

The Gospel—Mark’s Preface (Spring 29)

Mark 1:1

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

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 Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene,
 2 in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, 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 wilderness of Judea, saying,
 2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
 3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said,
 “THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!’”
 4 Now John himself had a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.
 5 Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan;
 6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:
 “BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY; [[Mal 3:1](#); [Exod 23:20](#)]
 3 THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.’”
 6 John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and his diet was locusts and wild honey.
 5 And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

3 And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;
 4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,
 “THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.
 5 ‘EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS 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 when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”</p> <p>8 Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;</p> <p>9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.</p> <p>10 The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.</p>	<p>7 So he <i>began</i> saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”</p> <p>8 Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father,’ for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.</p> <p>9 Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”</p> <p>10 And the crowds were questioning him, saying, “Then what shall we do?”</p> <p>11 And he would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.”</p> <p>12 And <i>some</i> tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?”</p> <p>13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.”</p> <p>14 <i>Some</i> soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And <i>what about</i> us, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse <i>anyone</i> falsely, and be content with your wages.”</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

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.

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 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).

² Steinmann, 260–61.

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.