



LUKE

Copyright © 2020 WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL[®]

25 Lantana Lane, Maxwell, Texas 78656

Email: biblestudy@wvbs.org Phone: (512) 398-5211

Store: www.wvbs.org School: school.wvbs.org

Copyright Guidelines

Copyright © WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL®

WARNING: SINGLE USER product

Use of this material is limited to the registered user,
according to the following conditions.

Print distribution: Any number of printed copies can be made by printing or photocopying, and used for Bible classes, seminars or teaching settings. Copies of a course or multiple courses can be printed. Printed copies cannot be used for resale purposes or mass distribution.

Electronic distribution: No electronic distribution is allowed, either transmitted or hyperlinked, in part or whole. The electronic version of the course notes is limited to the registered user.

Course Notes on USB: The USB version of the Course Notes is limited to the registered user, and may be copied to any device within the registered user's ownership. If the Course Notes are registered to a congregation, then the electronic files may be installed on any computer located on the congregation's property, and be used by any of its members as a resource to study (either in electronic or printed form) while on their premises. However, the copyright does not include making the files available to others through the Internet or other web services.

For any copyright questions, feel free to contact us so we can help.

25 Lantana Lane, Maxwell, Texas 78656

Email: biblestudy@wvbs.org Phone: (512) 398-5211

Website: www.wvbs.org

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY	4
BACKGROUND	5
INTRODUCTION	7
OUTLINES	8
EXPOSITION	11
CHAPTER 1	11
CHAPTER 2	24
CHAPTER 3	31
CHAPTER 4	36
CHAPTER 5	43
CHAPTER 6	48
CHAPTER 7	55
CHAPTER 8	62
CHAPTER 9	70
CHAPTER 10	81
CHAPTER 11	87
CHAPTER 12	91
CHAPTER 13	95
CHAPTER 14	97
CHAPTER 15	99
CHAPTER 16	100
CHAPTER 17	101
CHAPTER 18	103
CHAPTER 19	106
CHAPTER 20	109
CHAPTER 21	112
CHAPTER 22	115
CHAPTER 23	122
CHAPTER 24	127
APPENDICES	133

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

Instructor: Russell Haffner

Biography:

Russell Haffner currently serves as the director of the WVBS Online Bible School. He graduated from the Southwest School of Bible Studies in 1993. He is also an alumnus of Texas A&M University where he majored in Architecture. He has served as a minister of the gospel for over 25 years. He has spoken on various lectureships and has held several gospel meetings. He has also published articles in numerous lectureship books.

Russell and his wife Dee are blessed with three children - Ross, John and Kati. Ross and John are both graduates of the Southwest School of Bible Studies and currently serve as ministers in the Lord's church.

BACKGROUND

The book of Luke was written to provide an inspired and "orderly" account of the historical life of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:3). The term "orderly" does not necessarily mean a precise chronological sequence of events in all places, but that it is set forth in a logical and systematic manner to accomplish the purpose of the book. Luke first provides information concerning the birth and ancestry of Jesus before moving methodically through His ministry, death on the cross, burial and resurrection.

Luke was a Gentile who had become a Christian (Colossians 4:10-11, 14). He was writing to Theophilus who was also a Gentile. So we are not surprised to find that Luke produces an account which is especially beneficial, instructive and encouraging to Gentiles. He makes it clear that Jesus brought salvation for all (Jews and Gentiles).

He accomplished this goal with a unique emphasis on specific themes as he painted with inspired words his portrait of the life of Jesus. Time and time again he emphasizes that the salvation which was brought by Jesus was truly for all. For instance, in the book we see the lineage of Jesus traced back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38) instead of to Abraham as in Matthew's account (Matthew 1:1-17). Luke also includes a great deal of information concerning several non-Israelites, especially Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56, 10:30-37, 17:11-19). The gospel being for all is clearly emphasized in Luke's record of the angel's announcement of the Savior's birth, "I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people" (Luke 2:10) and the words of Simeon who proclaimed that Jesus would be, "a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32 - quoting Isaiah 9:2; 42:6).

Another theme we see in the book is Luke's emphasis concerning those people who are often looked down upon or disparaged. He includes stories of individuals with social challenges, physical limitations, diseases and sins.

Women are given a prominent role in his narrative. Such as the woman who was a "sinner" who brought an "alabaster flask of fragrant oil" to anoint Jesus (Luke 7:37-38), Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna (Luke 8:1-3), the sick woman who "touched the border of His garment" (Luke 8:43-48), Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), the woman who "had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over" (Luke 13:11-13) and "a certain poor widow putting in two mites" into the treasury (Luke 21:1-4). The birth narrative places special emphasis on Mary's perspective. Luke also notes those women who contributed monetarily to Christ's ministry (Luke 8:1-3). He calls special attention to the women who observed the crucifixion (Luke 23:49) and those who appeared first when Jesus was resurrected (Luke 24:1-10).

Luke also emphasizes children. We see references to "the only son" or "only daughter" in several events (Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38). Jesus "took a little child" to use as an example to rebuke the pride of His disciples in Luke 9:47. On several occasions Luke notes that Jesus used the example of children in His teaching (Luke 7:31-35; 18:16).

Luke also gives us several accounts of those who were not seen as "respectable" in society. We learn of a leper who was also a Samaritan (Luke 17:11-19), a rich tax collector (Luke 19:1-10) and the many poor (Luke 1:53; 2:24; 4:17-21; 6:30; 7:22; 14:11-14, 21; 16:19-31). In this connection Luke stresses the dangers of riches and possessions. We see this in both the book of Acts and this gospel account. He includes several events that deal with money and material things like the parables of the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21), the unrighteous steward (Luke 16:1-13), Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31) and the encounter of Jesus with Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10).

Luke also includes many of Jesus' lessons concerning money and material things. We find that possessions can cause us to forget our dependence on God (Luke 6:24; 12:13-21; 16:19-31) and distract us from our devotion to God (Luke 8:14; 14:18-20; 17:28; 18:18-30). A lack of possessions can increase awareness of our need for God (Luke 15:12-14; 16:19-31). We also see those disciples who forsook all to follow Jesus (Luke 5:11, 27-28; 14:33) and those who would be richly rewarded for sacrificing material things (Luke 14:12-14; 16:1-13; 18:18-30).

In Luke we constantly find an emphasis on joy. Luke includes the rejoicing of Mary (Luke 1:46-55), Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79) and Simeon (Luke 2:29-32). He often makes special comments about those who were rejoicing or giving glory to God (Luke 1:14, 44, 47; 2:20; 7:16; 10:21; 13:13). He makes note of laughter (Luke 6:21), leaping for joy (Luke 6:23) and the happiness in finding what was lost (Luke 15:6-7, 9-10, 32). He shows that following Jesus is a joyous and happy way of life. Luke wanted his friend Theophilus to understand the true joy which is only found in Jesus Christ.

As Jesus preaches the message of salvation in Luke's account we see both opposition and belief. Those who oppose Jesus seek His death. Those who believe are instructed and encouraged to count the cost of discipleship (Luke 14:25-33). Luke exalts Jesus as the Son of God and the perfect man who gave the perfect sacrifice for man's sin. Therefore, Luke presents Jesus to us as the perfect Savior for imperfect man. His resurrection ensures the victory and the fulfillment of His purpose "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

INTRODUCTION

Writer

It is agreed upon by almost all scholars that the writer of this epistle is Luke the "beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14), who was a friend and companion of the apostle Paul. The name Luke or Lucas (Philemon 1:24 - KJV), is an abbreviated form of Lucanus. It is not to be confused with Lucius who is also mentioned in the Scriptures (Acts 13:1; Romans 16:21). Luke is only referred to by name three times in the Bible (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 1:24), however, his impact on the Lord's church is enormous considering his inspired authorship of this gospel account and the Book of Acts. In both works, he does not include his own name.

Luke wrote more of the New Testament than any other writer. There are more words in the two books written by Luke than all of Paul's epistles. In fact, they contain about 500 more words if Paul penned the letter to the Hebrews and about 5,000 more words if Paul did not pen the letter to the Hebrews. The writings of Luke account for more than 25% of the New Testament. The book of Luke is the longest of the New Testament with 24 chapters broken into 1,151 verses which include 18 parables which are not found in the other gospel accounts.

Language

This letter was originally written in Koiné Greek. The word "Koiné" means "common." This is a fitting name because it was the common language used by the people in that day.

Date

Acts 1:1 states, "The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." Therefore Luke's gospel account was written before the book of Acts; but how much earlier is not known. It could have been written at Caesarea during Paul's imprisonment (A.D. 58-60).

Key Verses

Luke 2:10; 6:31; 6:46; 9:23; 9:25; 9:27; 11:23; 13:3; 19:10; 24:49

Key Phrase

"Son of Man" - This phrase is found 26 times in Luke's account emphasizing the humanity of Christ (Luke 5:24; 6:5, 22; 7:34; 9:22, 26, 44, 56, 58; 11:30; 12:8, 10, 40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30; 18:8, 31; 19:10; 21:27, 36; 22:22, 48, 69 and 24:7).

LUKE OUTLINE (BASIC)

- I. Preface (1:1-4)
- II. Announcements and Births of John and Jesus (1:5-2:52)
- III. Preparation for the Ministry of Jesus (3:1-4:13)
- IV. Ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:9)
- V. Ministry in the Regions around Galilee (9:10-50)
- VI. Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-13:21)
- VII. Ministry East of the Jordan River (13:22-19:27)
- VIII. Ministry in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38)
- IX. Suffering and Death (22:1-23:56)
- X. Resurrection and Ascension (24:1-53)

LUKE OUTLINE (EXPANDED)

- I. Preface (1:1-4)
- II. Announcements and Births of John and Jesus (1:5-2:52)
 - A. The announcement of John's birth (1:5-25)
 - B. The announcement of Jesus' birth (1:26-56)
 - C. Birth of John (1:57-80)
 - D. Birth and childhood of Jesus (2:1-52)
- III. Preparation for the Ministry of Jesus (3:1-4:13)
 - A. Preaching and imprisonment of John (3:1-20)
 - B. Baptism of Jesus (3:21-22)
 - C. Genealogy of Jesus (3:23-38)
 - D. Temptation of Jesus (4:1-13)
- IV. Ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:9)
 - A. Jesus teaching at the synagogue (4:14-30)
 - B. Miracles at Capernaum (4:31-44)
 - C. First tour in Galilee (5:1-39)
 - D. Sabbath controversy (6:1-11)
 - E. Twelve Apostles chosen (6:12-16)
 - F. Sermon on the plain (6:17-49)
 - G. Miracles at Capernaum and Nain (7:1-17)

- H. John's questions (7:18-23)
- I. Jesus commends the work of John (7:24-30)
- J. Jesus and the Pharisees (7:31-50)
- K. Second tour in Galilee (8:1-3)
- L. Parable of the sower (8:4-21)
- M. Journey across the Sea of Galilee (8:22-39)
- N. Third tour in Galilee (8:40-9:9)
- V. Ministry in the Regions around Galilee (9:10-50)
 - A. Feeding of the five thousand (9:10-17)
 - B. Peter confesses Christ (9:18-27)
 - C. Transfiguration (9:28-36)
 - D. Demon possessed son healed (9:37-45)
 - E. Disciples seeking recognition (9:46-50)
- VI. Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-13:21)
 - A. Vindictiveness and misplaced priorities (9:51-62)
 - B. Seventy disciples sent out (10:1-24)
 - C. Lawyer and the good Samaritan (10:25-37)
 - D. Jesus at Bethany with Mary and Martha (10:38-42)
 - E. Teachings on prayer (11:1-13)
 - F. Warnings about Satan's kingdom (11:14-36)
 - G. Hypocrisy of the Pharisees (11:37-12:12)
 - H. Greed, anxiety and poor stewardship condemned (12:13-59)
 - I. Parables of the barren fig tree, mustard seed and leaven (13:1-21)
- VII. Ministry East of the Jordan River (13:22-19:27)
 - A. The narrow gate (13:22-30)
 - B. Warnings concerning Herod (13:31-35)
 - C. Healing on the Sabbath (14:1-24)
 - D. Counting the cost of discipleship (14:25-35)
 - E. Parables of the lost sheep, coin and son (15:1-32)
 - F. Parable of the unjust steward (16:1-18)
 - G. The rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31)
 - H. Forgiveness and the unprofitable servant (17:1-10)
 - I. Ten lepers healed (17:11-19)
 - J. The promised Kingdom (17:20-37)
 - K. Parable of the persistent widow (18:1-8)
 - L. Parable of the Pharisee and tax collector (18:9-14)
 - M. Jesus welcomes the children (18:15-17)
 - N. The rich young ruler (18:18-30)
 - O. Jesus foretells His death (18:31-34)
 - P. The blind beggar healed (18:35-43)
 - Q. Jesus and Zacchaeus (19:1-10)
 - R. Parable of the minas (19:11-27)
- VIII. Ministry in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38)
 - A. Triumphal Entry (19:28-44)
 - B. Cleansing of the Temple (19:45-48)

- C. Confronting the Jewish leaders (20:1-47)
- D. The widow's mites (21:1-4)
- E. Jesus foretells the destruction of the Temple (21:5-28)
- F. The parable of the fig tree (21:29-38)
- IX. Suffering and Death (22:1-23:56)
 - A. The Last Supper (22:1-38)
 - B. Praying in the garden (22:39-46)
 - C. The arrest of Jesus (22:47-65)
 - D. The trials of Jesus (22:66-23:25)
 - E. The death on the cross (23:26-56)
- X. Resurrection and Ascension (24:1-53)
 - A. The empty tomb (24:1-12)
 - B. Appearance on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35)
 - C. Jesus appears to the eleven (24:36-49)
 - D. Jesus ascends to heaven (24:50-53)

I. Preface (1:1-4)

- 1:1 **"many have taken in hand"** - It is not surprising that many uninspired individuals would be writing about the life of Jesus. There is no more significant and important life in all of human history.
- 1:2 **"those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses"** - This tells us that the apostles were busy and zealous telling others about the life of Christ. We also see the implication that Luke was not an eyewitness from the beginning and not one of the seventy sent by Jesus as some have suggested (notice the use of the phrase "sent them" in Luke 10:1-2).
- 1:3 **"perfect understanding"** - It is important for us to note that Luke was inspired by God to write the things he wrote. The phrase "perfect understanding" makes it clear that Luke's account is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Luke did not collect and copy uninspired material written by others.
- "most excellent"** - The phrase "most excellent" is used to refer to governors of provinces, civil magistrates, senators, noblemen, princes and other high officials.
- "Theophilus"** - This is a Greek name which literally means "friend of God." All that we know about this individual is what we find in this verse and Acts 1:1. From his name and the honorable description given to him by Luke we can only assume he was a Gentile of considerable rank and distinction. He may have been converted to the Christian faith by Luke or perhaps Paul.
- 1:4 **"certainty"** - Like Theophilus we can be certain concerning the truth of Jesus from the inspired words of Scripture (John 20:30-31; 2 Timothy 1:12; James 1:5-8).

II. Announcements and Births of John and Jesus (1:5-2:52)

A. The announcement of John's birth (1:5-25)

- 1:5 **"Herod, the king of Judea"** - This is Herod the Great who ruled from 37 B.C. to A.D. 4 in Judea. He was the ruler of all of Palestine at the time of Christ's birth. He may have died the same year Christ was born. Following his death the province was divided between his sons to rule.

"Zacharias" - He was a priest of the division Abia (Abijah). In 1 Chronicles 24:7-19 there is a record of the 24 different divisions (group rotations) to serve in the temple.

"Elizabeth" - She was also of a priestly family, and a relative of Mary (Luke 1:36) the mother of Jesus. We do not know the exact relationship. Mary and Elizabeth may have been first cousins or perhaps even second, third or fourth cousins. All we know for sure is they were related.

1:6 **"righteous before God"** - They were righteous because they were walking in "all the commandments and ordinances" of God. Notice it was "all" the commandments not just "some" of the commandments. Partial obedience is not obedience.

We also need to realize that righteousness requires both faith and obedience.

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36).

Some fail to notice that in this verse two different Greek words are used for "believe." The first (PISTEUŌ) is talking about faith, while the second (APEITHEŌ) is talking about obedience. It should read, "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not obey the Son shall not see life." The translators used "believe" for both because obedience is automatically a part of true biblical faith. Faith alone is not righteousness (James 2:24-26).

