

“Precise Timing”  
John 4:1-3  
(Preached at Trinity, February 7, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapter 3:22** Jesus had departed from Galilee and entered Judea. As we come to **Chapter 4** Jesus is still in Judea. It opens with the familiar, “Therefore.” (literally, Ὡς οὖν, “When therefore.”) This is usually seen as a connecting conjunction, a clue to the Biblical reader to go back to the previous verses to find what the author is now alluding to. We can look at **Verses 22 & 26** as a reference—John's disciples were showing jealousy over the success of Jesus in winning disciples. But we are not told how the Pharisees had come to know what Jesus was doing. Their informants remained anonymous, but not to Christ.
2. The Jewish religious leaders had been highly suspicious of John the Baptist. Multitudes were coming to him and they were uneasy of his popularity. We saw in **Chapter 1 John 1:19 NAU** - "the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"
3. As jealous as they were of John the Baptist, they were particularly unnerved over the popularity of Jesus, especially as they learned He was gaining more disciples than John. They disliked John, but at least he was the son of a priest. This Jesus was a nobody, the son of a carpenter. Who did He think He was? And they had not forgotten the situation that took place in the Temple.  
**John 2:13-16 NAU** - "The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated *at their tables*. <sup>15</sup> And He made a scourge of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; <sup>16</sup> and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business."
4. When Jesus heard that the Pharisees had heard of His popularity, He knew the danger of their resentment and jealousy. Already in our Lord's ministry the vicious hatred of the Pharisees was kindled. Jesus knew it might lead prematurely to His arrest.
5. The opening verses of **Chapter 4** display for us the trajectory of our Lord's ministry upon the earth. He came as one despised.  
**Isaiah 53:3 NAU** - "He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."
  - a. In **Chapter 3** we saw the jealousy of John's disciples – testimony that they despised the person and work of Christ.  
**John 3:26 NAU** - "And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him."

- b. Then John reminds us of the universal rejection of Christ.  
**John 3:32 NAU** - "What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony."
- c. Now, as we come to **Chapter 4** we see a continuation of the rejection. This is the nature of Christ's journey to the cross, a journey of hatred and rejection.
- d. He is no less hated today. No one receives His testimony. Few see any value in the Gospel. Most are offended at the suggestion that they must bow before the throne of Christ.
6. Recognizing the danger, Jesus determined it necessary to leave Judea and return again to Galilee. Every aspect of the life of Christ was by Divine decree. Nothing was left to chance. From the cradle to the grave Jesus was fulfilling God's purpose in saving His people from their sin. What love God must have for us to order such a perfect plan.
7. Jesus knew the hour of His death had not yet arrived, so He left Judea.  
 Tonight, I want us to see the precise timing in Jesus' life and death. This perfect timing is still maintained today as the Gospel of Christ is fulfilling God's grand design.  
**2 Peter 3:8-9 NAU** - "But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."
- I. The first thing we see here is Jesus was in control of His own destiny, at the good pleasure of the Father – all according to God's perfect plan
- A. John was careful to display in this Gospel the authority of Christ over his life and ministry
1. The timing of His journey to the cross was in His hands  
**John 2:3-4 NAU** - "When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come."  
**John 7:2-3 NAU** - "Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. <sup>3</sup> Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing."  
**John 7:8 NAU** - "Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come."
  2. Over and over there were threats to prematurely end the life of Jesus. And over and over Jesus prevented it from occurring.  
**John 7:28-30 NAU** - "Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. <sup>29</sup> "I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me." <sup>30</sup> So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come."
  3. There were times when Jesus supernaturally escaped their grasp  
**Luke 4:28-30 NAU** - "And all *the people* in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; <sup>29</sup> and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. <sup>30</sup> But passing through their midst, He went His way."

