

*14 And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. 15 And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.*

*16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. 17 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written,*

*18 “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME,  
BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO  
THE POOR.*

*HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE  
CAPTIVES,*

*AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND,  
TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,*

*19 TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.”*

*20 And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” 22 And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, “Is this not Joseph’s son?” 23 And He said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.’” 24 And He said, “Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. 25 “But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; 26 and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 “And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” 28 And all the people in the synagogue were filled with*

*rage as they heard these things; 29 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. 30 But passing through their midst, He went His way.*

Verses 14 and 15 are an obvious transition. Beginning in verse 16 and going through chapter 9 of Luke we are entering into a year to year and a half long phase of Jesus ministry where he will minister almost solely to the people of the 240 - ish villages and towns of the region surrounding the Sea of Galilee.

But there is a gap from verse 13 where Jesus is finishing with the temptations in the wilderness for 40 days, a gap of almost a year where Jesus ministered in the more southern regions of Judea.

None of the synoptic gospels tells us very much about that time frame and ministry, but John does. John begins his book telling us some of the events in this time frame in Judea.

Jesus ministering near where John the baptist also ministered at the Jordan river. He cleanses the temple for the first time during this time frame, and He has that famous rendezvous in the night hours, away from the Jewish spectacle with Nicodemus.

There is the lady in Samaria, and the wedding at Cana which is actually very near to Nazareth in Galilee, where He turns the water into wine.

Matthew and Mark both tell us that it is the imprisonment of John the baptist, later beheaded by wicked Herod that is the point where Jesus leaves Judea and goes up into the Galilee's and ministers there, out of Herod's convenient reach.

Who's directing this drama. Who decides where and when Jesus moves, say from Judea to Galilee? Is He actually afraid of Herod? The man

who later tells us; Lk. 21:17 *And you will be hated by everyone because of My name. 18 Yet not even a hair of your head will perish.*

Matthew and Mark both tell us about Jesus making the switch to minister in the northern regions of Israel.

*Mt. 4:12 When Jesus heard that John had been imprisoned, He withdrew to Galilee. 13 Leaving Nazareth, He went and lived in Capernaum, which is by the sea in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali,...*

BTW, that was Matthew's entire account of what we read this morning. Jesus leaves Nazareth. He goes to live where people aren't trying to kill Him. It isn't time for that.

In Matthew's text the word withdrew is telling. Because of dis-belief and danger of violence, the light of the world withdraws that light from Judea, which is Jerusalem and the southern and eastern areas of Israel.

Mark likewise mentions John's arrest being the time frame that Jesus goes back up into the northern region of the Galilee where He had grown up.

*Mark 1:14 After the arrest of John, Jesus went into Galilee and proclaimed the gospel of God.*

Jesus was obviously moving out of harm's way by relocating. But again, who is the choreographer of this dance. Herod pleasing the religious leaders in Jerusalem by locking John up, and perhaps thinking how much more they would be pleased if he locks up Jesus.

Jesus moving 80 miles north and spending many months showering that region with blessing and teaching and healing and light. Why them? Why not some place else?

Luke actually tells us, and has been telling us who the choreographer is. Who the Master Planner of Jesus when and where is.

*14 And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit,*

And Luke has been setting this up for us in what has immediately preceeded. In Luke 3 at the baptism, we see this; 21 *Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."*

And then immediately in Luke 4:1 we see this; *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil.*

Those terms reveal for us that Jesus the man is completely under the influence of God, the Holy Spirit. God, the Son of Man isn't calling the shots. God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are choreographing where Jesus goes and what He does.

Jesus doesn't act on His own. He is led by the Spirit. Always. That's why Satan's temptations were in every case to get Him to step out of that realm of obedience to His Father's will and the Spirit's leading and act independently of the Holy Spirit, and the Father.

Luke is careful to let us know that Jesus has come to where He has come, to embark on this ministry in Galilee, not of His own accord, but in the power, the dunamais, the word we get dynamite from, the explosive power the effectual power of the Holy Spirit.

Sadly, we know much too little of this control and power. I have experienced times when I was very aware of the Spirits presence and

power and moving in combination with me.

