

05. Mark 1:14-15

“The Messiah’s Ministry”

(9/27/26)

Mark 1:12–15 (NKJV)

¹² Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. ¹³ And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him. ¹⁴ Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

Now Mark, for reasons of brevity, doesn’t discuss the ministry that Jesus conducted in Judea *before* departing to Galilee.

Jesus’ Judean ministry lasted almost a year—a period that is covered in John’s gospel chapters 1–4 and fits between Mark 1:13 and 14.

Mark takes us from the temptation in the wilderness directly to the Galilean ministry of Jesus.

The question is—why did Jesus end His Judean ministry to go north into Galilee?

Mark tells us it was because John the Baptist had been put in prison—but why was John put in prison?

Matthew gives us the details—

Matthew 14:3–4 (NKJV)

³ For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. ⁴ Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

What happened was that Herod Antipas (the Herod of Matthew 14) had paid a visit to his brother Philip in Rome.

Antipas was married to the daughter of a Nabatean king but while in Rome he fell in love with his brother's wife, Herodias.

Herod enticed her to leave Philip and return with him to become his wife—which she agreed to.

And so, he brought her home where he immediately divorced his own wife and married his sister-in-law.

John, being a straight shooter, rebuked Herod publicly for his immorality.

Now Herod was fascinated with John and called him many times to sit and talk with him—why, we're not sure.

Maybe he was fascinated with John's ascetic lifestyle, how John could be happy living out in the open country, sleeping under the stars and living on a simple diet of locusts and wild honey.

Herod was just the opposite—he indulged himself with food, drink, sex and every other luxury money could buy and still he was never satisfied.

So, John's life fascinated Herod and he enjoyed spending time with John.

But now in the face of this immorality John condemns Herod (and Herodias) publicly, which made Herod mad—but it made Herodias furious!

She saw red and wanted John's head—literally!

And so **“Herod had laid hold on John, bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake (v.3).”**

She was the real power behind the throne, pressuring her husband to put John to death—

Matthew 14:5 (NKJV)

⁵ And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

So instead, Herod arrested John and imprisoned him.

Jesus had taken His message to the Jews first that He was their Messiah and King but when John, who was the King's herald, was rejected and imprisoned—it meant that Jesus was being rejected by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem as well.

And so, to avoid any confrontation with Herod and the Jewish leadership, because His time had not yet come—He went north into Galilee.

Jesus knew that His rejection by the Jews would result in the gospel going out to the Gentiles—even as God had prophesied centuries earlier through Isaiah the prophet (9:1-2).

You see, Galilee was predominately Gentile in its population, which is why it is referred to as the *“Galilee of the Gentiles”* (Matt. 4:15)—although it did have a large number of Jewish cities and citizens as well.

The area of the Galilee was a densely populated region covering an area measuring roughly 30 miles wide by 60 miles long with a combined population of about 3 million people.

Matthew's account provides a lot more detail—so turn to Matthew chapter 4.

Most of Jesus' public ministry was conducted up in the Galilee—

Matthew 4:12–13 (NKJV)

¹² Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. ¹³ And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,

In the conquest of Canaan under Joshua the area that came to be known as Galilee was settled by the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali.

Matthew 4:14–17 (NKJV)

¹⁴ that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ¹⁵ “*The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:* ¹⁶ *The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.*” ¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Here the Lord speaking through the prophet Isaiah calls the region of the Galilee the “*region and shadow of death*” because the Gentiles fought so many wars in this area over the centuries that the shadow of death seemed to continually hover over the entire region.

However, from a spiritual standpoint, the Gentiles living in this area were so numerous and their pagan practices so pervasive that a cloud of spiritual darkness and death hung over this region as well.

And this gets into our study for this morning—a message I'm calling—“*The Messiah's Ministry*”.

I. The Messiah's Ministry

Matthew 4:23-24 (NKJV)

²³ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. ²⁴ Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.

In these verses we have an overview of Jesus' ministry—He preached, He taught and He worked miracles of healing—and as a result His fame spread throughout all the land of Israel and beyond so much so that v.25 tells us—

“Great multitudes followed Him--from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan”.

Now in subsequent chapters we will look at the ministry of Jesus in greater detail, but for this morning I want focus our attention on the *description* of Jesus' ministry rather than on the *details* of His ministry.

A. The ministry of Jesus brought Light

Matthew 4:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ *The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.*

The first description we are given about the nature of Jesus' ministry is that—it brought **light** to places that had only known darkness and with-it—life to those people who had only known spiritual death!

And notice that the word “**Light**” at the end of v.16 is capitalized and that's because it's referring to a Person and not a thing—in other words it is a title for Jesus Himself!

In John's gospel ch.1:9 Jesus is called the “*True Light*” who gives light to every person born in this world.

In Luke's gospel chapter 2 when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus, who was only 8 days old at this time, to be circumcised in the Temple.

We read how that Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God by saying—

Luke 2:29-32 (NKJV)

²⁹ "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation ³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, ³² A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Of course, the idea of '*light*' here is a reference to spiritual truth ('revelation'—explain) which alone can pierce the darkness of Satan's deception and bring eternal life to those living in the "*shadow of death*" spiritually speaking.

