



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #027

Jesus' Early Judean Ministry

The Nature and results of Jesus' Ministry

LK 3.23A; JN 1.14, 10-13, 16-18

=====

^LNow Jesus Himself was about 30 years old when he began his ministry.

¹⁴ ^J God the Word became a Person, living as the Temple of God among us, and we gazed with wonder upon the radiance of his revealed glory—a glory that was utterly unique to the only Son of God, Jesus—for it was glistening with grace and truth.

¹⁰ He, the true light that gives light to everyone, came into the world. He was living in the world, and although the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his very own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him—to those who believed in his name—he gave the favored status to become children of God, ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of a mere human decision, or a husband's will, but children born of God Himself.

¹⁶ Out of his Divine fullness, we (who have believed in him) have all received grace, constantly being replaced with new flows of grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but unbounded grace and the reality of truth came through Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ No one has ever fully seen God with their physical eyes before Jesus, but the one and only Son—who is himself God and lives in closest relationship with the Father—has made him fully known.

=====

NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus.*

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Judea
Time	January, 30 AD
Stage of Jesus' Life	Stage III: His Early Judean Ministry
Chapter 6	The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry
Section #027	Introduction: The Nature and Results of Jesus' Ministry

In today's reading we finally begin the narrative of Jesus' ministry. We began this reading with Luke's historical observation that Jesus was about thirty when he began his ministry. Why is this important? There are two main answers to this question.

1) Two important men who were "types" (representative examples) of Jesus in the Old Testament were thirty when they began their ministries. King David became King at thirty. Joseph was promoted to Pharaoh's right hand at thirty. Both of these men pre-figured Jesus in different ways.

(2) Levitical priests began their ministries at age thirty. Jesus became our High Priest in the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110.4; Heb. 7.21), rather than the order of Levi, but it is striking to see that Jesus fulfilled the Law of the priesthood by beginning his work at this age.

We think of Jesus today as a relatively young man at thirty. Due to short life expectancy rates in the first century, he was considered to be in the latter part of his life by his peers. Because they married young, many men his age were grandfathers already. Some were great-grandfathers in their late thirties. This is an area where our culture has changed a great deal, compared to the Bible.

Today's reading gives us an overview of both the nature of Jesus' ministry, and its results. John was the big-picture thinker among the four gospel writers, so he started his gospel with the main presuppositions clearly stated as the rationale for what followed. That is what he did in this text.

The nature of Jesus' coming as Messiah was communication through his incarnation. John used the background of the Tabernacle and Temple in the Old Testament to describe this in JN 1.14. The apostle used the phrase from the Greek Old Testament in Ps. 78.60 describing the Tabernacle: **"the Tent he had pitched among men."** Jesus also spoke of himself as the **"temple of God"** in JN 2.19. Just as the Tabernacle and Temple were places where God chose to reveal his presence that simultaneously fills the universe, God the Son chose to dwell in a flesh and blood body as the visible revelation of the Trinity's invisible, spiritual nature.

John ended this passage with another restatement of this same truth: **"No one has ever fully seen God with their physical eyes before Jesus, but the one and only Son, who is himself God, and lives in closest relationship with the Father, HE has made him fully known."** The Father did not send just a prophet to speak for him as in the past—he sent His Son in human flesh as his Word—an utterly unique communication method that will never be duplicated for the rest of eternity. This truth underlies everything Jesus said and did as the Messiah.

As the Tabernacle in the old covenant had a cloud of light by day and fire by night over it to reveal the presence of God, we see the light of incarnational revelation beaming like the sun out of Jesus. To see Jesus in any way is to see God in his humanity. And this revelation of God was primarily expressed in two ways: unbounded, bubbling, overflowing Grace-- and Truth (1.14B).

Because God is Love, he gives unconditionally and without measure. This is grace--unmerited, unlimited favor. Because God is Light, he speaks, reveals, and acts truthfully. And because God in Jesus radiated grace and truth, everyone who believes in him instantly becomes an heir of the very fullness of God (1.16-17). Just stop and think about that for a minute.

The text so far described the nature of Jesus' ministry: it was incarnational. John also talked in verses 10-13 about the results of Jesus' coming.

There are only two possible responses to the incarnational Jesus: either believe in him, or disbelieve in him. Both are decisions of the entire person that activate our will in a firm commitment. The decision to disbelieve in Jesus is the choice not to receive him as the Person he claims to be--our LORD and God.

In this text John did not describe what happens when people disbelieve in Jesus. This will develop in the course of narrative. Eternal destruction is the result.

Because Jesus is full of grace and truth, the result of believing in him--his name--is to receive the fullness of God, beginning with becoming both a spiritually birthed and adopted child of God. Jesus is the unique, Eternal Son of the Father who added humanity to his Divine nature in the incarnation. We are sinful humans who are given the favored status of all the benefits and qualifications of being a co-heir with Jesus, as a son or daughter of God. We are birthed by God into the same fellowship with the Father that Jesus and the Spirit have enjoyed forever.

Jesus came to call every person who has ever lived to a decision regarding him--to believe and receive him as our LORD and God, or to reject him and make ourselves our own lord and god. He revealed himself clearly as the Divine "LORD who Saves" through his ministry, so that rejecting him through disbelief is also a rejection of the truth. We will see the unfolding of these two opposite responses to Jesus in the development of his ministry.

APPLICATION:

The truths in this text are beyond our fullest comprehension. However, the promises of the revelation of truth (1.14, 17-18), grace (1.14, 16) the fullness of God (1.16), and the favored status of becoming a child of God (1.12-13) in these verses are firm and reliable.

How will you meditate upon the promises made to you in this passage?

What do you need to believe in a new way in these promises?

How does your identity as God's son or daughter define the kind of person you are--forever?