

ROSE CHRONOLOGICAL GUIDE TO THE BIBLE



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Early Ministry

Matthew 3–4; Mark 1; Luke 3–4; John 1–4

When Jesus was about the age of thirty, many people were streaming into the wilderness northeast of Jerusalem to listen to a fiery, mesmerizing prophet named John. (Jesus was actually a relative of John; see Luke 1:36.) John was calling people to repent and prepare for the Messiah's coming. John was baptizing in the Jordan River all those who were receptive to his message. When some people began asking if he was the promised Messiah, John quickly insisted that he was only a lowly servant preparing the way for God's anointed: "One who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie" (Luke 3:16).

Shortly after this, Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth, stepped out of the crowd. John pointed at him and declared that he was "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John

1:29). Jesus was baptized by John to identify with John and his message and the sinners Jesus had come to save. At Jesus' baptism, he was anointed by the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven in the form of a dove and affirmed as the Son of God by an audible voice from heaven. Then, immediately, he was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to overcome the temptations of the devil (Mark 1:12–13).

After these events, Jesus began a three-year public ministry. He gathered a few disciples and quickly began to shock them with his words and works.

At a wedding in Cana of Galilee, Jesus miraculously changed water into wine, his first recorded miracle (John 2:1–11). Not only did this miracle reveal that Jesus was no mere man, but it also suggested that he had come to bring ultimate joy. Wine in the Bible is a symbol of gladness and blessing: "The LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine" (Isa. 25:6).



He Wept over It by Enrique Simonet, 1892

In Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, Jesus angrily drove merchants from the temple courts. He reflected God's disgust with empty religion, and he displayed a "zeal" for God's house just as the Scriptures said the Messiah would (Ps. 69:9; John 2:17).

While in Jerusalem, Jesus had a lengthy spiritual conversation with a Pharisee named Nicodemus, one of Israel's most prominent religious leaders. The gist of Jesus' message was that spiritual rebirth, not religious effort, is what makes a person right with God: "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again" (John 3:3).

In Samaria, Jesus stunned his disciples by demonstrating grace to a Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well. Through her testimony, many Samaritans came to believe in Jesus (John 4:1–42). Jews in Jesus' day usually avoided the region of Samaria and looked down upon the Samaritan people. Jesus' actions showed his love for all people.



Christ and Samaritan Woman by Henryk Siemiradzki, 1890

First-century Jewish rabbis typically selected their students from among the brightest and best, those actively pursuing advanced training in the Mosaic law. Not Jesus. At the beginning of his ministry, he plucked unlikely

disciples out of fishing boats and tax offices. These were "unschooled, ordinary men" (Acts 4:13), not the sort around whom most leaders would try to build a religious movement. He spent the bulk of his time with these twelve men, inviting them to watch and learn from him. He wanted them to become disciples who would make disciples.

Teachings and Miracles

Matthew 5–20; Mark 2–10; Luke 5–19; John 5–12

Jesus taught constantly, sharing the deep truths of God. He taught in synagogues, the temple courts, people's homes, and outdoor settings. He preached in all sorts of contexts to huge crowds and small groups. He often seized on "chance" encounters to illustrate and explain spiritual truths to spiritually curious individuals. His authoritative words always left people scratching their heads in amazement: "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Matt. 7:28–29).

He delivered a wide range of messages in which he touched on a host of topics: anger, resolving conflict, adultery, divorce, revenge, prayer, fasting, worry, religious persecution, the future, the Holy Spirit, servanthood, finding true rest, and so much more. Often in his discourses, he highlighted the sharp differences between God's kingdom and the kingdom of this world. In his famous Sermon on the Mount, he made clear the differences between these two ways of living (Matt. 5–7).

