

Session 2 Overview of the Life and Times of Jesus Christ

I. OVERVIEW OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL

- A. ***Israel***: The land averaged about 70 miles in width and about 150 miles in length. West of the Jordan it was divided into Galilee, Samaria, and Judea; east of the Jordan into Decapolis and Perea.
1. ***Galilee***: about 50 miles long and 25 miles wide. Its major city, Capernaum, was Jesus' headquarters (Mt.4:13). Other cities included Cana, Nazareth, Bethsaida, and Nain.
 2. ***Samaria***: about 30 miles long and 25 miles wide. Samaria was a province which also had a city named Samaria. Other Samaritan cities included Sychar, Aanan, and Salim.
 3. ***Judea***: about 50 miles long and 30 miles wide. One half of Judea was desert called the *wilderness of Judea*. Cities included Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Emmaus, and Jericho.
 4. ***Perea***: This was a region east of the Jordan known as the region "*Beyond the Jordan*" (Mt. 4:15, 25; Mk. 3:7-8).
 5. ***Decapolis***: a group of ten cities east of the Jordan that were predominately Greeks. The word *deca* means ten. They formed a league that helped Rome resist Jewish uprisings.
- B. ***Jordan River***: It runs north-south for about 80 miles connecting the Sea of Galilee (in the north) and the Dead Sea (in the south).
- C. ***Sea of Galilee***: This sea was called by four names in the Bible—Sea of Galilee, Lake of Gennesaret (Lk. 5:1), Sea of Tiberias (Jn. 6:1; 21:1), and the Sea of Chinnereth (Num. 34:11; Josh. 12:3; 13:27). It is 60 miles from Jerusalem. Nine cities totaling over 15,000 people bordered this sea resulting in much commercial traffic; therefore, there were many tax collectors and Roman soldiers.

II. CLIMATE

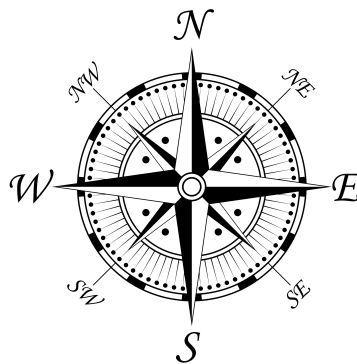
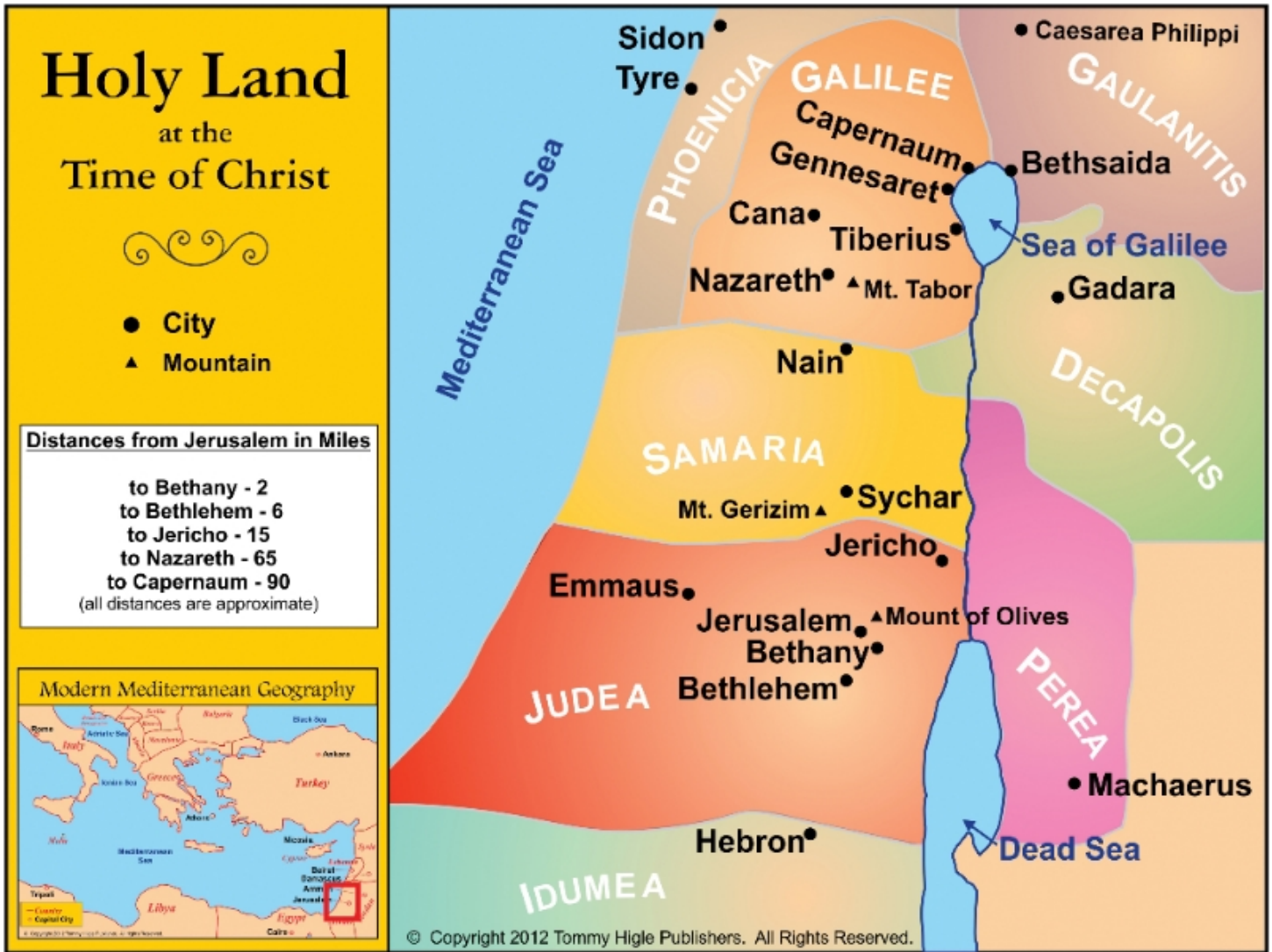
- A. There is variance of elevation throughout the land from Mt. Hermon (Galilee), which is 9000' above sea level with snow-capped mountains, to the Judean desert (in the south) 1300' below sea level.
- B. The two general seasons are winter (November to April) which is moist, mild, and rainy, and summer (May to October), which is hot with little rain. The weather in Israel is similar to California.