1:7 **"well advanced in years"** - Elizabeth was barren and they were both well beyond the age for having children. Tradition tells us they may have been approximately 90 years old at this time.

1:8 **"serving as priest"** - The life of a priest is a life of service. What does this say about Christians today (1 Peter 2:9; Colossians 3:23-24)?

"in the order of his division" - Abia (Abijah) was number 8 of 24 divisions. In the days of king David, there was a dividing of the sons of Aaron into "twenty four" orders, or courses to serve in the temple (1 Chronicles 24:10).

- 1:9 **"his lot"** - The custom was to cast lots to determine God's will for the job each priest would perform in the daily activities.
- "burn incense"** - The incense was burned by the priest twice a day (Exodus 30:7-8) representing the prayers and praises of the people toward God. The incense was made from equal amounts of sweet spices, stacte, onycha, galbanum and pure frankincense (Exodus 30:34).
- 1:10 **"the people were praying"** - Since the burning of incense was an emblem of the prayers and praises of the people toward God it is fitting to see that the people were engaged in prayer (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 8:1-3). The incense was burned twice a day in the temple, in the morning and in the evening (Exodus 30:7-8). However, Luke does not specify the time of day in which this event took place.
- 1:11 **"an angel of the Lord"** - This angel is later identified as Gabriel (Luke 1:19). Not only was Gabriel sent by God to Zacharias, he was also sent to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26-33). He was also the angel who had been sent to Daniel in the Old Testament to explain the meaning of Daniel's visions (Daniel 8:16; 9:21).
- 1:12 **"fear fell upon him"** - Perhaps Zacharias remembered the times in the Old Testament Scriptures when angels had been sent by God to punish sin and evil (2 Kings 19:35; 1 Chronicles 21:15; Isaiah 37:36).
- 1:13 **"the angel said to him"** - This prophecy from God's messenger ended 400 years of divine silence (Malachi 4:5-6).
- "your prayer is heard"** - Had he recently been praying for a son? Probably not since both he and his wife were "well advanced" in age. The lesson for us is that an answer to a prayer sometimes only comes after an extended period of time. Let us be patient in our prayers (Psalm 37:7; James 1:4; Luke 18:1-8).
- "you shall call his name John"** - In the original Hebrew language the name means "the grace of Jehovah." This is most fitting since it was John's role to prepare the way for the Messiah who is the perfect manifestation and revelation of God's grace.
- 1:14 **"joy...gladness...rejoice"** - The birth of John would bring joy to not only his parents, but also to those who would benefit from his work

of preparing the way for Jesus. In Israel at that time, as generally in all times, news of being with child was an occasion for rejoicing.

1:15-16 **"great in the sight of the Lord"** - He would be great in the Lord's sight (which is truly what matters) but he would not necessarily be great in the world's sight.

"shall drink neither wine nor strong drink" - Restraining from strong drink was a qualification for the Nazarite vow under the law of Moses (Numbers 6:1-21). A Nazarite was one (man or woman - Numbers 6:2) who was bound by a vow to be set apart for the service of God. The vow would last for a certain amount of time.

The Nazarites for life mentioned in the Bible include Samson (Judges 13:5), Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11) and John (Luke 1:15). However, the only one of these who was actually called a Nazarite was Samson.

It is assumed by some that Jesus was also a Nazarite for life, but this cannot be supported by Scripture. We can actually know that Jesus was not a Nazarite for life because He drank grape juice which was one of the things forbidden by the Nazarite vow (Numbers 6:1-21; Luke 22:17-20). The confusion comes from two different but similar sounding words: Nazarite and Nazarene. A Nazarene was a person from the town of Nazareth. Jesus grew up in Nazareth and was, therefore, a Nazarene (Matthew 2:23). However, Jesus is never called a Nazarite in the Scriptures.

"filled with the Holy Spirit" - He would be guided by the Spirit his entire life (Luke 1:41).

1:17 **"in the spirit and power of Elijah"** - Notice that this does not say he would literally be Elijah (Malachi 4:5-6). John would be similar to Elijah in many ways: personality, zeal, austerity and dress. They were also both known for their courage in condemning those in power who were guilty of sin.

"to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children" - The word "to" would be better translated as "with" the children. The meaning being that John would prepare many of the Jews (both fathers and children) for the Lord.

- 1:18 **"I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years"** - Tradition tells us they may have been approximately 90 years old at this time.
- 1:19 **"I am Gabriel"** - Gabriel had also been sent by God to Daniel to explain his visions (Daniel 8:16; 9:21). Gabriel and Michael the archangel (first in rank or chief angel) are the only angels mentioned by name in the Scriptures (Jude 1:9; Daniel 8:16; 9:21; 10:13, 21; 12:1).
- "stands in the presence of God"** - The Greek word AGGELOS means "a messenger" and as a messenger the angel is near to God, ready to do His bidding as may be required.
- 1:20 **"you will be mute"** - He did not believe Gabriel's words and so he would not be able to speak until the promise was fulfilled. We can only imagine how hard this must have been for him to be mute at this time. He was not able to share this joyful news with others.
- 1:21 **"he lingered so long"** - The people knew the time it normally took to perform his duties as a priest.
- 1:22 **"he beckoned to them"** - He was able to act out to them the basics of what had taken place inside the temple.
- 1:23 **"the days of his service were completed"** - Zacharias did not use his handicap as an excuse for not completing his service as a priest. He completed his duties. Christians today should not use any handicap as an excuse for failing to serve God.
- "departed to his own house"** - He returned to his home city. Zacharias lived in the hill country in the region of Judea (Luke 1:39, 65). The name of the city is not given in the Scriptures. Some believe it to be the city of Hebron which is described in the book of Joshua as being "in the mountains of Judah" (Joshua 20:7; 21:11), but there is no proof that this is the city where Zacharias and Elizabeth lived and John was born.
- 1:24 **"she hid herself five months"** - The Bible does not tell us why she hid herself, but it may be that she simply wanted to meditate upon God's goodness and spend her time thanking Him for this great blessing as is expressed in the following verse.
- 1:25 **"my reproach"** - The Jewish people mistakenly considered barrenness a reproach or disgrace. This may have been due to

God's promise that the seed of Abraham would be as numerous as the stars of heaven (Genesis 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; Exodus 32:13) and that from his seed would come the Messiah (Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:16).

B. The announcement of Jesus' birth (1:26-56)

1:26 **"sixth month"** - This would be the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy.

"Gabriel" - Not only was Gabriel sent by God to Zacharias (Luke 1:11, 19), he was also sent to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus. In the Old Testament Gabriel is named as the angel sent to Daniel to explain the meaning of his visions concerning the coming of the Messiah's kingdom (Daniel 8:16; 9:21).

"Nazareth" - Nazareth was a city with a population of 15,000 to 20,000 in the days of Christ located on a hill or mountain near Cana within the province of Galilee. The people of Galilee were looked down upon with contempt by the people of Judea for not being as cultured. They spoke in a disregarded dialect and were more exposed to contact with the heathen.

1:27 **"virgin"** - The virgin birth of the Messiah was actually prophesied from the beginning (Genesis 3:15). In this passage we learn that the Messiah would be the seed of the woman. This is the first hint concerning the virgin birth of Christ. It was prophesied again more clearly in Isaiah 7:14.

"betrothed" - The word "betrothed" means engaged to be married. In the Jewish culture it was not unusual to have a period of ten to twelve months between the betrothal and marriage. The nature of this engagement was more binding than what many cultures practice today. Unfaithfulness during this time was considered adultery and punishable by death (Deuteronomy 22:23-25).

"Joseph" - We do not find much information in the Bible concerning Joseph. He was the son of Jacob (Matthew 1:16) and son-in-law of Heli (Luke 3:23), and husband to Mary. We know he was a "just man" (Matthew 1:19) who was obedient to God's commands (Matthew 1:24-25). He was a carpenter (Matthew 13:55) who lived at Nazareth in Galilee, and was of the house of David.

"house of David" - The Greek word (OIKOS) translated as "house" in this verse is defined by *Thayer's Greek Definitions* as "stock, family, descendants of one." This tells us that Joseph was a descendant of David.

"Mary" - This was a common name among the Jews and is the same as the Old Testament name "Miriam" who was the sister of Moses and Aaron.

1:28 **"blessed are you among women"** - Happiness is hers because she is to be the mother of the long-anticipated Messiah (Isaiah 7:14). She was a poor virgin of Nazareth, who was to have the honor of bringing forth the world's redeemer, God's only begotten Son, the Messiah.

1:29 **"she was troubled"** - The Greek word (DIATARASSŌ) translated as "troubled" means "agitated with alarm." The awesome presence of the mighty angel Gabriel was so unexpected, sudden and extraordinary that it filled the heart of this young maiden with alarm not knowing what to make of the situation.

1:30 **"you have found favor with God"** - No better words could be heard to bring peace to a troubled heart. We are not told how she gained the favor of God, but her inspired words (Luke 1:46-55) point to a knowledge of the Scriptures, a trust in God and a life of virtue and integrity.

1:31 **"Jesus"** - The name Jesus is the New Testament form of the Old Testament name Joshua. The name means, "Jehovah is salvation." In Matthew's account we learn the reason why this name was chosen, "for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The names "Christ" and "Messiah" both mean "anointed," while the name "Emmanuel" (Matthew 1:23) means "God with us."

1:32 **"throne of His father David"** - Both Mary and her husband Joseph were direct descendants of David (Matthew 1:6; Luke 3:31), thus making Jesus both the legal heir of David and his physical descendent.

1:33 **"house of Jacob"** - This phrase is used to mean the Jewish nation in general, and later to describe the spiritual people of God (Jew or Gentile). The patriarch Jacob's God-given name was "Israel." Christ is now reigning over the true "Israel of God" (Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 6:16; Matthew 19:28).

"of His kingdom there will be no end" - The perpetual existence of Christ's church (kingdom) is clearly taught throughout the Scriptures (Isaiah 9:7; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 11:15).

- 1:34 **"since I do not know a man"** - The Greek word (GINŌSKŌ) translated as "know" in this verse is described by *Thayer's Greek Definitions* as a "Jewish idiom for sexual intercourse between a man and a woman." Mary was still a virgin at this point. This teaches us an important lesson concerning chastity. In the customs of the day the engagement was as binding as the actual marriage but this did not authorize any sexual intimacies until the time of the marriage.
- 1:35 **"will overshadow you"** - The language used here is reminiscent of God's Spirit hovering over the waters during the creation (Genesis 1:2). This unique event is the reason Jesus is called the ONLY begotten Son of God (John 3:16). Although the conception was miraculous there is no proof that throughout her pregnancy the experience of Mary was unlike that of any other mother.
- 1:36 **"Elizabeth your relative"** - We are not told how they were related. Mary was from the tribe of Judah and Elizabeth was from the tribe of Levi on her father's side, but may have had a mother who was from the tribe of Judah. History tells us that intermarriages between the two tribes (Levi and Judah) often occurred. Perhaps Mary was told about the miraculous conception of her relative Elizabeth to provide evidence to her that the promise which had been made to her would also be fulfilled.
- 1:37 **"For with God nothing will be impossible"** - Similar words were spoken to Abraham concerning Sarah's conception (Genesis 18:14). God is omnipotent which means He is all-powerful (Jeremiah 32:17). However, He will not do anything which is not in harmony with His nature (James 1:17). The Bible tells us concerning specific things God "cannot" do. He cannot lie (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; 2 Timothy 2:13; Titus 1:2), He cannot show partiality or favoritism (Deuteronomy 10:17; Romans 2:11; Colossians 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17) and He cannot forgive those who will not repent and forsake sin (Joshua 24:19-20; Proverbs 28:13; Luke 13:3, 5).
- 1:38 **"maidservant"** - The word "maidservant" is a translation of the Greek word DOULĒ which is defined as a female slave, bondmaid

or handmaid. This shows that Mary was completely submissive to the will of God.

1:39-40 **"a city of Judah"** - The Bible does not tell us the name of this city. Some have thought it was Jerusalem while others guess it to be Hebron. However, this is only speculation. It was probably a Levitical city being the home of Zacharias.

1:41 **"the babe leaped in her womb"** - It is important to notice that the Greek word for "babe" in this verse is BREPHOS which is the same word used in both Luke 18:15 and Acts 7:19 to describe young or newborn children and in Luke 2:12 and 16 for the newborn Christ-child. The word BREPHOS can refer to "an unborn child, embryo, a fetus; a new-born child, an infant, a babe" (*Thayer's Greek Definitions*). This leaves no doubt as to the position a Christian should have concerning abortion (Romans 13:9). BREPHOS refers to a living being fearfully and wonderfully made by Almighty God whether within the womb or without (Psalm 139:13-16).

"Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" - The reason for her being filled with the Holy Spirit is explained in the next verse.

1:42-45 **"Then she spoke"** - The Holy Spirit enabled Elizabeth to speak these inspired words. We should notice that this greeting from Elizabeth came before Mary's announcement of her own conception. Therefore, the words of Elizabeth would serve to confirm to Mary that the angel's promise to her would surely be fulfilled.

1:46-47 **"And Mary said"** - We know Elizabeth was enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak by inspiration so we may safely conclude Mary was also inspired to speak these words.

The words of Mary are sometimes referred to as the "The Magnificat" which is Latin for "magnifies" taken from the first line, "My soul magnifies the Lord." However, the Bible does not title her words in such a way. It is always wise to avoid describing Bible events in a way which is not supported by the Scriptures.

"lowly state" - This phrase refers to her humble standing in life or possibly her view of her state religiously.

1:48 **"all generations will call me blessed"** - There is no trace of arrogant boasting taking place here. She was simply saying that all

would consider her to be highly favored or happy in being chosen to be the mother of the Messiah. However, this does not justify worshiping her or praying to her.

- 1:49-50 **"holy is His name"** - Reverence for God's name is taught in several verses (Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 28:58; Isaiah 29:23; 57:15; Ezekiel 36:23; Daniel 2:20; Matthew 6:9).
- 1:51-52 **"strength with His arm"** - The "arm" is used as a symbol of strength. In His word God often uses accommodative language of physical human reference points (anthropomorphisms) for His actions. For example the Bible speaks of the arm of God (Job 40:9), the hand of God (Job 19:21), the face of God (Job 13:24), the eyes of God (Deuteronomy 11:12), the ears of God (Psalm 130:2), the mouth of God (Deuteronomy 8:3), the voice of God (Job 40:9) and even the finger of God (Exodus 31:18). We must not allow the use of this figurative language to confuse us. The Bible clearly teaches that God is not a physical being. God is spirit (John 4:24). Jesus stated, "a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have" (Luke 24:39). God uses accommodative language to help us in our understanding. It is often difficult for us as physical beings to grasp the concept of God as an infinite, eternal, spiritual being.
- "scattered the proud"** - This may refer to the proud Jews who would assume the Messiah could only come from a rich and noble family in Judea not from a poor family who lived in Nazareth (John 1:46).
- 1:53 **"hungry"** - The "hungry" would be those who were hungry for righteousness (Matthew 5:6).
- 1:54-55 **"Abraham"** - The promise made to Abraham has been fulfilled in Jesus (Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:16, 29).
- 1:56 **"returned to her house"** - She may have returned a few days before or after the birth of John. The Scriptures do not tell us. We also do not know if the events recorded in Matthew 1:18-25 occurred before she left to visit Elizabeth or upon her return.

B. Birth of John (1:57-80)

- 1:57 **"full time"** - The full term of her pregnancy was complete.

- "brought forth a son"** - Thus the promise of God through the angel Gabriel to Zacharias was fulfilled.
- 1:58 **"the Lord had shown great mercy"** - The "mercy" here refers to her former condition of barrenness.
- "they rejoiced with her"** - Receiving God's mercy is always a time of rejoicing (Acts 8:39).
- 1:59 **"it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child"** - The circumcision was required to take place on the eighth day according to the law of Moses (Leviticus 12:3). The practice of circumcision was also a part of God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:12). However, circumcision is not required in the law of Christ (Galatians 5:6; 6:15).
- "they would have called him by the name of his father"** - Often the name given to the eldest son was that of the father.
- 1:60 **"No, he shall be called John"** - This is the name the angel told Zacharias to give to the child (Luke 1:13). Evidently Zacharias had provided this information to Elizabeth (perhaps by writing).
- 1:61 **"There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name"** - These well-meaning neighbors argued even though they did not have the right name or the necessary information to make this decision. It would serve us well to remember this example to avoid being "a busybody in other people's matters" (1 Peter 4:15).
- 1:62 **"made signs"** - This may show that Zacharias was also unable to hear. If he was able to hear, there would be no reason to make "signs" by gesturing to him in some way.
- 1:63 **"tablet"** - The tablets being used during this time were usually made of wood and covered with a thin coat of wax. The one writing would use an iron stylus to scratch words into the wax.
- "they all marveled"** - They marveled because Zacharias gave the same name as Elizabeth which showed that the name had been already agreed upon and decided, which it had been by God through the angel (Luke 1:13).
- 1:64 **"his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed"** - This fulfills the promise made in verse 20.