B. Jesus was never a victim. He laid down His life by design, according to purpose.

1. All of the Old Covenant pointed to our Lord's death—it was the grand consummation of the sacrificial system.

2. He gave Himself for those whom the Father had given Him.

**John 10:17-18 NAU** - "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. <sup>18</sup> "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

**John 13:1 NAU** - "Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."

II. The second thing we see here is the earthly ministry of Jesus had just begun – There was much He had to accomplish before His life ended.

A. Jesus had to fulfill the prophecies that foretold His life

1. When John the Baptist inquired if Jesus was indeed the Messiah Jesus affirmed the Messianic prophecies

**Matthew 11:2-6 NAS** - "Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent *word* by his disciples, <sup>3</sup> and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> *the* blind receive sight and *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear, and *the* dead are raised up, and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. <sup>6</sup> "And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."

**Isaiah 35:4-6 NAU** - "Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you." <sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. <sup>6</sup> Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah."

2. Even the triumphal entry was according to prophetic prediction

**Zechariah 9:9 NAU** - "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

B. Jesus had to preach the nature of His Kingdom. It was dawning upon the earth and Jesus was revealing it – the nature of the Kingdom and how it must be entered.

1. It is a holy kingdom.

**Matthew 4:17 NAU** - "From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

2. Most of His parables began, "The kingdom of God is like . . ."

**Matthew 13:44 NAU** - "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

3. It is a victorious kingdom. Jesus had to display His power over Satan  
**Luke 11:20-22 NAU** - "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. <sup>21</sup> "When a strong *man*, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed. <sup>22</sup> "But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder."
- C. Jesus had to call and train His Apostles – it was a slow and tedious work
1. The Apostolic ministry was essential for the establishing of the church
  2. Even Judas Iscariot was an essential aspect of our Lord's earthly work  
**John 6:69-71 NAU** - "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." <sup>70</sup> Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and *yet* one of you is a devil?"  
<sup>71</sup> Now He meant Judas *the son* of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him."
  3. The training of the Apostles was a long season  
**John 17:6-8 NAU** - "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. <sup>7</sup> "Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; <sup>8</sup> for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me."
  4. All of this had to be accomplished before Jesus was ready to go to the cross.
- III. Jesus was not through living. The life of Jesus was as important as His death.
- A. Jesus had to display His holiness
    1. Jesus had to fulfil the Law. He had to provide righteousness for us.
    2. This is the glory of the Gospel. When we fail we don't retreat into the hope that we might do better tomorrow. We rest upon the righteousness of Christ.
    3. Jesus had a righteous Law to fulfil
  - B. Our Lord's ministry began with His baptism
    1. God gave the grand affirmation of the perfection of Christ  
**Matthew 3:15-17 NAU** - "But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him. <sup>16</sup> After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, <sup>17</sup> and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."
    2. Jesus came in perfection. Jesus was the perfect Lamb of God who came to satisfy God's Divine justice.

3. Not only was Jesus born sinless, He had to live a sinless life. There was both an active obedience as well as a passive obedience.  
**Hebrews 7:26 NAU** - "For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens"
- C. Jesus displayed His righteousness with His life
1. Justification is a two-fold imputation
  2. His righteousness is essential for our justification. Our sins were given to Him, but the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to us.  
**Jeremiah 33:15 NAU** - "In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth."  
**Romans 5:17-19 NAU** - "For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. <sup>19</sup> For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."  
**2 Corinthians 5:21 NAU** - "He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

#### Conclusion:

1. As Jesus was aware of the suspicions of the Pharisees He left Judea. It was not an act of fear but of purpose. Every point of His ministry was by Divine design.
2. This should give us great confidence and comfort. Nothing about our salvation was left to chance. This continues to be true in our life. God is continuing His perfect work.  
**Philippians 1:6 NAU** - "*For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."
3. God is perfecting us, preserving us, and protecting us – nothing is left to chance. And just as the coming of Christ was according to God's perfect timing, and the death of Christ was according to God's perfect timing, His return is according to God's perfect timing.  
**Matthew 24:42 NAU** - "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."