III. THE MAIN LANGUAGES

- A. Three languages were spoken by people who lived in Israel— Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic.
- B. The language that was primarily spoken by Jesus was Aramaic (after the Babylonian exile).

IV. GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL

- A. Israel was a predominately Jewish community that was governed by Rome from 63 BC until AD 70. The Roman Emperor **Augustus** died in AD 14. The Emperor **Tiberius** reigned from AD 14-37. **Pontius Pilate** was governor over Judea (AD 26-36); Felix (AD 52-58); Festus (AD 59-62).
- B. Rome ruled Israel through Jewish rulers appointed by Rome. For over 60 years the Herodian family was in power. Herod was not a personal name, but a family name. All descendants of Herod the Great (who died in 4 BC) to the 4th generation identified with the government were called “Herod.” A **ethnarch** ruled a significant part of a Roman province and a **tetrarch** ruled a fourth of a province.
1. First generation: **King Herod the Great** (37–4 BC).
 2. Second generation: **Herod Antipas** was the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (BC 4-AD 39).
 3. Third generation: **King Herod Agrippa I** ruled all Judea under Rome (AD 37-44).
- C. **Sanhedrin**: It began officially about 50 BC and was a council of 70 Jewish elders led by a high priest picked to represent the interests of the Jews before Rome. They had power to legislate many internal affairs dealing with the Jewish life and religion. They had limited yet significant authority.
- D. **Scribes**: The appearance of scribes began with the return of Jews from Babylonian captivity with Ezra (Neh. 8-10). They were the teachers of the Law with the highest spiritual influence in Israel.
- E. **Pharisees**: This group arose approximately 150 BC and came from the ranks of the scribes. They began in an effort to preserve the Law from being compromised. They taught extra laws to help apply the written word. These laws were referred to as the *oral law* or the *tradition of the elders*.
- F. **Sadducees**: They also began about 150 BC and were a religious party from the ranks of the priests. The high priestly family belonged to the Sadduceen party which was small in number yet were comprised of wealthy Jewish men. They were “the liberals” who believed neither in physical resurrection nor eternal judgment.
- G. **Essenes**: This was an ascetic community of men that began about 100 BC.
- H. **Zealots**: This was a Jewish patriotic party formed to resist Roman aggression. They sought the Messiah’s reign to establish Jerusalem as the political head of the earth versus the spiritual head. They resorted to violence and assassination in their hatred of Rome.
- I. **SUMMARY**: There were three schools of thought among the Jews: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. The Essenes were strict predestinarians. The Sadducees insisted that all things happened in accordance with man’s free will, while the Pharisees occupied a middle position which gave room for both God’s sovereign predestination and man’s responsibility of free choice.