In the Kingdom of This World	In Christ's Kingdom
Only those who are competent and “together” are welcomed.	Only those who know they are desperate and needy are accepted (Matt. 5:3).
Suffering for any reason is to be avoided.	Suffering for righteousness is expected and will be rewarded (Matt. 5:10–12).
You treat others the way they treat you.	You show your enemies extravagant forgiveness and love (Matt. 5:38–48).
You do good things in order to be noticed and praised by others.	You do good things quietly, without any thought of impressing others (Matt. 6:1–6).
You stockpile all the wealth you can.	You store up treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:19–21).
You spend a lot of time and energy obsessing over clothing and food and such matters.	You concern yourself with spiritual and eternal matters (Matt. 6:33).
You point out and critique the flaws of others.	You focus on your own shortcomings (Matt. 7:1–5).
You're expected to go along with the crowd.	You're called to take the narrow road that leads to life (Matt. 7:14).

Jesus also taught in parables. In fact, of the recorded teachings of Jesus, about a third are parables. Parables are short, memorable, image-rich stories that reveal a truth about God or about how his kingdom works. They include stories like the one about the good Samaritan, which challenged listeners to consider what it really means to love your neighbor; and the parable of the prodigal son, which revealed God's unending love for all his children. To the spiritually disinterested, parables didn't mean much. To the spiritually hungry, however, parables packed a punch. Each one prompted healthy soul-searching, and called for a response to a certain heavenly reality.

As Jesus was preaching the gospel and teaching about the kingdom of God, he punctuated his ministry with breathtaking miracles. His ministry involved “healing every disease and sickness among the people” (Matt. 4:23). Jesus gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. He corrected deformities and cured paralysis. Sometimes he healed by physically touching the sick, and sometimes

the sick found healing by simply touching him. On some occasions, he made people whole by speaking a word from a distance.

These wondrous acts weren't tricks performed to impress others or to draw a crowd. On one level, they stemmed from the fathomless compassion of Jesus. When he saw hurting, needy people, he was moved to alleviate their suffering. On another level, these miracles functioned as “signs” (John 2:11). A sign often points to something else. The miracles of Jesus were designed to point people's attention to the person of Jesus. The miracles of Jesus authenticated his message. In other words, his miracles demonstrated the truth of his claims to be the God-sent Savior of the world.

Jesus' miracles also proved his absolute authority over the spiritual and physical world. “Many who were demon-possession were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick” (Matt. 8:16). He calmed stormy seas and even walked on them. He fed massive crowds with only meager amounts of food. On at least three

occasions, Jesus resurrected dead people! Following each miraculous event, onlookers were left to marvel. When the disciples had watched Jesus command a stormy sea to become placid, “they were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’” (Mark 4:41).

Almost from the start of his public ministry, Jesus was immensely popular with the masses. Stories of him feeding thousands and performing other wonders went “viral” and resulted in enormous crowds. Yet the longer Jesus ministered, the more he infuriated the Jewish religious leaders. He shattered expectations and defied human traditions. From the beginning, Jesus made it clear that he had not come “to abolish the Law or the Prophets . . . but to fulfill them” (Matt. 5:17). He always displayed the utmost reverence for God’s Word. However, he had zero patience for man-made religious rules. He riled the Pharisees, telling them, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!” (Mark 7:9). Not only did Jesus confront their hypocrisy and haughtiness at every turn, but

he also attacked the religious systems they had put in place to take advantage of others.

Jesus also raised eyebrows in the way he elevated women in a culture that viewed them as second-class citizens (John 4). People were scandalized by the way he honored little children and treated social outcasts with dignity (Matt. 8:3; 19:13–15; Mark 2:16).

Mostly, however, Jesus shattered the public’s prevailing understanding of the Messiah. In the first century, the Jews were under Roman rule and messianic hopes were at a fever pitch. When would God restore the kingdom to Israel? Where was the deliverer who, in the spirit and manner of King David, would galvanize the people, lead a revolt, and drive the Roman pagans from the Jewish homeland? These were the questions on every heart and tongue.

