

The Gospel—Mark’s Preface (Spring 29)

Mark 1:1

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

John’s Public Ministry—Historical Setting (Spring 29)

Luke 3:1–2

1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, *when* Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene,
2 in the time of the high priest Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

John’s Public Ministry—The Messiah’s Messenger (Spring 29)

Matthew 3:1–6

Mark 1:2–6

Luke 3:3–6

1 Now in those days
John the Baptist came preaching in the Judean wilderness

2 and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near!”
3 For this is the one who was spoken about by the prophet Isaiah, saying,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

4 Now John himself had his clothing made from camel’s hair and a belt made of leather around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan were going out to him,
6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River *as they* confessed their sins.

4 John was there baptizing in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

2 Just as it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“Behold, I am sending my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, [[Mal 3:1](#); [Exod 23:20](#)]

3 the voice of one shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths!’”

6 And John was dressed in camel’s hair and a belt made of leather around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

5 And all the Judean region and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem went out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

3 And he went into all the surrounding region of the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,
4 as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight!
5 Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be leveled, and the crooked will become straight, and the rough road *will become* smooth,
6 and all flesh will see the salvation of God.” [[Isa 40:3–5](#)]

John's Public Ministry—John's Preaching (Spring 29)

Matthew 3:7–10	Luke 3:7–14
<p>7 But <i>when he</i> saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”</p> <p>8 Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance!</p> <p>9 And do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham <i>as</i> father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones!</p> <p>10 Already now the ax is positioned at the root of the trees; therefore every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.</p>	<p>7 Therefore he was saying to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “Offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”</p> <p>8 Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance! And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham <i>as</i> father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones!</p> <p>9 And even now the ax is positioned at the root of the trees; therefore every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”</p> <p>10 And the crowds were asking him, saying, “What then should we do?”</p> <p>11 And he answered <i>and</i> said to them, “The one who has two tunics must share with the one who does not have <i>one</i>, and the one who has food must do likewise.”</p> <p>12 And tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what should we do?”</p> <p>13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you are ordered to.”</p> <p>14 And those who served in the army were also asking him, saying, “What should we also do?” And he said to them, “Extort from no one, and do not blackmail <i>anyone</i>, and be content with your pay.”</p>

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Chronological Notes

1) Jesus' Public Ministry.

- A) Luke 3:1 places Jesus' baptism in the “fifteenth year of Tiberius.” Most historians and many biblical scholars put Tiberius' 15th year in AD 29.¹ “Because of the difficulty of fitting the entire ministry of Jesus into a one and one-half year period, from ancient times the most favored view is that Jesus had a 3½ year ministry. The Gospel of John explicitly mentions a number of feasts, including three Passovers (first: John 2:13, 23; second: 6:4; third: 11:55 [twice]; 12:1; 13:1; 18:39; 19:14), Tabernacles (John 7:2), Dedication (John 10:22) and an unnamed feast, which must be either Tabernacles or Pentecost (John 5:1). In addition, the Synoptic Gospels report the disciples plucking grain near the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry when John is silent about a Passover. This implies a fourth Passover during Jesus' ministry (Matt 12:1; Mark 2:23; Luke 6:1). Since Jesus' baptism took place before the first Passover mentioned in John (John 1:32), Jesus' ministry began some months before. Therefore, the Gospel of John implies a 3½ year ministry.”²

2) Order of events.

- A) The synoptic gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke—all have the same general order of events for Jesus' life and ministry. While the Synoptics disagree on the order of events within certain time periods (e.g., Galilean

¹ See the extensive discussion in Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 329–49. Note Finegan's conclusion on p. 340, #583, which I follow in this synopsis. Also see Brian Messner, “‘In the Fifteenth Year’ Reconsidered: A Study of Luke 3:1,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 1 (Fall 1998): 201–211.

² Steinmann, 260–61.

Ministry), overall the order is chronological: Jesus' birth, John's ministry, Jesus' ministry, the Passion Week, the Resurrection and the Ascension. In cases of disagreement on ordering, my synopsis will be following Mark's order of events. This is in keeping with the majority of harmonies available today (e.g., A. T. Robertson, R. L. Thomas & S. Gundry, Kurt Aland, Floyd Jones, S. L. Cox & K. H. Easley, Orville Daniel, Ralph D. Heim, George W. Knight, E. Burton & E. J. Goodspeed, J. F. Carter, Mark A. Fahling, Burton H. Throckmorton, E. Robinson & Riddle, John MacArthur, F. R. Coulter).³ One notable exception is Bernard Orchard, whose *A Synopsis of the Four Gospels in Greek* is the only implementation of the Two-Gospel Hypothesis (2GH) of which I am aware (following Matthean priority).

³ This is due to the fact that most scholars believe that Mark was written first (known as Markan priority). See the discussions in D. A. Carson & Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Second Ed., (Zondervan, 2005): 77–104 and Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009): 158–175.