"he spoke, praising God" - His voice was restored and he used his first words to praise God. He experienced great joy at the birth of his son and now the recovery of his speech.

- 1:65 **"fear came on all"** - In the Bible the word "fear" is often used to show reverence and awe. These remarkable events (the birth of John and the restored speech of Zacharias), convinced them this was truly of God which filled them with a sense of reverence and awe. We see this kind of "fear" often in the book of Luke (Luke 5:26; 7:16).
- 1:66 **"What kind of child will this be?"** - They knew God had a special mission for the life of John, but they did not know what it would be.
- 1:67 **"filled with the Holy Spirit"** - The Holy Spirit entered into Zacharias to enable him to speak by inspiration. The words he was given to speak are found in verses 68-79.
- 1:68 **"Blessed"** - To bless God, is not to bestow a blessing on Him; for He is blessed forever in Himself, and is the source of all spiritual blessings. The meaning here is to give God the praise and glory of which He is rightfully due. Specifically in this context to give thanks unto Him for Jesus Christ and the salvation He brings to the world.
- "He has visited and redeemed His people"** - The use of the past tense implies the certainty of it being fulfilled. When God promises something it is as certain as if it has already occurred.
- 1:69 **"horn"** - The word "horn" is often used in the Bible metaphorically to represent aggressive strength, power, honor or victory. This figurative use of "horn" is taken from the picture of battling animals.
- "the house of His servant David"** - This phrase shows that Mary was a descendent of David (Luke 1:32). Both Mary and her husband Joseph were direct descendants of David (Matthew 1:6; Luke 3:31), thus making Jesus both the legal heir of David and his physical descendent.
- 1:70 **"by the mouth of His holy prophets"** - There are over 300 Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ. [Please see the appendices - "OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST" for additional information.]
- 1:71 **"saved from our enemies"** - The enemies spoken of were not the Romans or any political enemies, as the Jews might have

expected, but the true enemies are Satan and his workers of iniquity which war against the souls of men.

Ephesians 6:11-12 says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

1:72-73 **"covenant"** - God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) was confirmed with an "oath" (Genesis 22:16-18) and promised to bless "all the families of the earth" through the glorious Seed (not seeds) which is Jesus (Galatians 3:16). It was John (the son of Zacharias), who would prepare Israel for the fulfillment of this promise in Jesus Christ.

1:74 **"delivered"** - Notice that we are delivered from our enemies to serve God. How many Christians today live in spiritual laziness never providing service to the one who redeemed them? The Christian life must be a life of diligent service (Matthew 5:16; 28:19-20; James 2:17).

1:75 **"all the days of our life"** - We are to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life (Matthew 10:22; Revelation 3:21-22).

In 1 Corinthians 15:58 Paul wrote, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

1:76 **"And you, child"** - The prophecy of Zacharias now turns toward John as the "prophet" (Matthew 11:9) who would prepare the way of the Savior (Malachi 4:5-6; Isaiah 40:3-5; Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2-4).

1:77 **"knowledge of salvation"** - John would let the people know what was necessary for salvation (Luke 3:3). God's plan for the "remission" of sins was clearly taught by the Apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36-38).

1:78 **"Dayspring"** - This word is a translation of the Greek word ANATOLĒ which means the rising of the sun (dawn). The rising of the sun brings light to a dark world and ushers in another day of life

for the inhabitants of the earth. Light and darkness are terms used in the Bible to represent truth and error. Jesus is indeed the light of the world (John 8:12). Those who follow Him will not walk in darkness. The teachings of Jesus would show mankind the way of truth, righteousness and peace.

1:79 **"shadow of death"** - Isaiah 9:2 teaches, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined."

"guide our feet" - Psalm 119:105 states, "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path."

1:80 **"the child"** - The child mentioned is John the son of Zacharias.

C. Birth and childhood of Jesus (2:1-52)

2:1 **"in those days"** - We do not know the day, month or even year for this event. This is one of the reasons it is impossible to fix an exact date for Jesus' birth. Based on the information in the gospel accounts and secular history, scholars assume a year of birth anywhere between 6 BC and 1 BC.

"Caesar Augustus" - This was the nephew of Julius Caesar who was appointed as the second emperor of Rome. The name "Caesar" was given to all the emperors, much like the designation of "Pharaoh" was given to the Egyptian leaders. The name "Augustus" (august or honorable) was a name he took for himself as a compliment to his own perceived greatness.

"registered" - The purpose of this registration was to generate a list of the citizens to be taxed. This is why some translations use the word "taxed" instead of "registered" or "enrolled."

2:2 **"Quirinius was governing Syria"** - This statement has caused some confusion. It seems that Luke is saying that the registration took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. However, Matthew says that our Lord was born during the reign of Herod (Matthew 2:1), at which time Quintilius Varus (not Quirinius) was governing Syria. The solution to this may be that the text is actually saying that this enrollment was made by Quirinius who only later was made governor of Syria and then made a second census.

2:3 **"his own city"** - This phrase means his place of birth.

2:4-6 **"Bethlehem"** - Joseph was a descendent of David so he went to the city of Bethlehem to register (1 Samuel 16:1). This would be the place of Jesus' birth as prophesied by Micah (Micah 5:2).

"betrothed" - Why was the word "betrothed" used here when Matthew 1:24 tells us that Joseph took her to be his wife? Perhaps this word was used to remind us that the marriage had not yet been consummated (Matthew 1:25).

2:7 **"she brought forth her firstborn Son"** - This is a remarkable, astonishing and world-changing event that is expressed in one short phrase. It is in the fullness of time that God has now sent forth His Son, born of a woman to be the Savior of the world (Galatians 4:4-5). If uninspired men had written the Bible (as some falsely claim) page after page would have been written to describe this momentous event.

"firstborn" - It is true that each first son was designated as the firstborn, but it is interesting to note that the word "firstborn" does differentiate this Son from other sons of Mary which would come later (Matthew 13:55-56; Mark 6:3).

"laid Him in a manger" - The word "manger" means a crib or feeding trough used for animals.

"there was no room for them in the inn" - There is no indication that the owner of the inn turned them away for any other reason than there was simply no room. There were probably many visitors in this small town because of the decree. It could be the owner of the inn offered them a place in the barn out of compassion and kindness.

2:8 **"in the fields"** - The Bible does not give an exact date for the birth of Jesus. In Luke 2:8 we find "there were shepherds" who were "abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock." This would probably not be in December when the fields were wet and cold, but rather sometime between April and September. Many dates have been suggested for the birth of Jesus, but all are simply the guesses of men. Perhaps God did not reveal the date because He knew men would limit their focus on the Savior to one special day instead of all year long as it should be (which is proven each year on December 25).

2:9 **"the glory of the Lord shone around them"** - When the angel appeared to Zacharias (Luke 1:11) and later to Mary (Luke 1:28)

there was no mention of the "glory of the Lord" seen in this verse. The word "glory" is sometimes used to describe "light" (1Corinthians 15:41; Acts 22:11). It may be this divine light served to help the shepherds see this angel of the Lord.

2:10 **"good tidings"** - The Greek word used here is EUAGGELIZŌ which means "to announce good news" from which comes the word "evangelize."

"great joy which will be to all people" - This good news brought by the angels was not merely for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles (all mankind).

2:11 **"born to you"** - This phrase indicates that it was for their benefit the birth had occurred (and indeed the benefit of all mankind).

"Christ" - The word "Christ" means "anointed." The use of this term identifies Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. He is the anointed, suffering servant, called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

2:12 **"sign"** - The shepherds were given this information to help them identify the baby Jesus. He would be bound with a strip of cloth which would indicate that the birth had recently occurred, and He would be lying in a manger which was an extremely unusual place to find a baby.

2:13-14 **"heavenly host"** - These are angels, who are often represented in the Bible as a host (heavenly army) surrounding the throne of God (1 Kings 22:19; 2 Chronicles 18:18; Daniel 7:10). Notice this is the heavenly army celebrating peace!

In the Greek this is literally "peace to men of goodwill" which is describing the spiritual peace that comes to Christians. God does not promise physical peace to mankind.

2:15 **"Let us now go to Bethlehem"** - This shows that the shepherds understood that the "city of David" mentioned by the angel was Bethlehem.

2:16 **"with haste"** - When God provides to us opportunities we should seize upon them at once. Moving quickly is often stressed in the Bible (Matthew 28:7; Luke 14:21-22; Luke 19:4). There is often danger in delay (Genesis 19:16; Matthew 8:21; Acts 17:32; Acts 24:25).

- 2:17 **"they made widely known"** - They were eager to tell others what had happened.
- 2:18 **"marveled"** - The Greek word used here (THAUMAZŌ) translated as "marveled" means to wonder with admiration.
- 2:19 **"pondered them in her heart"** - She considered (weighed) the circumstances relative to her Son's birth to help her gain the fullest understanding possible concerning the nature and mission of her Son. We have a better appreciation of her character when we take note that she pondered this event "in her heart" and did not boast and brag to her friends and neighbors about what had happened to her.
- 2:20 **"glorifying and praising God"** - The rejoicing of these shepherds was the result of the strong evidence of the Messiah's birth which they had seen and heard.
- 2:21 **"circumcision"** - The original institution of circumcision called for the operation to take place on the eighth day after the birth of the child (Genesis 17:12).
- "Jesus"** - This was the name specified by the angel to be given to the child (Luke 1:31). The name Jesus is the New Testament form of the Old Testament name Joshua. The name means, "Jehovah is salvation." In Matthew's account we learn the reason why this name was chosen, "for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The names "Christ" and "Messiah" both mean "anointed," while the name "Emmanuel" (Matthew 1:23) means "God with us."
- 2:22-24 **"days of her purification"** - This shows us that Mary followed the commands of the law (Leviticus 12:1-8).
- "to present Him to the Lord"** - It was required that every first-born male child among the Jews was to be presented to the Lord with an offering because the child was regarded as "holy" (consecrated, dedicated) to the Lord (Exodus 13:2, 12, 15; 22:29).
- "turtle doves"** - One of the doves was for a burnt-offering, and the other was for a sin-offering (Leviticus 12:8). The wealthy were required to bring a lamb, but the poor were required to bring two turtle doves, or pigeons. This shows us that God's Son was not born into wealth and privilege.

2:25-27 **"Simeon"** - Some scholars assume this Simeon was a son of the famous rabbi "Hillel" who was president of the Sanhedrin. However, there is no proof for this in the Bible. It should be understood that "Simeon" was a common name in that day. The "Hillel" theory rests upon complete speculation and guess work. All that is known about this Simeon is found in this context.

"Consolation of Israel" - The term "consolation" comes from the Greek word PARAKLĒSIS which means comfort, consolation or solace. Here it is in reference to the blessing that God had promised to Abraham and the world (Genesis 12:3; 22:18).

"the Lord's Christ" - The phrase means the anointed one of God (Psalm 2:2).

2:28-32 **"blessed God"** - This means he praised God, and gave glory and honor to Him, for His grace which was demonstrated by sending the promised Messiah.

"according to Your word" - God always keeps His word (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:13).

"For my eyes have seen Your salvation" - On more than one occasion this phrase is used in the Scriptures to describe the Messiah (Genesis 49:18; Isaiah 52:10).

"You have prepared" - The preparation included the plans and prophecies through the centuries which had now been fulfilled in the birth of this child, the Christ (Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 1:10).

"light" - The symbolic use of light or brightness is often found in both the Old Testament and New to represent truth shining into the darkness of sin and ignorance (Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 9:2; 60:3; Matthew 4:16; 5:16; Luke 1:79; John 1:5; 8:12; Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 1:5-9).

2:33 **"marveled"** - Joseph and Mary "marveled" that these amazing words of truth coming from the various ones who were prophesying would harmonize so perfectly.

2:34 **"the fall and rising of many"** - Jesus was "destined" (appointed) to bring about the "fall" of those who exalted themselves and the "rising" of those who showed humility and obedience (Matthew 23:12).

"a sign which will be spoken against" - This emphasizes the many who would oppose the things He would teach.

2:35 **"a sword will pierce through your own soul also"** - The sorrow of heart Mary would experience at the crucifixion is dramatically foretold in this verse (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25). It is interesting to note that Joseph was not included in this prophecy. Perhaps, he would not live to see the death of Jesus on the cross. The Bible does not tell us.

"the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" - The crucifixion of Jesus would put an end to the old law and bring about the new law of Christ (Colossians 2:13-17; Hebrews 8:9-13; 9:15-17). This would begin the Christian age where the gospel message would be proclaimed which would reveal the hearts of those who heard by how they reacted to the message of truth (Matthew 13:18-23).

2:36-38 **"Anna, a prophetess"** - The record in both the Old Testament and New show that women were sometimes inspired by God to prophesy (Exodus 15:20-21; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:8-20; Luke 2:36; Acts 2:17-18; 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5).

"Phanuel" - We do not know any more about this individual than what is found here, but evidently he was well known in that day.

"lived with a husband seven years from her virginity" - She married as a pure virgin (Deuteronomy 22:15) and lived seven years with her husband before his death. She continued as a widow for eighty-four years serving in the temple. This mean she could have been well over one hundred years old.

"who looked for redemption" - We are not given her words but the subject matter was the redemption which would be found in Jesus.

2:39 **"they had performed all things"** - Joseph and Mary performed all the requirements of the Law of Moses concerning their new born child. It should be noted here that Luke does not include the information concerning the journey the couple made to Egypt before their return to Nazareth (Matthew 2:1-23).

2:40 **"the Child grew"** - Jesus was human as well as divine and was subject to the normal physical growth and development of any child.

"filled with wisdom" - This is not talking about the divine wisdom within Him, but the natural wisdom which would come as He developed as a mature physical being.

2:41-45 **"His parents went to Jerusalem every year"** - All Jewish males in Israel were required to go to Jerusalem three times each year for the feasts of the Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles (Deuteronomy 16:1, 16).

"supposing Him to have been in the company" - It may seem odd that Joseph and Mary did not know the whereabouts of their Son. However, when going to these great feasts the families and neighbors would often join together and form a large group. Perhaps Joseph and Mary had seen Jesus with the other children as they were making preparations to leave and assumed He had continued with them on the journey. It was only later when they caught up to the others in the group that they realized their mistake.

2:46-47 **"after three days"** - The phrase used here probably means "on the third day." However, there is no doubt the parents would have been frantic at this point.

"in the midst of the teachers" - These were the rabbis or doctors of the law of Moses who would instruct the people concerning religious matters. This shows us the advancement of Jesus at an early age. We should not assume He was challenging or confronting them for any errors they may have had. Jesus would be showing the proper honor and respect to these teachers of the law (Leviticus 19:32).

"astonished at His understanding and answers" - The word "understanding" shows they were impressed with His ability to ask proper questions. He demonstrated by His intelligent questions that He had an excellent understanding of the subject matter and His answers to their questions revealed the comprehensive scope of His knowledge.

2:48-50 **"anxiously"** - The Greek word translated as "anxiously" here is *ODUNAŌ* which means to grieve or to have sorrow or torment.

"my Father's business" - Jesus used this opportunity to remind Joseph and Mary of His Divine mission concerning the souls of men.

"they did not understand" - They had been told many things concerning their Son, but they did not fully comprehend the significance of this event.

2:51-52 **"subject to them"** - Even Jesus (the Son of God) submitted to the rule of His parents showing respect and honor as commanded in the law of Moses (Exodus 20:12).

"His mother kept all these things in her heart" - She thought about what had occurred and cherished, treasured up and preserved these things in her heart and mind.

"increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" - See the notes on Luke 2:40.