V. PROBLEMS AND PRINCIPLES OF HARMONIZATION

- A. When we consider the manner in which Jesus' words are reported, we see the accounts of His words sometimes differ. One report of the same conversation, or discourse, may be more or less complete than another's.
1. Sometimes the differences in details appear as contradictions. Synonyms may be substituted, verb voice or tense changed, or nouns replaced by pronouns. Occasionally, the same or similar statements will be found in different context.
 2. It is easy to imagine various people with journalism skills taking detailed notes during many of Jesus' messages and even allowing Jesus to review them for accuracy. Thus, a large body of written information could have existed from which the gospel writers used as a primary main resource. There were people skillful in capturing what He said by "shorthand."
- B. Somewhat similar messages and events occur in different situations. Sometimes what appears to be the same event will be related in a different order in another gospel. No single gospel recorded everything that was said or done in a specific occasion. In fact, it is doubtful that any combination of parallel accounts records the entirety of a speech or dialogue or the actions of people.
- C. Christ surely repeated some of His teachings in slightly differing forms in the same messages and then spoke that message on different occasions just as preachers today do. Instances where parallel accounts report the same substance in different forms may be due to similar statements being made in the same message. Each gospel writer selected only a part of what was said for his account. I assume that no one gospel ever recorded the entire public sermon.
1. For example, consider the first beatitude. Matthew relates, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:3), while Luke writes, "Blessed are you who are poor, for YOURS is the kingdom of God" (Lk. 6:20). Jesus may have repeated this beatitude in a few different ways in His Sermon on the Mount. If so, He used third person once, second person another time, and referred to the kingdom by two different titles.
 2. The parable of the mustard tree (Mt. 13:32; Mk. 4:31) may illustrate Jesus repeating something in slightly different form on the same occasion. According to Matthew He said that the birds of the air rest "in its branches," but according to Mark they rest "under its shade." He probably said both. According to Matthew, Jesus in His Olivet discourse gives the claim of future impostors as "I am the Christ" (Matt. 24:5), but Mark and Luke quote Him as saying, "I am (He)" (Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8). Minor variations of this type are quite numerous.
- D. Jesus spoke three languages, as did many of His contemporaries. In many cases the Greek text reporting what someone said is actually a translation of what was originally said in Aramaic or Hebrew. In translation a certain amount of variation is possible; seldom, if ever, is there only one way to translate from one language into another.
- E. To some people, these dynamics make them question the inspiration and inerrancy of the gospels. Most harmonistic problems can be resolved when certain common sense principles of reporting and writing are applied.

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS

SECTION	MT.	MK.	LK.	JN.	DATE
Part 1: Jesus' pre-existence and genealogy					
1. Jesus' pre-incarnate existence				1:1-5	
2. Jesus' human ancestry	1:1-17		3:23-38		
Part 2: Jesus and John the Baptist birth to manhood (about 30 yrs.)				6 BC to AD 26	
3. Angel announced John's birth to Zacharias (temple)			1:5-25		early 6 BC
4. Gabriel foretold Jesus' birth to Mary (Nazareth)			1:26-38		late 6 BC
5. Joseph's dream about the virgin birth (Nazareth)	1:18-25				
6. Birth of Jesus (Bethlehem)			2:1-7		late 5 BC
7. Angelic proclamation to the shepherds (field near Bethlehem)			2:8-20		
8. Magi visited Jesus in Bethlehem	2:1-12				
9. Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Egypt	2:13-18				5 BC
10. Returned to Nazareth (Galilee)	2:19-23		2:39		4 BC
Part 3: John's ministry and Jesus' temptation (about 6 months)				AD 26	
11. John preaching (wilderness/Jordan River)	3:1-10	1:1-6	3:1-14		early AD 26
12. Jesus baptized, then the temptation	3:13-4:11	1:9-13	3:21-4:13		late AD 26
Part 4: Beginning of Jesus' public ministry (mostly Judea)				early AD 27	
13. Jesus met Andrew, Peter, Phillip, Nathanael (Bethany)				1:35-51	
14. First miracle—changing water to wine (Cana in Galilee)				2:1-11	spring
15. To Capernaum with His family and disciples (20 miles from Cana)				2:12	
16. First cleansing of temple during first Passover (90 miles to Jerusalem)				2:13-22	April
17. Miracles at Jerusalem lead many to believe				2:23-25	
18. Nicodemus questioned Jesus during the Passover in Jerusalem				3:1-21	
19. Jesus returned to Galilee through Samaria				4:1-4	
20. Samaritan woman at the well (Sychar in Samaria)				4:5-26	
21. John is imprisoned by Herod (in <i>Machaerus</i>)	14:3-5	6:17-20	3:19-20		
Part 5: Jesus' ministry moved to Galilee (about 18 months)			autumn AD 27 to spring AD 29		
22. Received in synagogues in Galilee			4:14-15	4:45	autumn
23. Capernaum royal official's son healed (Galilee)				4:46-54	
24. First rejection in Nazareth			4:16-30		
25. Moved to Capernaum (20 miles from Nazareth)	4:13-17	1:14b-15	4:31a		
26. Healed Peter's mother-in-law (Capernaum)	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39		
27. Many healed as whole town gathered at the door	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41		
28. First preaching tour in Galilee (about 4 months)	4:23-24	1:39	4:44		early AD 28
29. Called Matthew also named Levi (Capernaum)	9:9	2:14	5:27-28		
30. Returned to Jerusalem (second Passover)			5:1		April AD 28
31. Healed lame man causing Sabbath controversy			5:2-9		
32. Leaders sought to kill Jesus (Jerusalem)			5:10-18		
33. Jesus proclaiming equality with God (Jerusalem)				5:19-47	

