the Jewish synagogues, He was widely acclaimed.

Something else we need to understand, to emphasize the nature of his ministry, Jesus does not come as a religious leader in any traditional sense. He holds no official position, nor is he specially trained to be a priest.

Instead, he takes his ministry to the city streets and roads, to homes and fields, and wherever else the common people might be found. He is particularly fond of attending the Jewish synagogues, where the common man is permitted to discuss the meaning of Jewish Scripture.

It seems to be a bit strange that the first time that Luke describes the early ministry of Jesus, that he chooses an incident when the crowd's reaction was so hostile. This could well have been because Jesus was laying out just what his public ministry was to be. This is the passage that Jesus read to them:

**18 "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed;**

**19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."**

Verse 20 then tells us: "He closed the book".

Now, we really need to take note of just where Jesus "Closed the Book". When we read the original passage in Isaiah, that Jesus was reading, it is very clear that Jesus broke off reading in the middle of a verse. The verse that Jesus chose to read from Isaiah 61, here is the full verse:

**2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God;**

Jesus takes a portion of the prophet Isaiah to describe his mission, But he closes the book before Isaiah refers to the day of vengeance of our God (Luke 4):

**20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.**

**21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."**

The reason that Jesus closed the book where he did was to show just what his present ministry would be, and this did not include the day of vengeance of our God; this would come latter. We find this described in 2 Thessalonians 1v7. Let me just read these three verses for you:

**7 When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,  
8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on  
those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of  
the Lord and from the glory of His power,**

Jesus in this, his first visit to the earth was simply to: “To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

Notice the revolutionary implications of the mission of Jesus. He came to deal with the enormous problems that have afflicted mankind throughout history:

- Poverty: to preach the gospel to the poor.
- Sorrow: to heal the broken-hearted.
- Bondage: to proclaim liberty to the captives.
- Suffering: and recovery of sight to the blind.
- Oppression: to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

In Luke 4 and verse 22 It tells us:

**22 So all bore witness to Him, and marvelled at the gracious words which  
proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”**

We find the people were obviously impressed. They spoke well of Him, having been attracted to Him by His gracious words. It was a mystery to them how Joseph’s son, the Carpenter, had developed so well and they were touched by the kind and tender words that He spoke.

But, in verse 23 we find that Jesus is aware of just what they were really thinking.

**23 He said to them, “You will surely say this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal  
yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your  
country.’”**

We find that Jesus knew that this popularity was shallow. There was no real appreciation of His true identity or worth.

To them, He was just one of their own local boys who had made good in Capernaum. At first the people listened with great interest, but, this would soon change. Soon they began to whisper among themselves:

“Why should this carpenter try to teach us?” “This man is no teacher! He is only the son of Joseph! We know his brothers, and his sisters are still living here.”

And then they begin to ask, “Why doesn’t he do here, the wonders that they say he has done in other places? We want to see some of his miracles!”

Jesus had to explain a deep rooted principle, a simple fact of life. Great men are not appreciated in their own neighbourhood. He then pointed out two incidents in the Old Testament, where two prophets of God were not appreciated by the people of Israel and so they were sent to the Gentiles.

This is what Jesus tells them in verse 24, then He said:

**24 Then He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.**

**25 “But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land;**

**26 “but to none of them was Elijah sent, except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.**

**27 “And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.**

When there was a great famine in Israel, Elijah was not sent to any Jewish widows though there were plenty of them

but he was sent to a Gentile widow in Sidon.

You remember what is told of Elijah the prophet, when the heavens were shut up and there was no rain for three years and six months. There were many poor widows in the land of Israel at that time, but Elijah was not sent by the Lord to any one of them. The Lord sent him out to the land of Zarephath, a town near Zidon, to a widow there; and there he wrought his miracles.

When the widow of Zarephath, met the prophet there is nothing to say that she had ever met the prophet before, and; what he was asking her to do seemed to be extreme. But she believed what Elijah had told her. She believed, obeyed and then witnessed the miracle. The people in Nazareth wanted to see a miracle before they believed.

And although many lepers were in Israel when Elijah was ministering, he was not sent to any of them. Instead he was sent to the Gentile Naaman, a captain of the Syrian army. All this made the people in the synagogue, very angry; for they wanted to see some miracles and not just to hear the words of Jesus.

Imagine the impact of the words of Jesus on these Jewish minds, because Jewish Culture placed women, Gentiles, and lepers at the bottom of the social scale.