III. Preparation for the Ministry of Jesus (3:1-4:13)

A. Preaching and imprisonment of John (3:1-20)

3:1 **"Tiberius Caesar"** - Tiberius was the emperor of Rome at this time. He was the third of the Caesars following after Augustus the second and Julius who was the first. He reigned for nearly twenty-three years (A.D. 14-37). In the fifteenth year of his reign John began to preach. The fifteen years mentioned in this verse probably includes the three years Tiberius reigned jointly with Augustus.

"Pontius Pilate" - Pilate was the sixth procurator (governor) of Judea. He was appointed to his position in the twelfth year of Tiberius (around A.D. 25-26). He played a major role in the crucifixion of Jesus (Matthew 27:11-30; Mark 15:1-15; Luke 23:13-24; John 18:39-40; 19:1-16).

"Herod" - Herod is a family name used for several different individuals in the Scriptures. This Herod was Antipas who was the son of Herod the great. He married Herodias, the wife of his half-brother, Herod Philip (Luke 3:19). Antipas (at the urging of Herodias) killed John for condemning his marriage (Luke 9:7-9).

"Philip" - This Philip (not Philip the apostle found in John 1:44 or Philip the evangelist of Acts 8:5) was half-brother to Herod Antipas. He died in the twentieth year of Tiberius (A.D. 34).

"Lysanias" - Lysanias was the tetrarch of Abilene (the district around Abila) at this time.

- 3:2 **"Annas and Caiaphas were high priests"** - Annas who may have been a former high priest was the father-in-law to Caiaphas the current high priest (John 18:13). There was to be only one high priest according to the Law of Moses, but it could be that Annas served as a deputy (Sagan) to the high priest or perhaps he was president of the Sanhedrin, while Caiaphas was the actual high priest for religious activities. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Caiaphas was appointed to the position by the Roman prefect.
- 3:3 **"baptism of repentance for the remission of sins"** - John's baptism is one of the five baptisms in the New Testament. [Please see the appendices - "FIVE BAPTISMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT" for additional information]. John's baptism could more accurately be called "God's baptism" which was instituted at this time to prepare the Jews for the Messiah. Those Jews who refused to be baptized by John were actually rejecting God's will (Luke 7:30). However, this baptism was no longer valid once the baptism of the great commission was first proclaimed (Acts 2:38; Acts 19:1-5). From that Pentecost day in Acts 2 until the end of time all are required to experience the new birth of being born of water and of the Spirit as Jesus commanded (John 3:1-5) and practiced by the apostles starting in Acts 2:38.
- 3:4-6 **"as it is written"** - The following quotes can be found in the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 40:3-4; 52:10).
- "crying in the wilderness"** - He would be preaching in the wilderness of Judea (Matthew 3:1).
- "Prepare the way of the Lord"** - The language being used describes the work which was done to prepare for the approach of a king who would soon visit one's city. This physical illustration is used to describe the spiritual improvements which would need to take place in the hearts of the people to prepare them for the teachings of Jesus.
- "all flesh shall see the salvation of God"** - The words "all flesh" includes both Jews and Gentiles.
- 3:7-9 **"Brood of vipers"** - These words were spoken to the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- Matthew 3:7 says, "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them,

'Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?'"

These two groups were the leading sects of the Jews at this time. They had many differences in their doctrines, but one of the things they had in common was their hypocrisy. The strong language used by John emphasizes the poisonous effects of their hypocrisy.

"who warned you to flee" - The Pharisees and Sadducees probably came to be baptized by John merely for the outward appearance of righteousness (Matthew 6:1-8). John's message to the people was to repent of their sins and be baptized. The self-righteous attitude of these hypocrites revealed their unrepentant heart.

"bear fruits worthy of repentance" - Their actions showed the attitude of their hearts. True faith requires works of obedience (James 2:17-26).

"We have Abraham as our father" - The unwarranted pride the Jews had in their ancestry often led them to have feelings of justification and superiority (John 8:33). John is in no way demeaning Abraham. The Jews relied on their connection to Abraham, but they often did not demonstrate the faith and obedience of Abraham (James 2:21-24). The true Jews were the spiritual descendants of Abraham who were of his same faithful character and obedient, working faith (Romans 2:28-29).

"every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down" - We find many verses in the New Testament calling for the bearing of fruit. In the book of Luke the importance of bearing fruit is emphasized continually (Luke 3:9; 6:43-44; 8:14-15; 13:6-7, 9; 20:10). We see a long discussion by Jesus concerning fruit in John 15.

In John 15:5-6 Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned." [In this passage (John 15:1-8) the branches represent Christians not denominations (see "anyone" in verse 6).]

The word "fruit" is often used to refer to good works or good deeds (Colossians 1:10).

3:10-14 **"What shall we do then?"** - This is the question which comes from a good and honest heart seeking to do what is right (Acts 16:30).

"tax collectors" - This phrase comes from the Greek word TELŌNĒS and is defined as a tax farmer or collector of public revenue (publican).

"The tax collectors were as a class, detested not only by the Jews, but by other nations also, both on account of their employment and of the harshness, greed, and deception, with which they did their job" (*Thayer's Greek Definitions Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

"soldiers" - We are not told if these soldiers were Jews or Romans. Judea was a Roman province and it is possible that Jews or Jewish proselytes served as soldiers under Herod Antipas or Philip. We notice that these soldiers were not commanded to leave the army.

The soldiers were told to not use intimidation, violence or false accusations against others. They were also told to be content with their wages and not extort money or goods from others. The evil practices condemned by John were common crimes of the Roman soldiers in the first century.

3:15-18 **"expectation"** - The Greek word here is PROSDOKAŌ which means to expect (whether in thought, in hope or in fear) or to look for or wait for. The people were expecting the coming of the Messiah and were engaged in debate. Some doubted while others believed that John was the Messiah. John quickly corrected this misunderstanding (John 1:14-28).

"He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" - John baptized only with water but Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles (Acts 1:4-5) and took place on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). The baptism of fire is promised to all who disobey God's plan for salvation. It will take place after the judgment day. [Please see the appendices - "FIVE BAPTISMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT" for additional information]

"winnowing fan" - On the threshing floor animals were used to trample the harvest which would dislodge the chaff from the grain. The winnowing fan (shovel) was next used to toss the grain and chaff into the wind so the chaff would be blown to the side. The good grain was then stored and the chaff was burned.

3:19-20 **"rebuked by him concerning Herodias"** - John told Herod that it was not lawful for him to marry Herodias. This was true for several reasons, but most obviously because she was his brother Philip's wife. More information concerning John's imprisonment and death can be found in the accounts of Matthew and Mark (Matthew 14:3-12; Mark 6:17-29).

B. Baptism of Jesus (3:21-22)

3:21-22 **"Jesus also was baptized"** - For more information concerning the baptism of Jesus we can read the words found in Matthew and Mark (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11). Matthew's account explains that Jesus submitted to baptism not to remove sins, for He had none, but "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

"the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove" - It is most likely that the phrase "like a dove" modifies the descent and not the bodily form. In Mark 1:10 we read, "He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove." Therefore the descending would be like that of a dove and not that the Holy Spirit's bodily form looked like a dove.

"a voice came from heaven" - It should be noted that all three of the godhead are present. Each of the three Persons in the Godhead is called God. The three Persons in the Godhead are not attributes of God, but they each have ALL the attributes of God. The Bible tells us there is only one God, and yet there is distinctly God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. There is more than one place where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all mentioned in the same passage (Matthew 28:19; John 6:62-65; 1 Peter 1:2). What can we conclude from these verses? There is only one essence of God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence. The Godhead means three distinct Persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) in one distinct God.

C. Genealogy of Jesus (3:23-38)

3:23-38 **"thirty years of age"** - This is the same age at which the priests would begin their work (Numbers 4:3, 23, 47).

"the son of Joseph, the son of Heli" - The skeptics charge that there is a contradiction in the Scriptures because the genealogy of Christ listed by Matthew (Matthew 1:1-17) does not match the genealogy recorded by Luke (Luke 3:23-38). However, with further investigation we see that both genealogies are correct. The differences found in the two lists are easily explained by the fact that one is traced through the "father" Joseph and the other is traced through the mother Mary. Matthew's account says that Joseph is the son of Jacob, while Luke says that Joseph is the son of Heli. There is no contradiction found when we realize that the word "son" here can also be translated as "son-in-law." Matthew traced the paternal line of descent; while Luke traced the maternal line of descent. It should be noted that both Joseph and Mary were descendants of David (Matthew 1:6; Luke 3:31; 2 Samuel 7:8-16). The legal lineage of Joseph found in Matthew's genealogy is traced back to Abraham, while Luke provides the actual lineage from Mary back to Adam (Luke 3:38). [Please see the appendices - "THE GENEALOGIES OF MATTHEW AND LUKE" (AP Article) and "GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST" (Chart) for additional information.]

D. Temptation of Jesus (4:1-13)

4:1-2 **"into the wilderness"** - This would be the wilderness of Judea which was an uninhabited area located near Jordan.

Careful readers of the Bible will notice that Luke lists the temptations faced by Jesus in a different order than Matthew's account. This is not a discrepancy as the skeptics claim. In Luke's account the temptations are arranged topically (or perhaps climactically), whereas in Matthew's account it seems the temptations are arranged chronologically.

4:3-4 **"Man shall not live by bread alone"** - Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 8:3 which states:

"So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD."

Jesus uses this example from the Old Testament to teach the reliance we should always have on the word of God ("it is written").

The value of the spiritual instruction we receive from the Scriptures far outweighs the physical necessities of food (Job 23:12; Psalm 119:103; Jeremiah 15:16; 1 Peter 2:2).

4:5-8 **"kingdoms of the world"** - The devil's power in this world is taught in several passages in the New Testament (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Ephesians 2:2).

"You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve" - Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:13 which states: "You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name." Jesus teaches that it is wrong to direct worship to anyone other than God. This would include idols, false gods, saints, angels, Mary and those who exalt themselves with religious titles like pope.

4:9-13 **"You shall not tempt the Lord your God"** - Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:16 which states: "You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah." The place where the Israelites tempted the Lord was called Massah which means "testing" (Exodus 17:1-7). It was here the children of Israel complained about the lack of water doubting God's care and protection. Their lack of faith was an insult to God.

"he departed from Him until an opportune time" - Jesus faced temptations throughout His life on this earth (Hebrews 2:17-18).

Hebrews 4:15 states, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."

IV. Ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:9)

A. Jesus teaching at the synagogue (4:14-30)

4:14-15 **"in the power of the Spirit"** - The power of Jesus had not been weakened by the temptations. He was prepared to fulfill His ministry confirming His words by the power of the miracles He would perform (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4).

"synagogues" - The Greek word SUNAGŌGĒ which is translated as synagogue is defined as an assembly or congregation. It was a recognized place of worship and instruction for the Jewish people which seems to have been created during their Babylonian exile because they no longer had access to the temple. When they

returned from their captivity the synagogue system returned with them. In the middle of the synagogue there was a raised platform with a podium for the reader to stand when reading the Scriptures and to sit when teaching.

4:16-17 **"Nazareth"** - Jesus was visiting His home town.

"as His custom was" - We note that the regular habit of Jesus was to attend the assembly or meeting place for the reading of the Holy Scriptures and worship. How can any who claim to follow His steps fail to do so today? Attendance of the worship service will never become an issue for a faithful Christian (Hebrews 10:25).

"book" - This would be a scroll made from animal skin wrapped on two large wooden rollers.

"He found the place" - Jesus reads from Isaiah 61:1-2 and 42:7 which are prophecies concerning His spiritual mission.

4:18-19 **"anointed Me"** - Jesus was the prophesied anointed one promised in the Scriptures (Psalm 2:2; Acts 10:38). In the Old Testament we find prophets (1 Kings 19:16), priests (Exodus 40:13-14) and kings (1 Samuel 9:16-17) all anointed to fulfil their duties. Jesus was indeed all three: prophet, priest and king (Acts 7:37-38; Hebrews 4:14-16; Luke 1:32-33).

"preach the gospel to the poor" - This would be those who were "poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3).

"liberty to the captives" - This describes those who were captive to sin (2 Timothy 2:26)

"recovery of sight to the blind" - This would be bringing the light of truth to those in the darkness of sin and religious error (John 9:39).

"acceptable year of the Lord" - This was the time fixed by God for proclaiming the message of redemption to those who were lost in sin (Galatians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 6:2).

4:20-22 **"attendant"** - This would be the servant (Chazan) of the congregation.

"Today this Scripture is fulfilled" - Jesus was the fulfillment of all prophecies concerning the Messiah (Acts 13:29).

"bore witness to Him" - All who heard Him speak were witnesses to the power and truth of the things He said agreeing that it was correct to apply this passage to the Messiah, but they still had their doubts that He was actually the fulfillment of the prophecy.

"gracious words" - The words expressed the unmerited favor God showed to the people by providing to them a Savior.

"Is this not Joseph's son?" - They marveled that the Son of Joseph who had no training as a rabbi could proclaim a message with such power and knowledge.

4:23-27 **"You will surely say"** - Jesus knew they would wonder why He did not perform the same wonders in their area which He had done in Capernaum (Matthew 4:13; 11:23).

"Physician, heal yourself" - The meaning of this commonly used Jewish proverb was that a man should first and foremost take care of his own home, those near him and himself before helping others.

"no prophet is accepted in his own country" - Jesus knew they would not fully appreciate the significance of any miracles He would do.

"to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath" - The account of this event is recorded in 1 Kings 17.

"Naaman" - The account of this event is recorded in 2 Kings 5.

4:28-30 **"filled with wrath"** - When Jesus explained to the people of His home town that they would not receive very much attention from Him because they discounted Him and had a lack of faith they became angry and sought to kill Him.

"passing through the midst of them" - It could well be that Jesus used miraculous means to pass through this angry mob. The ease of His escape is difficult to explain without the use of miraculous power.

B. Miracles at Capernaum (4:31-44)

4:31-37 **"Sabbaths"** - The word "Sabbath" means "rest." It can be used to refer to a day, festive period, month or even year. The Sabbath was not observed in the days of the Patriarchs. It was incorporated into

the Mosaical system (Exodus 20:8-11) and it is not a part of Christ's covenant today (New Testament). The early church met and worshipped on the first day of week. The example we are to follow today is that of the first Christians who came together every Sunday to worship God (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2). Notice 4 important points concerning the Sabbath:

1. The Sabbath did not apply to anyone prior to the giving of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8; Deuteronomy 5:2-3). Nowhere in the Bible will you find even a hint that anyone observed the Sabbath from the time of Adam to the days of Moses.
2. The purpose of the Sabbath was a sign between God and the nation of Israel (Exodus 31:16-17). The Sabbath was FOR Israel.
3. The Sabbath was instituted to remind Israel how God delivered them from their Egyptian bondage (Deuteronomy 5:15). This was a special observance between God and Israel. It has nothing to do with following the law of Christ today (1 Corinthians 9:21).
4. If you are a Gentile you, and your ancestors were never under the law of Moses.

"His word was with authority" - Matthew 7:28-29 says, "And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

"unclean demon" - There are many references to "demons" and "demon possession" in the New Testament. Critics of the Bible say the belief in demons is evidence of the superstitious nature of the people at that time. However, the Bible record is clear that these evil spirits did exist. In the New Testament we find no explanation for their origin, but their existence as recorded in the Scriptures cannot be denied.

The Bible clearly describes demons as spirit beings (Matthew 8:16; Luke 24:39) who were "unclean" and "evil" (Matthew 12:43-45). From Matthew 12:43-45 we also learn that demons had a will and the ability to change location. Demon possession could cause physical and/or emotional disorders on the one possessed (Matthew 9:32; 12:22;

17:15-18; Mark 9:18; Luke 8:27; 9:39; Acts 19:16). However, the New Testament clearly indicates that the demons could do nothing except by divine permission (Matthew 8:28-31; Mark 1:34; 5:13-14).

Why did God allow demons to possess people in the first century? The Bible does not give a direct answer, but the casting out of demons demonstrated the absolute and complete authority of Jesus. Christ showed His authority in every realm:

1. He showed His power over diseases and physical disorders (Matthew 9:20-22; John 4:46-54; 9:1-41).
2. He showed His authority over material objects (Matthew 14:15-21; 17:24-27; John 2:1-11; 21:1-14).
3. He demonstrated His control over the elements of nature (Matthew 8:23-27; 14:22-23).
4. He showed His power even over death (Matthew 9:18-26; John 11:1-45).