And there are times when I don't know, but the Spirit is using my mouth and His written word to affect you all. I believe that regardless of what I can feel and sense, because this book tells me so.

But in Jesus case, every thing He did, every move, every word, everything is choreographed and accomplished by the will of the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit. All the time. 100 percent.

And Luke has made that abundantly clear as he sets up for us the narrative of the life of Jesus. The Spirit controls. The Spirit is the power source. The will of the Father is the controlling force of everything. *Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.* Jesus is our picture of those words.

And Luke launches us into the life of Jesus with those words: *And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit* and then never says that again. He doesn't need to. We know from what Luke has told us in the prologue that everything Jesus will do, every word He will say, every miracle, every healing, every prayer, every decision to turn this way, or that, is done in the dynamite, the dynamic, the power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke doesn't need to start every new paragraph of every new development with "the power of the Spirit". We know that now and Luke never says it again. It's simply the unspoken, underlying truth moving forward in every thing that happens, right up to the cross and the resurrection from death and the ascension back into heaven.

Jesus life is choreographed and controlled by the will of the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit.

*And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. 15 And He began*

*teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.*

Jesus ministry is primarily a ministry of teaching. Mark chapter 1 says; 38 *He said to them, "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; **for that is what I came for.**"* 39 *And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons.*

Jesus says that what He came to do is preach and teach. In the rest of Lukes' gospel alone there are at least a dozen times where someone will come up to Jesus and they will address Him as; teacher.

Healing people and casting out demons and all the other miracles are incidental to the main thing He came to do, and that was to teach.

And generally, Jesus was well received. *And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. 15 And He began teaching in their synagogues **and was praised by all.***

Praised by all. What's not to praise? A beautiful Godly man who comes and teaches the Word of God with an authority they hadn't witnessed before. He didn't teach like their scribes and teachers. He taught as though He were the author of the book, explaining with authority.

The Word of God teaching the word of God. God the revealer of Himself, in a human body, teaching the people the words of His book.

And then lovingly healing their diseases, blessing their children, dwelling with them in Godly humility. Of course He was praised by all.

Until He visits His own home town where He had until recently, just been an ordinary resident interacting with others like any other ordinary resident.

I think that's why Luke chooses to start here, at Nazareth. Because here, in the village where He grew up, where His half brothers and sisters live with His earthly mother, a conflict arises. A conflict of dis-belief that He could be anything other than Joseph's son, the carpenter.

Before we launch into the actual teaching in their synagogue, which Luke is the only one who records for us, let's look quickly at Mark's account, because I think it sheds light on the interaction of teaching, and the reaction and belief of the teaching, and the resultant power to do miracles, because of belief.

Very interesting what Mark says: Mk 6: *1 Jesus went out from there and came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him. 2 When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands? 3 "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him. 4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household." 5 And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And He wondered at their unbelief.*

He was astonished at their unbelief. And He could do no miracles there. That's actually a wonderful insight into what happened, I think.

He says basically, All these wonderful things Isaiah predicted are happening. You're looking at the Messiah. And they said, yeah, we know who you are, who your brothers and sisters are, who your dad is, (or was. Joseph isn't mentioned and we'll assume it's because he's already gone from the scene.) and we don't think so.

But, prove it to us by doing some tricks. And *He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And He wondered at their unbelief.*

God's response to unbelief is always that it spirals downwards from there. They didn't believe and He could do no miracles there. God actually meets unbelief and confounds it into more unbelief.

We know who you are Jesus. We know your family. We know you. You dis-appear for a year and come back telling us you're the person Isaiah is writing about? Yeah, we don't think so.

It isn't the first conflict or the first unbelief. The rulers in Jerusalem already hate Him and have dismissed Him. But here in the Galilee, it was going so well. Everyone was speaking well of Him. Until Nazareth. And the people of Nazareth took offense to Him. Conflict.

And the story of Jesus is the story of conflict until finally, in God's perfect timing, the unbelievers who hate Him will murder Him.

These folks would have murdered Him on this occasion, except for the one miracle they did get to witness. The mob is shoving Him towards the brow of a cliff to throw Him off . . . and suddenly . . . where's Jesus?