SECTION	MT.	MK.	LK	JN.	DATE
34. Returned to Galilee (90 miles from Jerusalem)				6:1	May
35. Picking grain causing Sabbath controversy (Galilee)	12:1-8	2:23-28	6:1-5		August
36. Healed withered hand causing Sabbath controversy	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11		
37. Spent night in prayer (mountain near the sea)		3:13	6:12		
38. Ordained the 12 apostles	5:1	3:13-19	6:13-16		August
39. Sermon on the Mount (Galilean mountain)	5:2-7:27		6:20-49		
40. Centurion's servant healed (Capernaum)	8:5-13		7:2-10		
41. Multitudes to Nain (25 miles from Capernaum)			7:11		September
42. A widow's son raised from the dead (Nain)			7:12-17		
43. Woes upon Chorazin, Capernaum (Galilee)	11:20-30				
44. Second tour of Galilee with the 12			8:1		autumn AD 28
45. Women support Galilean tour			8:2-3		
46. Friends and family call Jesus "crazy" (Galilee)		3:20-21			
47. First public rejection by Jewish leaders (Galilee)	12:22-37	3:22-30			
48. Crossed the sea and calmed a storm	8:18-28	4:35-5:1	8:22-26		November
49. Healed Gadarenes demoniac	8:28-34	5:2-20	8:27-39		
50. Healed woman who touched His garment and raised Jarius' daughter raised (Capernaum?)	9:18-26	5:22-43	8:41-56		
51. Final visit to Nazareth (20 miles from the sea)	13:54-58	6:1-6a			November
52. Third (final) tour of Galilee; pray for laborers	9:35-38	6:6			winter AD 28
53. Commissioned and sent out the 12	10:1-42	6:7-13	9:1-6		early AD 29
54. The 12 returned and reported to Jesus (Galilee)		6:30	9:10		
55. Feeding 5,000 by Sea of Galilee (third Passover)	14:15-21	6:35-44	9:12-17	6:4-13	
56. Refused to be made their king (by Sea of Galilee)				6:14-15	
57. Walked on the water (storm on Sea of Galilee)	14:24-33	6:47-52		6:16-21	
58. Arrived at Gennesaret and did many miracles	14:34-36	6:53-56			
Part 6: The training of the 12—Galilee (about 6 months)					May-Oct AD 29
59. Withdrew to Tyre (35 miles from Capernaum)	15:21	7:24			May
60. Healed the Syrophenician demoniac	15:22-28	7:24-30			
61. Arrived in Decapolis (about 50 miles from Tyre)		15:29	7:31		June
62. Many healed; notably a deaf man (Decapolis)	15:30-31	7:32-37			
63. Feeding 4,000 (Decapolis)	15:32-38	8:1-9			
64. To Caesarea Philippi (25 miles from Bethsaida)	16:13	8:27a			
65. Peter's confession of Jesus as Son of God	16:13-20	8:27b-30	9:18-21		August
66. First prediction of His death (Caesarea)	16:21-26	8:31-9:1	9:22-27		
67. Transfiguration (Mt. Hermon near Caesarea)	17:1-13	9:2-13	9:28-36		
68. Second prediction of death (road to Capernaum)	17:22-23	9:31-32	9:43b-45		
69. Resolute to go to Jerusalem (thru Samaria)	19:1	10:1	9:51-52		
70. James and John desiring to call down fire			9:53-56		autumn