Therefore, it would not surprise us to see that His authority over the spirit realm was shown to demonstrate His power over all things.

In Luke 11:20-22 Jesus said, "But if (*since*) I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils."

This helps us to understand that the purpose of demon possession in the first century was to establish the complete and ultimate authority of the Son of God.

"with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out" - The word "authority" comes from the Greek word EXOUSIA (force, capacity or freedom) and the word "power" comes from the Greek word DUNAMIS (force, ability or might). The

idea expressed is that Jesus had both the right and ability to give and execute such a command.

"the report about Him went out" - Every city, town and village in Galilee was talking about the works of Jesus. Word even spread to places surrounding Galilee (Mark 1:28).

4:38-39 **"Simon's wife's mother"** - This was Simon Peter (Matthew 4:18) whose mother-in-law was sick. This shows us that Peter was married (1 Corinthians 9:5). This would disqualify Peter from being the supposed first "pope" of the Roman Catholic denomination.

The fact that Peter was married also proves that celibacy was not a requirement of either being a disciple or an apostle (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

In Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus said, "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

The "rock" in Matthew 16:18 is Jesus who Peter just confessed as the Christ. Jesus is the foundation upon which the church is built (Ephesians 2:20). The "keys of the kingdom" were not given to Peter alone! In the original Greek text the word translated as "you" is plural. Therefore the keys were given to all the apostles.

Peter had no authority over the other apostles. Nowhere in Scripture does it say Peter is the head of the apostles, or the head of Christ's church! If Peter was chosen to have authority over the other apostles why did they not know it? In Luke 22:24 they were in an argument trying to choose who was the greatest. If Peter had been chosen to be the leader by Jesus this argument would have never happened. Jesus rebuked them and explained that they would not be like the Gentile kings exercising lordship over others (Luke 22:25-27). They were to be servants.

4:40-41 **"He, rebuking them"** - Jesus would not allow the demons to speak because he did not want the support of such evil characters. He

also did not want His enemies to use this as proof of an alleged collusion on His part with the demons.

4:42-44 **"for this purpose I have been sent"** - This will be further explained in Luke 8:1 which says, "Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God."

C. First tour in Galilee (5:1-39)

5:1-7 **"the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God"** - Their eagerness to hear the word of God is a great example for us today (Psalm 119:18; Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; James 1:19; 1 Peter 2:2).

"Lake of Gennesaret" - This is the same as the sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:18; Mark 1:16) and sea of Tiberias (John 6:1) being about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide with a maximum depth of about 140 feet.

"nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net" - Simon Peter was already demonstrating the faith he would continue to have in the words of Jesus.

5:8-11 **"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"** - He was so overwhelmed by the power and wisdom of Jesus that he felt unworthy to be in His presence.

"Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men" - These men would now be involved in casting the net of the Gospel (good news of salvation which has come) with great success (Acts 2:41). Those who were in the depths of sin would be brought up to the light of truth and salvation.

"they forsook all" - A couple of small boats and their nets may not seem to be much, but it was all they had and their source for making a living (Matthew 6:19; Colossians 3:2).

5:12-16 **"leprosy"** - Leprosy was an incurable, contagious disease affecting the skin and nerves which causes discoloration and lumps on the skin. In severe cases it can even cause disfigurement and deformities (Leviticus 13:45-46).

"Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean" - The faith of this leper must have been based upon what he had heard about the other miraculous healings performed by Jesus.

"tell no one" - The more people who knew about the power of Jesus the larger the crowds would become. The Lord's desire at this time in His ministry was probably to keep the crowds of a manageable size. Not only would this make it easier for Him to move about, but it would also help to minimize the jealousy of the Jewish rulers and the suspicion of the Roman government.

"go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering" - The law of Moses gave to the priests the responsibility of determining if the particular skin disorder was real leprosy or some other disease. When the afflicted individual was declared clean by the priest specific sacrifices were then required (Leviticus 14:1-32).

"He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed" - It was His habit to spend time alone that He might rest from His labors and privately pray to the Father, God.

5:17-20

"Pharisees" - The Jews were divided into three prominent sects (Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes). The Pharisees were the largest of the Jewish religious sects. Their name probably came from the Hebrew word PERUSHIM which means separated because they separated themselves from the world to study the law of Moses. They were known for their great pretense of holiness and their strict observance of the laws of Moses and the traditions of the elders. Unlike the Sadducees, they believed in angels, spirits and the resurrection of the dead. They were often condemned by Jesus for their hypocrisy. They were known for being proud, arrogant and self-righteous. They had little or no respect for the common people (John 7:49).

"When He saw their faith" - The paralyzed man benefitted from the faith of his friends. This does not imply that he did not have faith. It simply shows that Jesus noticed the faith of this man's friends.

"your sins are forgiven you" - Obviously, Jesus knew how the Pharisees would react to this and was using it as an opportunity to teach an important lesson. Jesus as Deity had authority to forgive sins (cf. the thief on the cross).

5:21-26

"scribes" - The scribes were scholars whose business it was to study the Law of Moses, transcribe it and write commentaries explaining its meaning. Ezra "was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses" (Ezra 7:6). The scribes had the monumental and essential task of preserving the Holy Scriptures. They took this daunting responsibility seriously as they did their work in a meticulous fashion. They would even count the letters and spaces in their work to make sure each copy was an exact duplicate. The Jewish scribes did us a great service by preserving the Old Testament portion of our Bibles.

In the days of the New Testament the scribes were often associated with the Pharisees. However, not all Pharisees were scribes (Matthew 5:20; 12:38). The scribes became teachers of the people (Mark 1:22) and interpreters of the Law of Moses. They were widely respected by the community because of their knowledge, dedication and outward appearance of Law-keeping.

The original work of the scribes was to preserve, understand and teach the Law. However, the man-made traditions they taught began to take the place of God's word. They soon considered their own regulations and traditions more important than the Law itself. This led to the many confrontations we see in the New Testament between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees. Being hypocrites at heart their life which was once based on true godliness was replaced with a pretense of holiness.

"Who can forgive sins but God alone?" - They were correct that the power to forgive sins belongs to God alone. However, what they failed to realize is that Jesus was and is God. Deity alone has the power to forgive sins.

"the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" - Jesus often used the term "Son of Man" to emphasize His humanity. In this case He shows that He is equally Man and God. Jesus became the Son of man that we might become the sons of God.

"Immediately" - The vast majority of miraculous healings found in the Scriptures occurred immediately. One exception to this is found in John 9:1-12. Jesus could have healed the blind man instantly, but He told him to "go" and "wash" to test the man's faith. Jesus gave conditions to be met to strengthen the man's faith. Those who claim they are able to perform miracles today are frauds and

charlatans. [Please see the appendices - "MODERN-DAY MIRACLES, TONGUE-SPEAKING, AND HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM: A REFUTATION" (AP Article) for additional information.]

"they were all amazed" - Jesus had given them dramatic proof of His authority and Deity.

5:27-32

"tax collector" - Tax collectors (or publicans) were employed by the Roman government to collect revenue from the citizens. The people looked upon Jewish publicans as being traitors to Israel for collecting taxes for the hated Roman oppressors. The publicans also had a bad reputation for collecting more than required so they could enrich themselves. The name "publican" became synonymous with "sinner" (Matthew 5:46; 18:17; 21:31; Mark 2:15-16; Luke 5:30; 15:1-2).

"Levi" - This is the son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14) who was also called Matthew (Matthew 9:9). Levi's job was to gather the custom fees on imports and exports.

"Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" - This charge is made to discredit Jesus with the people. They were hoping to turn the opinion of the people against Jesus by condemning His actions.

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" - Jesus was not saying the Pharisees were really righteous, but since they saw themselves as being righteous they should not have condemned Him for seeking out sinners. The Pharisees could not speak against the logic of His reasoning unless they admitted their own sinfulness.

"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" - As Jesus would explain later, "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

5:33-35

"fast" - The Old Testament record shows us that Israel fasted for different reasons and on different occasions. The people fasted on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-31), in time of war or the threat of war (Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 7:6), during the sickness or death of a loved one (2 Samuel 12:16-23; 1 Samuel 31:13; 1 Chronicles 10:12; 2 Samuel 1:12), when seeking God's forgiveness (Deuteronomy 9:15-18; 1 Kings 21:17-27; Jonah 3:4-10), when faced with impending danger (2 Chronicles 20:3; Nehemiah 1:4; Esther 4:3, 16) and to commemorate certain tragedies or disasters

(Zechariah 8:19). In the New Testament we read of the fasting of Anna (Luke 2:36-38), Jesus (Matthew 4:1-9; Luke 4:1-2), Saul (Acts 9:9), Cornelius (Acts 10:30-31), the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-3), the church at Galatia (Acts 14:21-23) and Zaccheus who fasted twice each week.

Fasting is never commanded in the New Covenant, however, in Matthew 6:16 Jesus uses the phrase, "when you fast" which implies that spiritual people will on occasion fast. Fasting can be a positive experience spiritually. It allows a Christian more time and focus to devote toward spiritual growth. Fasting encourages self-discipline and training. It provides better control of the fleshly desires.

It is interesting to note that we often see Scriptures which speak of both prayer and fasting together, but we never see the practice of fasting without prayer.

"the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them" - Jesus explained that fasting was not consistent with the joy the disciples experienced while the Lord was with them. The time would come when Jesus would depart from this world and because of this their grief would cause them to fast.

5:36-39

"He spoke a parable to them" - The word "parable" is from the Greek word PARABOLĒ which means a similitude or comparison. It is using an earthly story to teach a spiritual lesson. A parable is a story from common life designed to communicate a spiritual truth, religious principle or moral lesson. The example is drawn from everyday experiences. Jesus was the master teacher who was able to communicate great spiritual truths and insights by using everyday events and ideas. Jesus would often use a parable to teach a deep spiritual concept. Parables allow the listeners to see themselves in the story.

"a piece from a new garment on an old one" - Most commentators teach this parable shows the foolishness of mixing the new teaching of Jesus with the old Law that Moses gave to the Israelites. The Bible does teach this (Colossians 2:14-17), but if it is being taught here it is an abrupt change of topics which certainly does not fit the context. It makes more sense to see this simply as a lesson on appropriateness. It is not appropriate to put "a piece from a new garment on an old one" or "new wine into old wineskins." Wineskins expand when new wine is put in them. The old wineskins dried already expanded and would burst if new wine

was added. In much the same way, it was appropriate for the disciples of John to mourn because he had been taken from them. However, it was not appropriate for the disciples of Jesus to mourn while He was with them each day. Ecclesiastes 3:4 says there is, "a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance."

D. Sabbath controversy (6:1-11)

6:1 **"second Sabbath"** - Scholars are divided concerning the meaning of this phrase. This may be speaking of the seventh day of the feast of unleavened bread or the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles.

Some say that since there were three major festivals among the Jews (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles) when the Sabbath day fell on the feast of the Passover it was called the first prime Sabbath, when the Sabbath fell on the day of Pentecost it was the "second Sabbath" and when it fell on the feast of tabernacles it was called the third prime Sabbath.

Others say the phrase "second Sabbath" can be translated as "the first Sabbath after the second" which would be the first Sabbath after the second day of the Passover, when the first-fruits were offered to God. The harvest would have begun so it fits the context of the "heads of grain" being ripe and the disciples "rubbing them in their hands."

6:2 **"Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"** - They were not charged with stealing because the Law sanctioned their actions. In Deuteronomy 23:25 we find, "When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain." The aspect which was called into question was plucking grain on the Sabbath.

The Law of Moses commanded the Israelites to sanctify the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8). They were told to rest on the Sabbath (Exodus 23:12; 34:21) not doing any work (Exodus 20:10), not even gathering sticks (Numbers 15:32-36) and not to travel outside one's place of residence (Exodus 16:29).

To this the Pharisees had added numerous restrictions which were not found in God's word. They condemned such

things as weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying, untying, tearing, writing two or more letters and erasing two or more letters. According to their man-made laws the disciples had sinned by plucking the ears (reaping), rubbing them in their hands (threshing) and lifting the grains to the mouth (carrying burdens). The charges made against the disciples were based on the traditions invented by the Pharisees not on God's word.

6:3-4 **"what David did"** - Jesus was not using the example of David to justify His own disciples. Their actions needed no justification since what they had done was perfectly legal (Deuteronomy 23:25). David's actions were not lawful, but the actions of the disciples of Jesus involved no guilt whatsoever. The point He is making is to show the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who were so eager to condemn His disciples and overlook the faults of David.

6:5 **"The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath"** - This is a clear statement of the deity of Jesus. He proclaimed His own authority over the Sabbath and took the dispute out of the realm of their interpretations and opinions. The disciples only needed the permission of Christ to do what He permitted since He had all authority (Matthew 28:18).

Some have tried to use this verse to teach that Christians should keep the Sabbath. However, this verse actually teaches the opposite. The Sabbath should not be kept by Christians unless Jesus commanded it (which He did not). The apostle Paul clearly taught that the Sabbath laws had been taken out of the way and nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14-17).

6:6-11 **"He knew their thoughts"** - This statement clearly shows the omniscience of Jesus (John 2:25).

"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good" - Jesus was trying to get them to understand the principle that doing good on the Sabbath was not a sin. They understood this principle when it came to helping an animal which had fallen into a pit, so why couldn't they understand it when it came to helping a man (Matthew 12:11-12)?

"they were filled with rage" - The word "rage" is a translation of Greek word ANOIA which means stupidity, folly or madness. Why had their anger driven them mad?

"(1) Because He had shown His power to work a miracle; (2) because He had done so in contradiction of their rules; (3) because He had thus proved that He was from God, making them WRONG in their interpretations; (4) because Jesus had openly condemned THEIR views; and (5) because He had done these things in the sight of multitudes" (Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*, 44).

E. Twelve Apostles chosen (6:12-16)

- 6:12 **"He went out to the mountain to pray"** - The book of Luke often highlights the importance of prayer (Luke 18:1). This should be an important lesson to us. Paul taught the Thessalonians to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Obviously this does not mean we can never stop praying since this would prevent us from fulfilling other commands given to us by God. However, we should always be ready to offer prayer to God. Prayer should play a major part in our Christian lives. We certainly see this in the life of Jesus. He was a man of prayer. He prayed alone (Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; 9:18; 22:39-41), in public (John 11:41-42; 12:27-30), before meals (Matthew 26:26; Mark 8:6; Luke 24:30; John 6:11), before important decisions (Luke 6:12-13), before healing (Mark 7:34-35), after healing (Luke 5:16) and to do the Father's will (Matthew 26:36-44). He also taught on the importance of prayer (Matthew 5:44; 6:5-15; 7:7-11; 21:22; Mark 11:24-26; Luke 6:27-28; 11:9-13; John 14:13-14; 15:7,16; 16:23-24). We find the Lord's model prayer which showed the disciples how to pray in Matthew 18:19-20 and Luke 11:2-4. The example of Jesus provides to us the perfect guide on how to pray (see John 17).
- 6:13 **"apostles"** - The word apostle come from the Greek word APOSTELLŌ which means one sent forth, sent away or set apart. In the context of this passage, it was those who were chosen by Jesus to be with Him during His earthly ministry and to be sent forth to preach the gospel.
- 6:14-16 **"Simon, whom He also named Peter"** - Peter was the son of Jonah from Bethsaida who was called Cephas by the Lord (John 1:42). He worked as a fisherman. According to tradition he suffered martyrdom around A.D. 67-68 during Nero's persecution of Christians.

"Origen says that Peter felt himself to be unworthy to be put to death, in the same manner as his Master,

and was therefore, at his own request, crucified with his head downward" (*Smith's Bible Dictionary*).

"Andrew his brother" - Andrew was the son of Jonah from Bethsaida who also worked as a fisherman. Tradition says he preached in Scythia, Greece, Asia Minor and Thrace before being crucified at Patrae in Achaia.

"James" - James was the son of Zebedee and Salome from Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem. He worked as a fisherman. Jesus gave the brothers James and John the name "Boanerges" which means "sons of thunder." He was put to death by Herod Agrippa I in A.D. 44 which pleased the Jews (Acts 12:1-2).