The implication was that they would be judged in like manner for their rejection of Him. Enraged, they rose up to take Him out of the city and kill Him. Verse 28 tells us:

**28 So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath.**

The people of Nazareth understood exactly what He meant. They were angry by the mere suggestion of favour being shown to Gentiles. It was when Jesus reminded them of the time when God passed over the Jews, His chosen people, to favour two Gentiles, a widow in Zarephath, and Naaman, the leper. The implication was that they would be judged in like manner for their rejection of Him. Enraged, they rose up to take Him out of the city and kill Him.

This is when mob psychology took over. Jesus was forcibly removed from the synagogue and literally carried or dragged to a cliff where the entire congregation intended to kill him.

Verses 29 and 30 are really interesting:

**29 and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.**

Listen to this in verse 30:

**30 Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.**

Jesus allowed them to drag Him out of the synagogue, and to push Him to a cliff, but then, He stopped them. They had every intention of throwing Jesus off a cliff attempting to kill Him. The bible does not tell us exactly what Jesus did; only that he simply walked through the midst of them. Though they wanted to kill Him, they failed, He passed through their midst and left.

Rejected by those closest to him in Nazareth, Jesus takes his ministry to another place. Surprisingly, though, it is not to Jerusalem that Jesus goes. Despite the fact that Jerusalem is the Holy City, capital of ancient Israel, the site of the temple,

Jesus now takes his ministry mainly to Galilee. Using the city of Capernaum as a base for his travels, Jesus teaches and performs miracles around the Sea of Galilee and throughout the entire province. It is here that Jesus gains popularity among the people and begins to see the crowds swell.

This is something worth noting. There is no record anywhere that Jesus ever returned to Nazareth. They rejected him; So, he rejected them. It is amazing when you realise that the Jewish rejection of Jesus is what allowed the gospel message to move on to the Gentiles.

We who were not born of this chosen race were allowed to hear and receive this gift of eternal life. Simply because God's own people rejected the message.

Jesus' claim that "today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" places both listeners and readers in the position of having to make a choice. No fence-sitting is possible. Jesus' teaching is not some moral instruction, He is the promise of God. Either he brings God's promise or he does not.

The choice is simple enough: we can except what Jesus tells us, or we can refuse to listen to what he has to say.

Jesus now goes to make his adult home in Capernaum at the north side of the lake and settles there. Here He teaches and performs miracles; here the people are amazed and spread the knowledge of Him throughout the region, helping the spread of His ministry.

We read this story in verse 31:

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

**32 And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.**

**33 Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice,**

**34 saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are — the Holy One of God!”**

**35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him.**

**36 Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, “What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.”**

**37 And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.**

In the synagogue the people were astonished at Jesus’ teaching: “He taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes.” But they were more astonished at his power; he commanded even the unclean spirits and they obeyed him. He was not merely a teacher, but also a miracle worker; he brought not just guidance, but also active help.

In this scene Luke describes both the miracle and the people’s reaction to it. The people are amazed; and on account of this His fame spreads throughout the country.

Let’s read on a little further in verse 38:

**38 Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. But Simon’s wife’s mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her.**

**39 So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.**

After the synagogue service, Jesus went into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. In the house he healed Simon’s wife’s mother who was sick of a fever. What happened here was very simple, it was simple because Jesus was just going about everyday life; he had just come into the house of Simon when this happened.

It was caring as soon as they entered the house; they made request of Him concerning her. As soon as Jesus heard He did something about her condition. It was effective; because the fever left her; and having stood up she was serving them, life quickly returned to normal for her.

What happened here was not out of the ordinary for Jesus. Jesus spent a large amount of his time out there with real people. When others heard of the wonderful power of Jesus, and they too wanted to be healed. But in order not to break the Sabbath, they waited until sunset when the Jewish Sabbath was over.

The healing of the “possessed” man in the synagogue that morning, followed by the cure of the fever of Simon’s wife’s mother, we see how rapidly this was noised abroad. This would account for the crowds who brought their sick to him in the evening.

When we carry on reading this is what we find in verse 40:

***40 When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.***

***41 And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, “You are the Christ, the Son of God!” And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ. At sunset they brought to Jesus those who were sick and those who were possessed with demons, and Jesus put forth his divine power to heal.***

This sentence is amazing. He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. The touch of that Divine hand communicated health to the body:

***42 Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd***

That is where chapter four finishes so this is probably a good place to finish today.