Now then, because there are so many folks missing this morning, and because this event and the teaching surrounding it at Nazareth is so very important, I'm going to do things a little differently than what I originally envisioned.

I'm looking forward to picking up this narrative in vs 16 next week, it's such an important story and important teaching, and for the brief time we have left this morning, I want to develop what the Bible teaches about belief and unbelief.

Psalm 14:1 states: *The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."* The word fool there doesn't mean stupid. This guy isn't so stupid that he can't form the idea of God. It's more like the title to Al Gore's book. ***An Inconvenient Truth.***

To the wicked fool, God, the very idea of a God who has created everything and who owns everything and who will judge everything, is an inconvenient truth.

Because if that's true, then, sin . . . is sin, and they can't have any roadblocks between them, and the sin they love. So, they choose stubbornly to not believe.

There. I fixed that. I don't believe in any God, so I can do as I please. I made God go away, so I can just do any sin I want. That's the guy in Psalm 14. The disbelief is not from ignorance, it's an obstinate disbelief. The fool, the hebrew word means wicked fool, murders God, he makes God go away, by his obstinate dis-belief.

KNPR had a special going yesterday and I was listening to bits and pieces of it as I was doing errands and going to the post office. But they were talking about our pre-dispositions to believe in error and not to believe what science says is true.

There was a guy talking about climate change. And he was saying how ridiculous the question he hears over and over, do you believe in climate change. And of course he was saying there isn't any room for the word believe. Belief is for 6 year olds and the tooth fairy, but not for climate change which 87% of all scientists have reached a consensus on.

Excuse me. Consensus. Science by consensus. 87% voted yes, so that means it's so. Science is a method. Repeatable truths and data from testing. Show me 1000 years of data, and I'll listen. Show me 40 years and a bunch of people who vote, no thanks.

Of course the guys point was that people like me are pre-disposed to not come up with the same consensus that the scientists voted for. What he doesn't have a clue about is a sovereign God who may very well be making the changes they think they're observing . . . for His purposes.

I do agree with him that humans are predisposed to believe what gives them what they want. And a God with rules who judges sin is most inconvenient. So they take a vote and consensus of 87% of wicked people is that there is no God. You can do as you please.

The problem with that is that the magnificence of creation demands that you bow to a noble creator. God set the evidence in the sky and in the wind and in the weather and in the beauty, even of the barren deserts.

And those very scientists, of all people, are more guilty of obstinate disbelief because of what their science has taught us about the absolute necessity of an intelligent designer.

To not believe in God is to be obstinate. Wickedly obstinate. The wicked fool says in his heart, there is no God. It's not just the mistake of the simple, it is purposefully denying what every breath you are granted and every consecutive heart beat demands is true.

Hebrews 3:12 combines this idea of unbelief and the fact that it is evil.  
*12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.*

Dis-belief in what God has made obvious in His physical creation is evil. That's what this verse tells us. Stand in front of the Judge some day and tell Him, there just wasn't enough evidence?

The people of Jesus home town were pre-disposed to not believe that a young man who grew up before their eyes could be God's messiah.

They took offense to Jesus. They had the same evidence, mostly, as the other towns in the Galilee. But they wouldn't believe.

In John chapter 14, the upper room discourse, the final teaching before the cross, Philip, who always seems to have trouble believing has a discussion with Jesus about belief.

*8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; **otherwise believe because of the works themselves.***

Philip, if you're really so dull that you haven't discovered that nothing I do is independent of the Father, you really don't see it, or get it, then believe because of the miracles alone.

The evidence that God will hold people accountable for on judgement day will be the miracles. What Jesus did, over and over and over, the miracles like no where else in the Bible, the astounding quantity and quality of the miracles is enough to hold every person accountable in the judgement.

Actually, the creation itself is evidence that God will hold people accountable for. But you could argue, you can't get to God by believing in Him because of His creation.

Then you find the one person who says I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. And you believe in Him because of His life, and at the very least, because of the miracles He did that only God the creator could have done.

Our culture, our society has murdered God because they love their sin. It's as simple as that. Unbelief has at it's roor, evil. The evidence is available.