"John" - John was the son of Zebedee and Salome from Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem. He worked as a fisherman. Jesus gave the brothers James and John the name "Boanerges" which means "sons of thunder." Tradition tells us John was taken captive during the persecution of Domitian sent to Rome and later exiled to the island of Patmos where he was eventually released to die a natural death.

"Philip" - Philip was from Bethsaida (John 1:44). According to tradition, he spent his days preaching in Phrygia, and died a martyr for the faith at Hierapolis.

"Bartholomew" - Bartholomew may be his family name. In Hebrew, the name would be Bar-Tholmai, or Son of Tholmai. Nathanael may be his actual name (John 1:45-46; 21:2). Uninspired history tells us he preached the gospel in India, Arabia and perhaps Armenia. Legend claims he was flayed to death in Armenia.

"Matthew" - Matthew (also called Levi) was the son of Alphaeus from Capernaum. His occupation was a tax collector (publican). Tradition claims he stayed in Jerusalem for fifteen years and then spread the gospel to the Persians, Parthians and Medes. Legend says that he died a martyr in Ethiopia.

"Thomas" - Thomas who was also called "the Twin" (Didymus) was from Galilee (John 11:16). He is best known for being absent when Jesus met with the disciples after the resurrection. He doubted the Lord was alive because he had not seen Him for himself (John 20:25). Early tradition represents him as preaching in Parthia or Persia. The later traditions claim he was preaching

farther to the east. It is believed he suffered martyrdom perhaps in Persia or India.

"James the son of Alphaeus" - Since Matthew (Levi) is also called the son of Alphaeus (Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:14), it could be that he and James were brothers. Tradition says James was stoned by the Jews for preaching Jesus as the Christ and then buried near to the Sanctuary in Jerusalem.

"Simon called the Zealot" - Simon who was also called the Cananite. He was probably a Galilean. The term Cananite was probably used as a political designation having no geographical significance. The Zealots were a sect, headed by Judas of Galilee, who zealously opposed the increase of taxes by the Roman Government which would come as a result of the census (Acts 5:37; Luke 2:1-2). Tradition says Simon was crucified for preaching the gospel.

"Judas the son of James" - Judas is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Judah. He is also called "Thaddaeus" or "Lebbaeus" (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18). In John 14:22 he is described as "Judas (not Iscariot)" to avoid any confusion. Tradition says he preached in Assyria and Persia where he died as a martyr for the faith.

"Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor" - The designation "Judas Iscariot" literally means "Judas, man of Kerioth" which may have been either the city mentioned in Joshua 15:25 South of Judea or the city in the land of Moab (Jeremiah 48:24; Amos 2:1-2). He was the son of a man named Simon (John 6:71; 13:2, 26). Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and afterwards hanged himself (Matthew 26:14-16; 27:3-5; Acts 1:16-19).

F. Sermon on the plain (6:17-49)

6:17-19 **"on a level place"** - Some mistakenly see this event as the same "Sermon on the Mount" found in Matthew 5:3-7:27; but this sermon was "on a level place" ("in the plain" - KJV) while Matthew recorded a sermon on a mountain. This sermon was preached immediately after the naming of the apostles where Matthew's account takes place long before the apostles are chosen. In Luke's account Jesus stood, and in Matthew's He is seated. The two accounts cannot be logically harmonized as the same event. It would not be unusual for Jesus to teach the same lesson with variations at different times and places. Great teachers often repeat the same lesson to different audiences.

- 6:20 **"Blessed are you poor"** - Some translate the word "blessed" as "happy" but this is not correct. Happiness comes by outward happenstance. It is circumstantial. A person is only truly blessed when they are right with God. Their joy comes not from the outward things of this life but the inner peace of knowing they have gained the approval of God by obeying His commands. The poor here are the poor in spirit who are blessed because they realize their need for salvation and seek to do those things necessary to obtain it.
- "For yours is the kingdom of God"** - The kingdom (church) is the place of salvation with Jesus as the King (Matthew 16:18-19: Ephesians 1:22-23).
- 6:21 **"Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled"** - This is the same as to "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6) which means to zealously seek God's will like a starving man desires food (1 Peter 2:2).
- "Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh"** - Those who weep for their lost condition recognize their need for a Savior and will experience joy through obeying Him. The self-righteous Pharisees felt no need for saving and therefore would never experience the joy to be found in Christ.
- 6:22-23 **"Blessed are you when men hate you...For the Son of Man's sake"** - We must not miss the qualifier found in this passage. It is not simply those who are hated will be blessed, but those who are hated because of their obedient example to the "Son of Man" (Jesus the Lord and Savior). 1 Peter 2:20 explains, "For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God."
- 6:24 **"But woe to you who are rich, For you have received your consolation"** - Those who look to the pleasures of this life to be content and satisfied may well gain those pleasures, but they will forfeit the eternal blessing which are only found in meeting the obligations of a righteous life in Christ. Those who follow after riches have misplaced the priorities in their life and therefore do not realize their true spiritual condition. To the Laodiceans Jesus said, "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17).

- 6:25 **"Woe to you who are full, For you shall hunger"** - Here Jesus describes the sad condition of the "know it all" who never appreciates or seeks the truth. The man with a full belly does not seek bread until motivated by the pangs of hunger.
- "Woe to you who laugh now, For you shall mourn and weep"** - Those who do not take their spiritual condition seriously now will mourn and weep on the day of judgment (Matthew 25:30).
- 6:26 **"Woe to you when all men speak well of you"** - It is often the case that a righteous man will not be popular. The people who are living in sin often attack those who shine the light of God's truth on their evil deeds. They will attack anyone who dares to question their actions (John 15:18-25).
- 6:27-36 **"Love your enemies"** - This section of scripture gives us the most difficult to follow instructions ever presented by our Lord. Most commentators quickly try to soften the meaning of these commands. However, we would be better served seeking to achieve the high calling of the principles found here instead of frantically searching for exceptions to the rules to gain us latitude and flexibility in our obedience. Jesus said what He said. Let us not be so quick to diminish what He requires.
- "give to everyone who asks of you"** - The word "everyone" implies Jew or Gentile; friend or enemy; believer or unbeliever; good or evil men; worthy or unworthy. We should be willing to give that which will do good to everyone who asks. We must never provide to them something which will do them harm, even if they ask.
- "be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful"** - The bottom line to this section is to show mercy. The Greek word translated as "merciful" is OIKTIRMŌN which means compassionate.
- 6:37-38 **"Judge not"** - Many misuse this passage to teach that Jesus forbids all judgment. However, the Bible makes it clear that not all judging is forbidden. We know this is the case because we are commanded to "judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24; 1 Corinthians 5:3; 10:15; 11:13). But, the Bible does condemn many kinds of judging. We are not to judge by appearance (John 7:24), hypocritically (Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 6:41-42), harshly (Titus 3:2; Matthew 5:7), falsely (Proverbs 19:5) or self-righteously (Luke 18:9-11).

6:39-42 **"blind lead the blind"** - This refers to those who are spiritually blind and is specifically applied by Jesus to the Pharisees in Matthew 15:12-14.

"everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher" - John wrote, "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (1 John 2:6).

Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

"speck in your brother's eye...plank in your own eye" - Literally it would be impossible to see a speck in a brother's eye with a plank in your own eye. However, in a spiritual sense this takes place all the time. It is so easy to see the faults of others before we see our own. Jesus often condemned those who did this and named them as "hypocrites" (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 15:7; 16:3; 22;18; 23:14-15, 23, 25, 27, 29; 24:51; Mark 7:6; Luke 11:44; 12:56).

6:43-45 **"out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks"** - The outward action reflects the inward attitude (Psalm 51:10; Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 5:8; 15:16-20).

6:46-49 **"why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"** - True commitment to Christ requires more than simply calling His name. Our actions will show if He is truly the Lord of our lives. Jesus said "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). He also said, "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (John 15:14). God will judge us by our heart, by our words and by our works (Matthew 7:21-23).

G. Miracles at Capernaum and Nain (7:1-17)

7:1-10 **"Capernaum"** - The city of Capernaum (*village of Nahum*) is located by the sea of Galilee, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali (Matthew 4:13; John 6:24) in the "land of Gennesaret" (Matthew 14:34; John 6:17, 21, 24). It was large enough to have its own synagogue where Jesus often taught (Mark 1:21; Luke 4:33, 38; John 6:59). Jesus adopted this city as His home after leaving Nazareth (Matthew 4:13).

"centurion's servant" - The title of centurion comes from the Latin word CENTURIO meaning one hundred. A centurion was an officer

in the army of Rome who was responsible for one hundred soldiers. The normal duties of a centurion were to drill his men, inspect their provisions (armaments, food and clothing) and to command them in the camp and in the field. Historians tell us that centurions were often known for being harsh, strict and cruel (W.W. Capes, M.A., *Roman History, The Early Empire*, 222). However, this centurion shows us an example of kindness, compassion and care. He also showed his humility when he sent emissaries to deliver his message because he did not feel worthy to have personal contact with Jesus. He was a Gentile who had a good reputation among the Jews. The elders of the Jews told Jesus that this centurion "loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue" (Luke 7:5).

A careful examination of the New Testament will show eight places where a centurion or centurions are mentioned and in each case they are portrayed in a complimentary way.

1. The centurion whose servant was healed (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10).
2. The centurion who confessed "Truly this was the Son of God!" at the crucifixion of Christ (Matthew 27:54).
3. The centurion named Cornelius who was the first Gentile convert to Christ (Acts 10:1).
4. The centurions who saved Paul from the mob at Jerusalem (Acts 21:32).
5. The centurion who when he learned Paul was a Roman would not scourge him (Acts 22:25).
6. The centurion who brought Paul's nephew to the commander to report the plot the Jews had against Paul (Acts 23:17, 18).
7. The centurions who escorted Paul to Caesarea (Acts 23:23).
8. The centurion named Julius who saved the life of Paul on the voyage to Rome (Acts 27:1-3, 43)

It should be noted that we do not find in any one of these eight cases even a hint that serving as a soldier is sinful in the sight of God.

"under authority" - It is amazing to see how readily this Gentile centurion recognizes the authority of Christ. Those today who refuse to see His authority have no excuse. The Bible often teaches us concerning the authority of Jesus (Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 1:1-2; John 17:17-18; Colossians 3:17; Ephesians 3:1-12).

"He marveled at him" - The Greek word translated as Marveled is THAUMAZŌ which means to wonder; by implication to admire or have in admiration.

"I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" - Jesus knew and knows the hearts of all men and so He could readily commend this man's amazing faith. The centurion's faith was immediately rewarded with the healing of his dear servant.

7:11-17 **"Nain"** - The village of Nain (*beauty*) was in Galilee near the plain of Esdraelon.

"widow" - This poor woman had previously lost her husband and now loses her only son. A widow's life was very difficult in the first century. We can easily understand the compassion Jesus had for her plight.

"Do not weep" - Jesus did not say this to rebuke her or imply that it is wrong to cry at the passing of a loved one (John 11:35). He said these words to tell her that her tears were not needed because the reason for her sorrow would soon be removed.

"A great prophet has risen up among us" - This miracle probably brought to their minds the stories they had read in the Scriptures about Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:32-37). They did not realize that Jesus was the great prophet spoken of by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15).

"this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region" - Word was spreading about the miracles being done by Jesus.

H. John's questions (7:18-23)

7:18 **"these things"** - The "these things" of this verse would be the things reported concerning the miracles Jesus was doing.

7:19-20 **"John the Baptist"** - In the first century people would often add a descriptive term to someone's name to eliminate any confusion with someone else who had the same name. They might add the name of their father (Matthew 16:17), their place of residence (Matthew 27:56), their children's names (Matthew 27:56), their husband's name (Matthew 27:56), a group they belonged to (Luke 6:15), or some well-known characteristic (Matthew 26:6). John the Baptist (*baptizer*) was referred to in this way because God gave him the commission to baptize (Matthew 21:25). He was John who was "baptizing in the wilderness" (Mark 1:4).

John the Baptist bore no association, connection or affiliation to the modern denomination which has the same name. John baptized "for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4) which the Baptist denomination opposes.

"Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" - Why did John send his disciples to ask Jesus this question? We should note four possible explanations:

1. It could be he was hoping Jesus would declare His Messiahship more directly.
2. Perhaps his imprisonment had raised doubts in his mind so he was seeking confirmation that Jesus was the Messiah.
3. He might have chosen this way to help his disciples to more easily make the transition to following Jesus (John 3:30).
4. It may be he was not sure if his mission to prepare the people for the Christ was complete. If his job was finished he would be better able to meet any forthcoming punishment from Herod (Matthew 14:1-12).

The Scriptures simply do not tell us why John sent his disciples to ask Jesus this question.

7:21-23 **"Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard"** - Jesus had demonstrated by the miraculous works that He was the Messiah (Isaiah 61:1-3).

I. Jesus commends the work of John (7:24-30)

7:24-25 **"a reed shaken by the wind"** - The question of Jesus implies that John was not like a reed. A reed is a tall, slender stem that sways

in the breeze. The illustration is used to represent a man who was unstable and could easily be influenced.

7:26-27 **"A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet"** - Not only did John deliver prophecies, but he also prepared the people for the Messiah who was the fulfillment of the sayings of the many Old Testament prophets. This made John more than a mere prophet (Malachi 3:1).

7:28 **"there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist"** - There was not a greater prophet than John because he not only fulfilled prophecies, but he also pronounced prophecies that were of the greatest importance. However, he never saw or even was a member of the kingdom (church) established by the Savior (Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 1:22-23). Therefore, the least person in the kingdom is greater than John in the sense that they have received and enjoyed the blessings which are only found in the church.

7:29-30 **"justified God"** - The word translated as "justified" comes from the Greek word ΔΙΚΑΙΟΩ which means to declare or pronounce one to be just or righteous.

"the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God" - A rejection of God's will is equal to a rejection of God.

The "lawyers" who were also sometimes referred to as "scribes" or "teachers" or in some versions "doctors" (Luke 2:46) were held up as experts in the law of Moses. Their role was to study and interpret the law, to instruct the Hebrew children in the law and to decide disputes concerning questions about the law.

J. Jesus and the Pharisees (7:31-50)

7:31-35 **"the men of this generation"** - In this place He is specifically indicating the reaction of the people to John the Baptist.

"they are like children" - Jesus uses the example of children to emphasize the immaturity of the people who were determined to be dissatisfied.

"neither eating bread nor drinking wine" - John did not eat and drink among the people. He lived in the wilderness surviving on locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6). In their minds

anyone who chose to live in such a way could not be in his right mind (having a "demon").

"a glutton and a winebibber" - A "winebibber" was one who had a habit of drinking alcohol.

This is one of many accusations made against the Lord:

- (1) He was called a glutton (Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34).
- (2) He was called a winebibber (Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34).
- (3) They said He cast out demons by the prince of demons (Matthew 9:34).
- (4) They called Him Beelzebul (Matthew 10:25).
- (5) They called Him a sinner (John 9:24).
- (6) They said He had a demon (John 7:20).
- (7) They said He was a Samaritan (John 8:48).
- (8) They charged Him with violating the Sabbath (Matthew 12:2).
- (9) They referred to Him as a "deceiver" (Matthew 27:63).
- (10) They accused Him of friendship with publicans and sinners (Luke 15:2).

When reading this passage some say it teaches that Jesus drank alcoholic (fermented) wine. However, we must understand that in the Bible the word "wine" is generic in nature. In the Bible the word does not always imply an alcoholic liquid. We must study the context to determine if it is talking about alcoholic or non-alcoholic wine. The word "wine" simply refers to the juice of the grape. It can mean either fermented or unfermented. There are several Bible passages which demonstrate that the word "wine" is generic. Sometimes the word "wine" is clearly used for the alcoholic beverage (Genesis 9:21; Genesis 19:33-35; Ephesians 5:18), while at other times the word "wine" is clearly used in

a non-alcoholic, unfermented sense (Isaiah 16:10; 65:8). The point is we must always consider the context to define how the word "wine" is being used in each occurrence.

Some have a false notion that those in the first century had no way to keep the wine from fermenting, but that is simply not true. They sometimes used filters which would keep the wine unfermented. They also boiled the grapes, which removed any chance of fermentation. At times they kept the unfermented wine in cool water which kept air from getting to the juice, which plays a part in the fermentation process.