Jesus, when He called Paul the apostle to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, described what his ministry would be all about this way—

Acts 26:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

In John's gospel ch.8:12 Jesus Himself said, "*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life (i.e. "the truth of God which brings eternal life").*"

How did Jesus bring this light to Galilee—by declaring God's divine truth—how did He do that—first of all through preaching the gospel.

B. The ministry of Jesus involved Preaching

Matthew 4:23 (NKJV)

²³ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom...

The word for ‘**preach**’ is a Greek word that means to “*announce*” or to “*proclaim*”. The word ‘**gospel**’ means ‘*good news*’.

And so, Jesus’ preaching ministry consisted of announcing the good news of the coming Kingdom.

That Kingdom will not be established until Jesus returns at His Second Coming and He rules over the whole earth from Jerusalem.

However, Jesus preached right here that the Kingdom of Heaven “**is at hand**” or “*has come near*.”

The Kingdom had come near because the King had come near through the incarnation (John 1:14).

And to anyone who receives Jesus into their heart as King over their life right now it means that the Kingdom has come near to them as well (is established in their heart)—because the Kingdom is anywhere the King reigns!

But Jesus also preached that the only way to enter or be a part of the Kingdom was through repentance—

Matthew 4:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

The word *repentance* comes from the Greek word “*metanoia*” which means more than simply regret or sorrow—it means to have a change of mind that leads to a change of direction.

Repentance is the first step before a person can believe the gospel and be saved.

Jesus said this in Mark 1:15—“**Repent, and believe in the gospel.**”

But that’s the problem today, many people don’t think they need to repent for the way they’re living because they don’t feel they’re doing anything wrong. (Explain)

Now Hollywood has portrayed many ‘*hellfire and damnation preachers*’ in the movies as red eyed, fire-breathing nut jobs screaming “repent!” at sinners almost as an accusation rather than how Jesus proclaimed it to sinners as an invitation. (Explain)

So, first of all, Jesus went around preaching that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.

Secondly, He went around **teaching** in the synagogues of Galilee (Matt. 4:23a).

C. The ministry of Jesus was built on Teaching

Jesus went into the synagogues in Galilee and opened the Jewish Scriptures and taught them how they all spoke of Him—even as He said:

Psalm 40:7 (NKJV)

⁷ Then I said, “Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book [*the O.T. Scriptures*] it is written of me.

John 5:39–40 (NKJV)

³⁹ You [*religious leaders of Israel*] search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰ But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

He also testified of this on the road to Emmaus with two of His disciples the afternoon of His resurrection—as recorded in Luke 24:27—

Luke 24:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Today when I think of preaching and teaching—I think of preaching as something we do when we want to reach the lost with the gospel, and teaching as something we do for those who are saved and now need to grow in the faith.

This is one of the great flaws in *'seeker-sensitive'* churches, and the main reason why many of their members don't grow—it's because the pastor is a *preacher* who keeps giving his people the gospel every week instead of a *teacher* who feeds his flock on the Word of God so they can grow.

Spiritual leaders that don't feed the flock of God His Word is the very thing God condemned the spiritual leaders of Israel for not doing when He promised His people that someday—*"I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding."* (Jer. 3:15)

That promise started to be fulfilled with the coming of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

D. The ministry of Jesus included miracles and healings

Matthew 4:23-24 (NKJV)

²³ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. ²⁴ Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.

The term "*diseases and torments*" could cover almost any disease.

In those days, because of all the spiritism, occult practices, pagan worship, especially among the Gentiles—demonic possession was common.

As we read the gospels, we see that demonic possession often resulted in *epileptic* type fits and other physical infirmities and psychological torments and disorders.

I believe that many people in our country who are in psych-wards for emotional disorders could be demonically oppressed or even possessed—and they don't need drugs they need deliverance!

The miracles that Jesus performed were for the purpose of authenticating His ministry as Messiah.

Jesus said to His disciples in the upper room the night before His crucifixion,
"Believe who I am because of the words I speak or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves because they testify to who I am." (John 14:11)

When John the Baptist was in prison at one point, he began to doubt that Jesus was really the Messiah (*because He wasn't organizing a revolt to overthrow the Romans and set up the Kingdom*) and so he sent some of his disciples to Jesus to ask Him,

"Are You really the One we've been waiting for or should we look for another?"

Matthew 11:4-6 (NKJV)

⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵ *The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.* ⁶ And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

This was to remind John of what the prophet Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah's ministry (Isa. 11 and 35).

Miracles were designed to authenticate Jesus as the one and only true Messiah and Son of God sent from the Father.

John 20:30-31 (NKJV)

³⁰ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

The result of these great miracles was great multitudes—

Matthew 4:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ Great multitudes followed Him--from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

“**Syria**” (v.24) refers to an area in northern Galilee.

“**Decapolis**” means “*ten cities*” and was a district made up of ten cities originally built by followers of Alexander the Great.

The Decapolis was in the northeastern part of Galilee.

“**Beyond Jordan**” means Perea, the area east of the Jordan.

News traveled fast, and those who had afflicted friends or family members brought them to Jesus for healing.

The healing became a platform for Jesus to conduct His main ministry—to bring the light of God’s truth to fallen men and women.

So, Jesus’ ministry was all about bringing the light of God (the truth of God, the gospel) to the spiritual and moral darkness of this fallen world.

But not everyone appreciates the light nor wants to forsake the darkness they are living in—

John 3:16–21 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the

light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”