Not long after Jesus began his ministry, many Jews had become convinced that Jesus would be this military deliverer. Yet when they tried to push Jesus in this direction, he resisted. He was clear about his mission. From the beginning, Jesus stated that he was sent *by* God to do the will *of* God: “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me” (John 6:38). According to Jesus, God’s will for him was to preach the good news of God’s kingdom, call sinners to repentance, testify to the truth, bring light to a dark world, and drive out the devil. Jesus was the divine King and Messiah, but he was one who “did not come to be served, but to serve” (Mark 10:45). Bottom line, he came to save the world. And to do so, he would go to a cross on a hill in Jerusalem to lay down his life.



HOW LONG WAS JESUS’ MINISTRY?

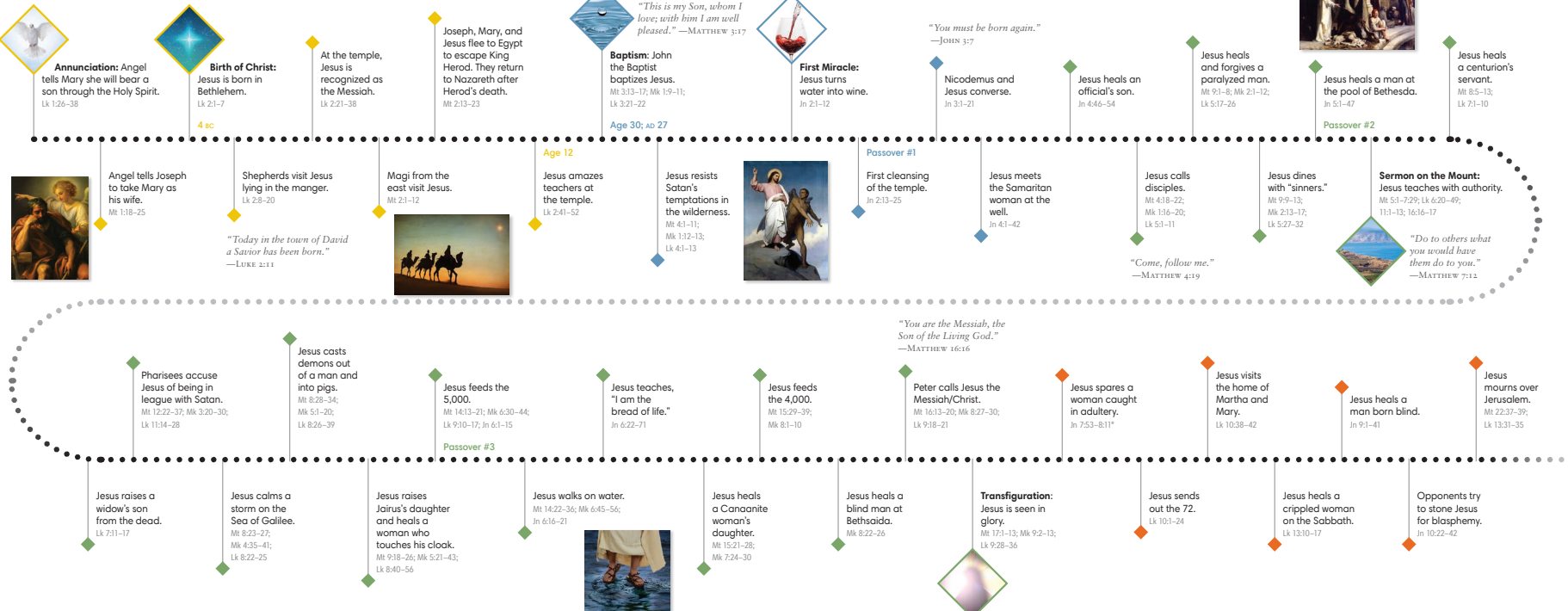
One way to measure the length of Jesus’ public ministry is by counting the number of Passovers in John’s gospel. John is the writer most concerned with giving readers details about the Jewish festivals that happened during Jesus’ ministry. John mentions four Passovers (John 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 13:1); the first one very early in Jesus’ ministry and the last one in Jesus’ final week in Jerusalem. (Though John 5:1 doesn’t use the word *Passover*, the festival mentioned is believed to be either *Passover* itself or another festival near the *Passover* season.) This means that Jesus’ ministry continued for at least three years.