"wisdom is justified by all her children" - This idea of children of wisdom is probably an idiom or expression to indicate the fruits of wisdom. This shows that both Jesus and John were fulfilling their true mission producing the outcome God desired.

7:36-39 **"anointed"** - This anointing is not the same as the one reported in the other gospel accounts (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8). In the other accounts the Mary mentioned is a sister of Lazarus (John 11: 2). In Luke's account the anointing takes place at the home of a Pharisee (probably in Galilee) instead of Bethany. Chronologically, Luke reports an anointing which seems to occur early in the ministry of Jesus, while the anointing in the other accounts is much later. In Luke's account the indignation raised is not by Judas, but by the Pharisee because the woman was a sinner.

"if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him" - This Pharisee was wrong to think that Jesus did not know what manner of woman this was. He was also wrong in his believe that sinners should be treated in an unloving and condescending way.

7:40-43 **"Teacher, say it"** - Simon had already decided that Jesus was not a true prophet, so this statement was probably less than enthusiastic.

"which of them will love him more" - The Pharisees and religious leaders of the day would not appreciate the forgiveness Jesus offered, because they underestimated their debt of sin. Their self-righteousness hindered their love and appreciation for the Savior.

7:44-48 **"you gave me no water for my feet"** - In the culture it was customary, as an act of hospitality, to either wash the feet of a

guest or provide water so they could wash their own feet (Genesis 18:4; 24:32; Judges 19:21; 1 Samuel 25:41; John 13:4-17; 1 Timothy 5:10). The custom of foot washing developed because there was a need to clean the feet of those who customarily wore sandals while travelling on the dirty and dusty roads of the day.

"You gave me no kiss" - A kiss on the cheek is a common form of greeting in many cultures. We often see this form of salutation in the Bible (Genesis 33:4; Exodus 18:7; Matthew 26:49; Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26). Romans 16:16 which says, "Greet one another with a holy kiss," does not obligate Christians to kiss when they meet. In this passage Paul is legislating that if a kiss is given (as was the custom) it should be of a holy nature. This woman kissed the feet of Jesus which was a sign of submission and honor.

"You did not anoint My head with oil" - Anointing the head of a guest with oil was common among the Jews (2 Samuel 12:20; 2 Samuel 14:2; Psalm 23:5). They would use sweet oil specially prepared to emit a pleasant aroma. The oil also provided conditioning for the hair to make it more manageable and smooth.

"He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven'" - Jesus forgave her sins because of the loving faith, service, humility and submission she had shown.

7:49-50 **"Who is this who even forgives sins?"** - Man could not do this, so the obvious answer is God. However, they refused to accept Jesus as God. Deity alone has the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24). Today there is no person or religious "priest" who can forgive sins.

"Your faith has saved you" - Down through the ages God's basic formula for salvation has always been faith and obedience. Not faith alone, for this is the faith of the demons (James 2:19), but faith combined with obedient action (James 2:20-26). Her actions demonstrated and completed (perfected) her faith.

K. Second tour in Galilee (8:1-3)

8:1-3 **"bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God"** - The phrase "bringing the glad tidings" comes from the Greek word EUAGGELIZŌ which means to announce good news. It is from this word we get our English word "evangelize."

"Mary called Magdalene" - The word "Magdalene" means that she came from the town of Magdala on the west side of the sea of Galilee. There are six women with the name Mary mentioned in the New Testament:

1. Mary, mother of our Lord (Luke 1:30-33)
2. Mary called Magdalene (Luke 8:2)
3. Mary, mother of Mark, sister to Barnabas (Acts 12:12)
4. Mary of Clopas (John 19:25)
5. Mary, a Roman Christian greeted by Paul (Romans 16:6)
6. Mary, sister of Lazarus and Martha (John 11:1)

This Mary called Magdalene was at the cross when Jesus was crucified (John 19:25) and remained for the burial in the tomb (Matthew 27:61; Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55). She was also the first person to whom Jesus appeared after His resurrection (John 20:1-15).

There is no evidence that Mary Magdalene was the immoral woman who anointed the feet of Jesus with her tears (Luke 7:44). Those who foolishly speculate that Mary Magdalene was the sinner mentioned (and probably a prostitute) are guilty of slander and defamation of character without a hint of evidence to back-up their evil charges.

"Joanna" - It is interesting to consider her connection to Herod (Antipas) through her husband, Chuza. He was given the responsibility of managing Herod's household matters like Joseph did in Potiphar's house (Genesis 39:6).

"Susanna" - She is not named elsewhere in the Scriptures.

"many others who provided for Him from their substance" - These "many others" who were also women (feminine gender used in the Greek) were financially supporting the work Jesus was doing.

L. Parable of the sower (8:4-21)

- 8:4-8 **"wayside"** - This refers to the paths used to walk between the fields. In these areas the ground was packed down which made it very difficult for the seeds to bury themselves into the soil.
- "rock"** - This "rock" would be stony ground where rocks were located just under a thin layer of dirt.
- "thorns"** - This is the ground which had plants with sharp protective spines or thorny stems growing in a dense patch of briars.
- "good ground"** - This ground was fertile and well suited for plant growth.
- 8:9-10 **"seeing they may not see, and hearing they might not understand"** - This may seem confusing to think that Jesus would not want some to understand what He was teaching. However, Jesus used parables in part to conceal His teachings from those who did not sincerely seek to understand His words. They had rejected the teachings of the Old Testament concerning His kingdom and therefore could not appreciate what He was revealing (Matthew 13:11-13). They had failed to appreciate the words of Moses and the prophets, so they would remain in the dark until the time when the whole world would be given the full description of the system of salvation found only in His kingdom.
- 8:11-15 **"The seed is the word of God"** - The only way to spread (sow) the seed is to teach and preach God's word. Paul, who understood the power of the gospel (Romans 1:16), told Timothy to preach the word (2 Timothy 4:2). Preaching the word is not the same as preaching opinions, philosophies and the doctrines of men. The seed (word) is powerful (Hebrews 4:12). This seed (word) is able to save the souls of the lost (James 1:22). The seed (word) produces after its own kind. An apple seed will only produce apples and when the seed (word of God) is sown into good soil it will only produce Christians.
- "wayside"** - This soil represents a hard heart. It is one who hears the word, but does not allow the seed to penetrate. The hard heart does not believe what God says, delays in obeying the truth and argues against the truth with rationalizations and excuses.
- "rock"** - It is very important that new Christians root themselves deeply in God's word (Colossians 2:6-7) so they won't fall away when tempted. This verse makes it very clear that the doctrine of

"once saved, always saved" also called "Perseverance of the Saints" is completely false. The Bible does teach that the believer is secure in his salvation as long as he remains faithful to God and loyal to Christ (2 Timothy 4:7-8). But, a Christian can voluntarily separate himself from God and Christ by his sins and be lost. If the child of God becomes unfaithful and refuses to repent, the "wages of sin" is death (Romans 6:23), even though he had once been in fellowship with God. There are many verses which teach that a Christian can become unfaithful and be eternally lost (Matthew 13:41-42; Acts 8:9-24; Romans 8:12-13; 11:22; 14:15; 1 Corinthians 8:11; 9:27; Galatians 5:2-4; 1 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 10:26-29; James 5:19-20; 2 Peter 2:1; 3:17; Revelation 3:5).

"thorns" - These plants also "sprang up" but they never produced fruit. These are those Christians who become entangled with the cares, riches and pleasures of life. They allowed these things to crowd out their growth in Christ. God's word grows the Christian's faith (Romans 10:17), but the things of this world can choke out the desire to hear, study and obey the inspired instructions from the Lord.

"good ground" - There are many important aspects which are represented by the good ground. First and foremost is a good and honest heart. However, one must also be willing to hear the word of God, understand what it teaches and submit to obey the commands given (Matthew 13:23). It is this kind of heart which will produce fruit (Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9).

8:16-18 **"No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it"** - Hiding the light defeats the purpose of having the light.

"nothing is secret that will not be revealed" - Jesus is explaining that even though He was using parables at this time (that the meaning might be understood by some and not others), He did not want these teachings to always remain secret. The apostles would have the responsibility to teach these things clearly to all (Mark 16:15-16). The light of the Gospel would shine as knowledge of these doctrines spread.

8:19-21 **"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it"** - Jesus was not being disrespectful to His family or diminishing their significance. He was simply using this opportunity to teach that a relationship with God, through hearing and obeying His word, is far more important than one's relationship with physical family members.

M. Journey across the Sea of Galilee (8:22-39)

8:22-25 **"the other side of the lake"** - This is the sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:18; Mark 1:16) which is also called the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1) or sea of Tiberias (John 6:1). The lake was about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide with a maximum depth of about 140 feet.

"Master, Master, we are perishing!" - Their cries show their utter terror. Not only did they think there was the possibility of danger they were convinced they were already perishing. The apostles (many who were seasoned fisherman) saw no way to save themselves.

We would do well to remember this principle as we consider our own spiritual salvation. We cannot save ourselves without Jesus. The Bible teaches that our salvation involves both God's part and man's part. God has done His part through His grace with the gift of His Son who gave His life on the cross for our sins (Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10; Romans 5:9; Matthew 26:28). But, when we examine God's plan for salvation we quickly see that man has a part in salvation as well.

We can never earn our salvation and there are no works of merit which will save us (Ephesians 2:9). However, there are works of obedience which God requires (Ephesians 2:10; James 2:19-20).

What is man's part in salvation?

- The first step is to **hear** the saving message of salvation (*Romans 10:17*). In other words one must learn of the truth before they can obey it.
- The second step is to have faith, or **believe** that Jesus is indeed the Christ the Son of God (*John 8:24; Mark 16:15-16*). However, this is not the only step. Faith alone will not save (*James 2:14, 17, 24*).
- The third step of God's plan is **repentance**. The sinner is required to repent which is composed of sorrow for sin, a change of will, which results in a changed life (*Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 7:10*).

- The fourth step is **confession**. The sinner is required to confess their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (*Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:10*).
- The fifth step is **baptism** (*Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-19; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21*).

Ananias told Saul in *Acts 22:16*, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Saul was a man who already had faith, being repentant and in prayer (*Acts 9:1-18; 22:1-16*), but he was still in sin and needed to do something more. He needed to obey the final step of God's plan of salvation.

A person's sins are washed away not by the water of baptism but by the blood of Christ when one submits to God's plan of salvation to hear, believe, repent, confess and to be baptized (*Acts 8:38-39*). Only then is the sinner saved from past sins and is added to the Lord's church (*Acts 2:38, 41*).

- The sixth step is **remaining faithful** (*Matthew 10:22; Revelation 2:10*).

"Where is your faith?" - Their overwhelming fear of death caused them to lose faith in Christ's ability to care for and protect them. They should have realized that there was no way this boat carrying the Lord would sink.

8:26-29 **"the country of the Gadarenes"** - This is also called "the country of the Gergesenes" (*Matthew 8:28*). Gergesa (Gerasa) and Gadara were not the same city, but two cities near to each other in the same country.

"do not torment me!" - The torment, explained in the next verse, was being commanded to come out of the man.

8:30-34 **"What is your name?"** - Jesus who knows all things did not ask this question out of ignorance, but so those who were with him would fully understand both the power of the miracle being done and the miserable condition of this tormented man. Some foolishly teach that Jesus needed to have the name in order to have power

over the demon, but this idea is nowhere supported in scripture. It seems that one of the demons was the spokesman for the others and that is why the pronoun is sometimes singular in number.

"Legion" - A "Legion" was a regiment of soldiers who numbered somewhere between 4,000 to 6,000 men.

"they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them (swine)" - This not only shows the desperate situation of these demons, but also their complete subservience to Christ. They needed His permission to even enter into the swine.

"the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned" - Some have tried to use this passage to condemn Jesus for the destruction of private property. Those who make such a foolish argument neglect to realize that all things belong to God (Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalm 24:1; 50:10-12; 89:11; 1 Corinthians 10:26). All things are His and He can do with them as He wills. This also provided a great opportunity to show the destructive nature of Satan and the demons (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 4:4).

"told it in the city and in the country" - The events which took place became a major topic of conversation among the people. Word of the power and authority of Jesus quickly spread.

8:35-37 **"they were afraid"** - People often fear what they do not know or understand.

"the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them" - It is surprising that they did not take this opportunity to bring to Jesus the sick and afflicted to be healed. Their fear blinded them to the blessings which could have been theirs.

8:38-39 **"tell what great things God has done for you"** - Jesus commanded him to tell others about the great things that had been done for him and the compassion he had been shown by the Lord. In this way the news of Jesus' power spread throughout the whole region.

N. Third tour in Galilee (8:40-9:9)

8:40-42 **"Jesus returned"** - He returned from the other side of the lake to the province of Galilee, probably to the city of Capernaum.

"Jairus" - Here we are introduced to a ruler of a synagogue which was probably located in a city near the western shore of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 9:18; Mark 5:22). We see both his humility and desperation as he falls down at the feet of Jesus to beg Him to heal his dying daughter.

"as He went, the multitudes thronged Him" - As Jesus was conversing with Jairus they are interrupted by the movement of the crowd.

8:43-48 **"a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years"** - This is describing a hemorrhaging of blood from somewhere in her body. This woman would be classified as unclean under the Law (Leviticus 15:19; 25-27). Anything or anyone she touched would be unclean. Therefore, she could not associate with people for fear she might cause them to be defiled. She could not go to the Temple, because she was unclean. She could not work close to others because they may touch her and become unclean. This reduced her to a life of living distant from others on the fringe of society.

"touched the border of His garment" - This is a dramatic and unusual example of the miraculous power of Jesus. Later a similar thing is seen when "God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them" (Acts 19:11-12). Such healings were so rare that Luke called them "unusual miracles."

8:49-50 **"only believe"** - Jairus could either trust in the power of Jesus to raise the dead or give up all hope and return to his home to bury his only child.

This does not justify the false doctrine of "faith only" which teaches that faith is the only thing required for our salvation. The New Testament teaches we are saved by many things:

- Grace (Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:8)
- Mercy (Titus 3:5)
- Jesus' Blood (1 John 1:7; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7)
- Works (James 2:24; Acts 10:34-35; Philippians 2:12)

- Obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9)
- Endurance (Matthew 10:22)
- Patience (Hebrews 6:12; Revelation 14:12-13)
- The Love of the Truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10)
- Fear (Jude 23; Philippians 2:12)
- Faith (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 16:30-31)
- Repentance (Luke 13:3; 2 Corinthians 7:10)
- Confession (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10)
- Baptism (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21)

8:51-56 **"He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl"** - The young girl's actual death was established and was so undeniable that it could not be refuted.

"she is not dead, but sleeping" - Jesus uses the term "sleeping" to emphasize that He would raise her from death much like when one is raised from a natural sleep. This also serves as a teaching example that death is not permanent. There is an eternal life after this physical life for which we must prepare.

"they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead" - The word "ridiculed" comes from the Greek word which means to laugh to scorn or deride. They reacted in this way because they knew she was dead.

9:1-6 **"the twelve disciples"** - Those who had been chosen to be apostles (Luke 6:13-16; Matthew 10:1-5; Mark 3:13-19).

"gave them power" - They were given the ability to cast out demons and heal all kinds of sickness and diseases (Matthew 10:1).

"preach the kingdom of God" - Their message concerning the kingdom was that it was "at hand" or soon to come (Matthew 10:7).

This was the same message taught by Jesus (Matthew 4:17) and John (Matthew 3:2).

"shake off the very dust from your feet" - To shake off the dust from their feet was a symbolic action which signified they were renouncing all association with them. This seems to be a reference to some custom of the Jews in regard to the dust of heathen countries.

Several suggestions have been made concerning the meaning of this action:

1. It was done to show that the apostles did not come with any desire to gain any material profit from the people. They would not even carry away the dust on their feet.
2. It was done to express that the dust which they shook from their feet would figuratively rise up in judgment against the people for rejecting the gospel message.
3. It was done to convey that the people were so wicked, that even the dust of their city was tainted by their evil, and therefore they shook it off so it would not defile them as they continued on their journey.
4. It was done to communicate that the apostles would have nothing more to do with them, or say to them, and that they looked upon them as impure and unholy, like a heathen city or country.

The Scriptures do not reveal to us the details concerning the purpose of this action.

