

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XXV. Christ's Geographical Moves In God's Omniscience
(Matthew 4:12; Luke 3:19-20; 4:14; John 4:1-4)

I. Introduction

- A. John 2:25 reports that Jesus did not need anyone to testify about man, for He already knew what was in man, implying that He was omniscient because He was God Incarnate.
- B. Such omniscience is evidenced in Christ's withdrawal from unedifying conflict in Judaea to Galilee in John 4:1-4, but even more revealing of His omniscience is the fact that Galilee where Jesus was then headed was ruled by Herod Antipas who had just imprisoned John the Baptist! (Matthew 4:12 with Luke 3:19-20; Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., vol. Three, p. 140) Humanly, it can seem that Jesus was heading into a worse conflict in Galilee than what He was leaving in Judaea, but in God's perspective, it was far better due to His omniscience.
- C. We view Matthew 4:12; Luke 3:19-20; 4:14 and John 4:1-4 for insight into Christ's divine omniscience on His geographical movements for a lesson on geographical movements for our insight, application and edification:

II. Christ's Geographical Moves In God's Omniscience, Matthew 4:12; Luke 3:19-20; 4:14; John 4:1-4.

- A. When Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that He was making and baptizing more disciples than John the Baptist, He withdrew from His ministry of baptizing in Judaea (John 3:22) to head into Galilee, John 4:1-3. Christ "knew of the conflict which the Pharisees were seeking to stir up between His disciples and those of John," and "(s)ince Jesus and John were part of the same program and engaged in the same ministry, Jesus did not want them to be divided. In order to prevent a division" among their disciples, "Jesus withdrew to Galilee where John had not ministered." (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 131)
- B. However, Herod Antipas "was tetrarch over Galilee and Perea" (Ibid., Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib.; Matthew 4:12) and he had just imprisoned John the Baptist for publicly denouncing as sin Herod's marriage to his brother Philip's divorced wife Herodias in gross violation of the Mosaic Law (Luke 3:19 with Leviticus 18:16; 20:21; Ibid.) Thus, for Jesus to withdraw from Judaea to avoid an unedifying conflict between the disciples of John and of Jesus only to go into Galilee where its secular ruler had just imprisoned John the Baptist for denouncing his incestuous marriage to Herodias seemed to be an unwise move in that Christ looked like He was leaving one bad conflict in Judaea for a far worse one in Galilee!
- C. At this point, the omniscience of Christ and the Holy Spirit Who led Him (Luke 4:14a) became apparent, revealing Christ's move to Galilee be an excellent one in view of the dynamics of the heart of Herod Antipas:
 - 1. We know from Matthew 14:3-5a that Herod Antipas had imprisoned John with the intent of killing him to silence John's public criticism about Herod's incestuous marriage to his brother Philip's divorced wife.
 - 2. However, Herod Antipas feared the reaction of the multitude of Hebrews living in his dominion were he to kill John, for the Hebrew people all considered John the Baptist to be a prophet of God, Matthew 14:5b.
 - 3. Also, the last thing Herod wanted was an uprising of the Hebrew people in his realm that he would have to suppress by great force, for such unrest would attract the negative attention of Rome's Emperor who did not like unrest in his empire and who could react by even banishing Herod to Gaul! (cf. Acts 19:38-41)
 - 4. Accordingly, Jesus knew that He would have a lot of liberty to minister in Galilee under even the tetrarch Herod Antipas **simply because** he had imprisoned John, and that even if he attracted Herod's attention due to His ministry, which He actually managed to do, cf. Matthew 14:1-2. After all, Herod "did not want to use force" to capture or to harm Jesus "because he might rouse his people again as he had with John," what could lead to an unwelcome end for Herod Antipas at the hands of a sovereign Roman Emperor whom he had managed to irritate! (Ibid., Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., p. 142)
- D. Jesus thus left His ministry in Judaea to avoid letting the Pharisees stir up division between John's and Jesus' disciples to their spiritual harm to go to Galilee to minister where Herod Antipas would be too restricted from exercising negative force against Jesus due to Herod's political trouble for imprisoning John the Baptist!

Lesson: *Due to the omniscience of God Incarnate Jesus and God the Holy Spirit Who was on Him, Jesus withdrew from Judaea to avoid an unedifying conflict between the disciples of John and His own disciples to go into Galilee that was ruled by Herod Antipas, knowing that Herod was too politically restricted to harm His ministry there.*

Application: *(1) May we rejoice to know that our Savior, Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit are omniscient God. (2) May we follow the Lord's leading in our lives and ministries to avoid stirring up unedifying conflict among believers while not fearing or withdrawing from conflict if God opens a door of ministry in some location!*