BIRTH & CHILDHOOD

EARLY MINISTRY

MINISTRY PRIMARILY IN GALILEE

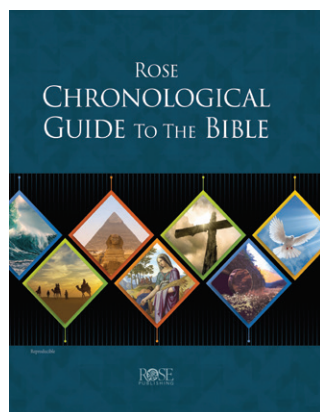
Life of Jesus Time Line



MINISTRY PRIMARILY IN GALILEE

MINISTRY IN JUDEA & Perea

Event	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John
EARLY MINISTRY				
<i>Key Places: Jordan River, Judea, Cana, Jerusalem, Samaria</i>				
John the Baptist preaches in the Judean wilderness.	3:1-12	1:1-8	3:1-18	1:19-34
John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan River.	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-22	
Jesus resists Satan's temptations in the wilderness.	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13	
Jesus gathers his first disciples.				1:35-51
Jesus turns water into wine at a wedding in Cana.				2:1-12
Cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem at Passover.				2:13-25
Nicodemus and Jesus converse.				3:1-21
John the Baptist testifies about Jesus.				3:22-36
Herod Antipas imprisons John the Baptist.			3:19-20	
Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well.				4:1-42
MINISTRY PRIMARILY in GALILEE				
<i>Key Places: Capernaum, Caesarea Philippi, Tyre/Sidon, Cana, Nain, Bethsaida</i>				
Jesus preaches throughout Galilee.	4:12-17, 23-25	1:14-15	4:14-15	4:43-45
In Cana, Jesus heals an official's son who is in Capernaum.				4:46-54
Jesus calls disciples.	4:18-22	1:16-20	5:1-11	
Jesus orders an impure spirit out of a man.		1:21-28	4:31-37	
Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law and others.	8:14-17	1:29-39	4:38-44	
Jesus heals a man with leprosy.	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-16	
Jesus heals and forgives a paralyzed man.	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
Jesus dines with sinners.	9:9-13	2:13-17	5:27-32	
People ask Jesus about fasting.	9:14-17	2:18-22	5:33-39	
Jesus heals a man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath.				5:1-47
Pharisees accuse Jesus of Sabbath breaking.	12:1-14	2:23-3:6	6:1-11	
Large crowds seek out Jesus.	12:15-21	3:7-12	6:17-19	
Twelve disciples appointed.		3:13-19	6:12-16	
The Sermon on the Mount, including the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, and the Golden Rule.	5:1-7:29		6:20-49; 11:1-13; 16:16-17	
In Cana, Jesus heals a centurion's servant.	8:5-13		7:1-10	
In Nain, Jesus raises a widow's son from the dead.			7:11-17	
From prison, John the Baptist asks if Jesus is the Messiah.	11:1-19		7:18-35	
Woes for the unrepentant; rest for those who come to Jesus.	11:20-30			
A "sinful" woman anoints Jesus.			7:36-50	
Pharisees accuse Jesus of being in league with Satan.	12:22-37	3:20-30	11:14-28	
Jesus predicts his own death; the sign of Jonah.	12:38-45		11:29-32	
Jesus' mother and brothers come to see him.	12:46-50	3:31-35	8:19-21	



Rose Chronological Guide to the Bible

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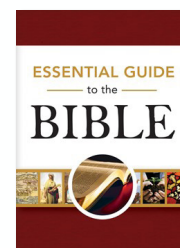
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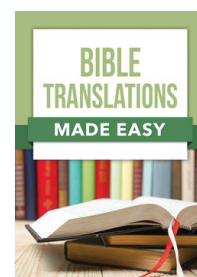
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