SECTION	MT.	MK.	LK	JN.	DATE
Part 7: Jesus' ministry in Judea (about 3 months)				autumn AD 29	
71.				7:10	
72.				7:11-52	
73.				8:1-11	
74.			8:31-59		
75.			10:1-16		autumn
76.			10:17-24		autumn
77.			10:25-37		
78.			10:38-42		
79.			11:14-36		
80.			11:37-54		
81.			12:1-12		
82.			12:54-59		
83.			13:10-21		
84.				9:1-41	
85.				10:19-21	
86.				10:22-39	winter
Part 8: Ministry in Perea (about 3 months)				early AD 30	
87.			13:22	10:40-42	
88.			13:23-30		
89.			13:32-35		
90.			14:1-6		
91.			14:7-24		
92.			14:25-35		
93.			15:1-32		
94.			16:1-13		
95.				11:1-46	
96.				11:47-53	
97.				11:54	
98.			17:11		February
99.			17:12-21		
100.			17:22-37		
101.	19:1	10:1			
102.	19:2				March
103.	19:16-30	10:17-31	18:18-30		
104.	20:29	10:46			
105.	20:30-34	10:46-52	18:35-43		
106.			19:1-10		
107.				11:55-57	
108.				12:1	
109.	26:6-13	14:3-9		12:2-8	
110.				12:9	
111.				12:10-11	

SECTION	MT.	MK.	LK.	JN.	DATE
Part 9: Messiah formally entered Jerusalem as Messiah (4th Passover)					April AD 30
112. Disciples were sent to bring a donkey to Jesus	21:1-6	11:1-6	19:29-34		
113. Stopped outside Jerusalem to weep over city			19:41-44		
114. Triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Sunday)	21:6-11	11:7-11	19:34-38	12:12-19	April
115. Second cleansing of temple and healed people	21:12-22	11:15-18	19:45-48		
116. Jesus asked about the Christ as Son of David	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44		
117. 7-fold rebuke to scribes/Pharisees (temple)	23:13-36				
118. Second lament over Jerusalem (temple)	23:37-39				
119. Prophesied the destruction of the temple	24:1-2	13:1-2	21:5-6		
120. Teaching on the end times (Mt. of Olives)	24:3-31	13:3-27	21:7-28		
121. Passover meal and foot washing (upper room)	26:20-25	14:17-21	22:14-23	13:1-20	
122. First prediction of Peter's denial (upper room)			22:31-38		
123. Teaching after breaking of bread (upper room)				14:1-16:33	
124. Jesus' intercession (upper room)				17:1-26	
125. Second prediction of Peter's denial (Gethsemane)	26:30-35	14:27-31			
126. Jesus' agonizing prayers in (Gethsemane)	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:40-46		
Part 10: Jesus' death and resurrection					
127. Betrayal and arrest (Mt. of Olives)	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12	
128. 1 st Jewish phase: Before Annas				18:13-24	
129. 2 nd Jewish phase: Caiaphas/Sanhedrin	26:57-68	14:53-65	22:54		
130. Peter's denials (courtyard of Caiaphas)	26:69-75	14:66-72	22:55-65	18:25-27	
131. 3 rd Jewish phase: condemned by Sanhedrin	27:1	15:1a	22:66-71		
132. Suicide of Judas (Acts 1:18-19)	27:3-10				
133. 1 st Roman phase: 1 st trial before Pilate	27:2, 11-14	15:1b-5	23:1-5	18:28-38	
134. 2 nd Roman phase: Before Herod Antipas			23:6-12		
135. 3 rd Roman phase: 2 nd trial before Pilate					
136. Crucifixion (6 hours) Golgotha	27:35-56	15:24-41	23:33-49	19:18-37	
137. Tomb guarded by Roman guard	27:62-66				
138. The stone was rolled away by angels	28:2-4				
139. Tomb found empty by women	28:5-6	16:2-8	24:1-8	20:1	
140. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene		16:9-11		20:11-18	
141. Jesus appeared to other women (Jerusalem)	28:9-10				
142. Soldiers report to Jewish authorities	28:11-15				
143. Appearance to 2 disciples on Emmaus road		16:12-13	24:13-32		
144. Peter and John report to the others (Jerusalem)			24:33-35		
145. Appearance to the 10 apostles (Jerusalem)		16:14	24:36-43	20:19-25	
146. Appearance to all 11 apostles (Jerusalem) 15:5b				20:26-31	
147. Appearance to 7 apostles, fishing (Sea Galilee)				21:1-25	
148. Great Commission to apostles (Mt. in Galilee)	28:16-20	16:15-18			
149. Appearance to disciples in Jerusalem (Acts 1:3-8)			24:44-49		
150. Ascension from the Mt. of Olives (Acts 1:9-12)		16:19-20	24:50-53		