9:7-9

"Herod" - Herod is a family name used for several different individuals in the Scriptures. This Herod was Antipas who was the son of Herod the great. He married Herodias, the wife of his half-brother, Herod Philip (Luke 3:19). Antipas (at the urging of Herodias) killed John for condemning his marriage (Matthew 14:3-4).

"it was said by some that John had risen from the dead" - This was not a belief in the general resurrection as taught in the Scriptures, but a false doctrine whereby a soul passes at death into another body. This incorrect belief concerning the possibility of the

transmigration of souls was growing in popularity, but was clearly refuted by Jesus and His apostles (Matthew 16:14-16; Mark 8:28-29; Hebrews 6:2).

V. Ministry in the Regions around Galilee (9:10-50)

A. Feeding of the five thousand (9:10-17)

9:10 **"belonging to the city called Bethsaida"** - Jesus took His apostles to an unpopulated area near to the city of Bethsaida. Bethsaida was the residence of Philip, Andrew and Peter (John 1:44).

9:11-17 **"spoke to them about the kingdom of God"** - Jesus, the master teacher, made good use of every opportunity.

"Send the multitude away" - It is interesting to note that the apostles knew that the people would not leave unless Jesus sent them. This shows the eagerness of the people to learn more concerning the kingdom. This serves as a great example for us to follow today.

"there were about five thousand men" - This account of the feeding of the five thousand should not be confused with the feeding of the four thousand which was a different event (Matthew 14:15-21; 15:32-38). The feeding of the five thousand took place near Bethsaida, close to the Sea of Galilee. In contrast, the feeding of the four thousand took place in the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee.

"looking up to heaven" - This was done by Jesus to show clearly the source of all blessings.

James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." [The phrase "comes down" is future perfect tense which means "continually coming down."]

"blessed and broke them" - He gave thanks to His Father for the blessing of food (Matthew 6:11).

B. Peter confesses Christ (9:18-27)

9:18-20 **"He was alone praying"** - Jesus was a man of prayer. He often prayed alone (Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; 9:18; 22:39-41), in public (John 11:41-42; 12:27-30), before meals (Matthew 26:26; Mark 8:6; Luke 24:30; John 6:11), before important decisions (Luke 6:12-13), before healing (Mark 7:34-35), after healing (Luke 5:16) and to do the Father's will (Matthew 26:36-44). He also often taught on the importance of prayer (Matthew 5:44; 6:5-15; 7:7-11; 21:22; Mark 11:24-26; Luke 6:27-28; 11:9-13; John 14:13-14; 15:7,16; 16:23-24).

"Who do the crowds say that I am?" - Jesus, who is all-knowing (omniscient), knew what the people were saying. He asked this question for their benefit to provide an opportunity to teach an important lesson.

"Peter answered and said, 'The Christ of God'" - There is more detail concerning this event given in Matthew's account (Matthew 16:13-20). However, notice the significance of the term "Christ" being used. The name "Christ" means "anointed." Jesus is declared to be the anointed one of God, the Messiah for the salvation of mankind.

9:21-22 **"tell this to no one"** - The apostles were not qualified at this point to tell others this news because they did not fully comprehend the full significance and implications of Jesus being the Messiah. Jesus begins to reveal some of these things to them in the next verse.

"The Son of Man must suffer many things" - The apostles had great difficulty understanding why the Messiah would suffer these things (Luke 18:34).

"third day" - In those days the phrase "third day" would be used to designate a part of Friday, all day Saturday and a part of Sunday. [For additional information concerning Jesus being raised the third day, please see the appendices - "DID JESUS RISE 'ON' OR 'AFTER' THE THIRD DAY?" (AP Article).]

9:23-25 **"deny himself"** - No one can be saved without denying self. If we are to be saved we must be saved in Christ (Galatians 2:20) and as Christ commands (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).

"take up his cross daily" - A Christian must be prepared to patiently bear and endure the afflictions, persecutions and evil which will come his way from the world as a result of obedience to

Christ. The Christian must cheerfully submit to the Lord while bearing up under the weight of persecution.

"follow Me" - Jesus has set the example for us to follow (1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6).

"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it" - If one sets their priority on their physical life (things of this life, worldly things) they will lose their spiritual life (soul condemned for eternity). However, if a man is willing to sacrifice the things of this physical life and set his priority on a spiritual life (submitting and serving Christ) he will be rewarded with an eternal life in heaven.

9:26 **"whoever is ashamed of Me and My words"** - This describes one who is ashamed to be associated with Jesus and His teachings. If Jesus would have come to this world as an upper class, elite, noble aristocrat people would have fallen over themselves to gain His association, but as a poor carpenter's son His position created little respect from the world. People are often very shallow.

9:27 **"there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God"** - This is a very important verse which clearly shows that those who say the kingdom has yet to come are obviously wrong (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:6-8; 2:4; Colossians 1:13).

Some teach that Christ is coming back to this earth to set up His kingdom. They explain that since He failed on His first attempt, He established the church as a substitute to last until He comes again. To say that Jesus "failed" is absolute and utter blasphemy.

Jesus said to the multitude in Mark 9:1, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power." If the kingdom is in the future, those people who stood there that day would still be alive.

In Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus used the terms "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably. Paul stated to the Christians at Colosse, "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13). The kingdom was obviously already in

existence if Paul could say that he and these Colossians were in it.

The Bible never teaches that Christ needs to return to set up His kingdom. What it does say is that when He returns we will meet Him "in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17) and He will deliver the kingdom (which is already established) to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24). We must be careful to be not misled by false teachings regarding the kingdom (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12).

C. Transfiguration (9:28-36)

9:28-32 **"Peter, John and James"** - It seems that Jesus had an especially close relationship with these three apostles. These three are often mentioned together (Luke 8:51; Matthew 26:37; Mark 5:37; 14:33).

"the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening" - This description helps us to have a better understanding of Matthew's account which says, Jesus "was transfigured before them" (Matthew 17:2).

"two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah" - Many theories have been developed to explain why these three were transfigured before Peter, John and James. The significance of this event becomes clearer when we remember that Moses was the great lawgiver and Elijah was the great prophet. They were called to show that Jesus had ultimate authority (verse 35). This would provide clear evidence to Peter, John and James that Jesus was more than just another great prophet. This event left no doubt that Jesus was greater and superior to all, even to Moses and Elijah.

9:33-36 **"let us make three tabernacles"** - It is interesting to note that Peter immediately thought to provide a physical dwelling place for this spiritual manifestation of Jesus, Moses and Elijah. It seems man often feels uncomfortable with spiritual things. This is seen in the Scriptures concerning man's reaction to spiritual beings and spiritual teaching.

"not knowing what he said" - Peter "did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid" (Mark 9:6).

"they were fearful as they entered the cloud" - Again we see their fear.

"This is My beloved Son. Hear Him" - The voice of God from the cloud makes clear the lesson to be learned. Jesus has all authority! No longer should one look to the law of Moses or the words of the Old Testament prophets for direction concerning what should be done (Hebrews 1:1-4; 12:24).

"When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone"- Jesus alone provides the divine pattern we are to follow today. The old law is not to be followed. Jesus is the sole source of all authority in religion. The lesson for us today is that the doctrines of man are always to be avoided. We must follow the teachings of Jesus alone without the additions of man (Galatians 1:6-9; Jude 1:3; Revelation 22:18-19; Proverbs 30:6; Deuteronomy 9:2; 12:32).

"they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen" - As they were coming down the mountain Jesus told them to tell no one about this vision until after His resurrection. (Matthew 17:9; Mark 9: 9).

D. Demon possessed son healed (9:37-45)

9:37-39 **"a spirit seizes him"** - This was a case of demon possession (see the notes for Luke 4:33 for additional information concerning demons).

9:40-42 **"I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not"** - The explanation for this is revealed in Matthew's account:

"Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Why could we not cast it out?' So Jesus said to them, 'Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting'" (Matthew 17:19-21).

"faithless and perverse generation" - This is a blanket indictment of the present generation, including the apostles who had failed. The frustration of Jesus is understandable when we consider all the miracles and wonders He had already done which they had seen. Their faith should have been growing. However, Jesus did not give-up on them, but instead was prepared to once again perform another mighty miracle for them to witness.

9:43-45

"they were all amazed at the majesty of God" - The word "majesty" is the English translation of the Greek word *MEGALEIOTĒS* which means glory or splendor: mighty power.

"the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men" - Here we find a prediction of the trials and crucifixion of Jesus. In Matthew's account we notice three different times when Jesus taught on this subject (Matthew 16:21; 17:22, 20:17).

In these three verses from Matthew no less than 14 significant details of His suffering and death are revealed:

- His death would be in Jerusalem.
- The scribes would have a part in His death.
- The chief priests would be involved.
- The elders of the people would play a role.
- He would suffer many things.
- He would be killed (not merely die which is significantly different).
- He would be raised from the dead.
- His resurrection would be on the third day.
- He would be delivered up ("betrayed").
- He would be condemned, indicating a trial would take place.
- The Gentiles would have a part.
- The Gentiles would mock Him.
- The Gentiles would scourge Him.
- The Gentiles would crucify Him

From these specific facts it is clear that Jesus was fully aware of the suffering and death He would endure.

"it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it" - They could not comprehend what they were being told. In their minds the death of the Messiah did not make sense. The concept of a sacrificial death of the Messiah to bring about salvation for mankind was beyond what they could conceive at this time. Their lack of understanding was not because of God, but rather the limitations of their human minds.

E. Disciples seeking recognition (9:46-50)

9:46-48 **"a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest"** - Perhaps this helps us to see why they could not understand the spiritual things Jesus was trying to tell them. It appears they were more concerned with the honors often offered in this physical world.

"Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart" - Jesus knew what they were thinking. John 2:24-25 explains, "But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man."

"took a little child and set him by Him" - The child represented humility. Adults are often filled with pride and an overestimation of their own importance. The disciples must overcome this inclination if they are to follow the Master with the proper attitudes of humility, submission and obedience. The Bible has much to say about humility (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12; James 4:6, 10; 1 Peter 5:5).

9:49-50 **"we forbade him because he does not follow with us"** - We should take note that there is no doubt concerning this man's ability to cast out demons. The apostles told him to stop because he was not with them daily following Jesus. They did not understand that only the apostles were required to "be with Him" in that sense. When Jesus appointed the apostles the inspired writer Mark said, "Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach" (Mark 3:14). The man who was casting out demons who was clearly a disciple of Jesus was not required to be with the group travelling with Jesus.

"Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side" - Since the man was actually able to cast out demons in Christ's name it is clear that he was a true disciple of the Lord. If he was not a true disciple he would not have been able to do so successfully. He would have failed miserably just like the unbelieving Jews who

tried to use the name of Jesus and Paul without authority to cast out demons (Acts 19:13-16).

VI. Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-13:21)

A. Vindictiveness and misplaced priorities (9:51-62)

9:51-56 **"the time had come for Him to be received up"** - This means the time was drawing near for Jesus to leave the earth and ascend to heaven. Going from Galilee to Jerusalem He would pass through Samaria.

"they did not receive Him" - This was probably a reflection of the prejudice which existed between the Samaritans and Jews (John 4:9).

Samaritans - The history of the Samaritans can be traced back to the time when the Assyrians captured the ten northern tribes of Israel. When the Israelites were taken away into captivity, the King of Assyria sent people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath and Sepharvaim to inhabit their country (2 Kings 17:24; Ezra 4:2-11). These people continued in their idolatry; however, when they were having trouble with lions in the land they assumed it was because they had not honored the god of that region. Therefore the Assyrian king sent a Jewish priest to them to teach them the religion of the Jews. They were taught the books of Moses, but they still held on to their old rituals and idolatrous customs. Their religion became a mixture of Judaism and idolatry (2 Kings 17:26-28).

When the Jews returned from Babylon to rebuild the temple the Samaritans offered to help. However, the Jews rejected this proposal because they did not see it as a sincere offer motivated by the Samaritan's love for the law of Moses, but instead an effort to gain part of the favors being bestowed upon the Jews by Cyrus. As Nehemiah was engaged in building the walls of Jerusalem the Samaritans made every effort to hinder the project (Nehemiah 6:1-14).

Eventually the Samaritans were able to gain permission from Cyrus to build their own temple. Their temple was built on Mount Gerizim. They argued that Mount Gerizim was the place chosen for the people to worship God (John 4:20). The leader of the Samaritans (Sanballat) appointed his son-in-

law (Manasses) as high priest. The actions of the Samaritans created animosity which could not be resolved.

Eventually, Samaria became a refuge for the outlaws of Judea. The Jewish criminals would flee to the region of Samaria to escape punishment. Those who had violated the law of Moses and even those who had been banished found safety and refuge with the Samaritans. Their numbers increased as did the hatred between the two nations.

The Samaritans only respected the five books of Moses. They rejected the writings of the prophets and the Jewish traditions. This caused an irreconcilable difference between them and the Jews. This attitude and the events enumerated created a long and bitter animosity and prejudice between the Samaritans and the Jews. The Jews regarded the Samaritans as the lowest of the human race (John 8:48), and had no dealings with them (John 4:9). However, Jesus preached the gospel to them (John 4:6-26), as did the apostles as directed by the Lord (Acts 1:8; 8:25).

"do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" - It is interesting that the brothers (James and John), were the only apostles mentioned by name here. It could be they were the only ones there at the time or that the others did not agree or were not consulted before this suggestion was made. James and John looked to the precedent of Elijah's destruction of the troops sent by Ahaziah (the king of Israel), whose capital city was Samaria for their authority (2 Kings 1:10, 12).

"you do not know what manner of spirit you are of" - They were not demonstrating the proper spirit or disposition (nature, character and temperament). Their misguided zeal sought revenge which should never be the response of a meek follower of Christ who understands the importance of a lost soul.

"the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" - Jesus explained to them the purpose of His earthly mission. Jesus would later emphasize this again telling Zacchaeus, "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

9:57-58 **"the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head"** - Followers of Jesus should not expect to receive physical comforts and luxuries in this life.

9:59-60 **"Let the dead bury their own dead"** - There are two main views concerning this disciple's request

The first view is that his father had already died, and he wanted to attend to the funeral arrangements. If this is the correct view, Jesus is simply teaching that our responsibility to the Lord is greater than any earthly duty we might have.

The second and more likely view is that this disciple wanted to stay at home until his father eventually died and was buried, and then he would follow Jesus. If this was the case then we only need to look to the words of Jesus when He said, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37-38).

9:61-62 **"No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"** - A farmer who is always looking back as he plows will not make a straight furrow. In a similar way the disciple who is looking back toward his earthly priorities will not be successful in his service to Christ. Jesus warned, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). Jesus added, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

B. Seventy disciples sent out (10:1-24)

10:1-12 **"appointed seventy others"** - These were seventy disciples other than the apostles who were sent in pairs to prepare each city for the arrival of Jesus.

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few" - Like today, there were so many souls who needed to hear Jesus' message and so few willing to take His message of salvation to the lost (Matthew 9:37-38).

"The laborers have always been tragically few; it is man's fatal lack of concern for his fellowmen that

keeps the numbers so small; but the Master makes it clear throughout his Gospel that this concern is a test of discipleship" [Charles L. Childers, Beacon Bible Commentary (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1964), p. 498].

"lambs among wolves" - Jesus is comparing the disciples to gentle, harmless and non-threatening sheep. In their actions and speech those sent were kind, compassionate and loving. The enemies who they would encounter would often be like fierce, furious, cruel and hurtful wolves. Therefore, they were to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

"greet no one along the road" - The urgency of their mission was such that they were not to waste the valuable time of their journey with long, extended greetings as was customary in the Eastern culture.

"son of peace" - This means a person inclined to peace.

"the laborer is worthy of his wages" - Their message of the coming kingdom was of such great value that any support they received was compensation they rightly deserved. This principle still applies today.

10:8-9 **"heal the sick there"** - Jesus gave the seventy disciples the ability to perform miraculous healings.

10:10-12 **"The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you"** - For explanation of this phrase please see the notes at Luke 9:5.

"the kingdom of God has come near you" - The message they would deliver was that the kingdom was "near you," "at hand" or soon to come (Matthew 10:7). This was the same message taught by Jesus (Matthew 4:17) and John (Matthew 3:2). The kingdom (church) is the place of salvation with Jesus as the King (Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 1:22-23).

10:13-16 **"Chorazin"** - There must have been many miracles done by Jesus in this city located two miles from Capernaum, but they are not recorded in scripture. This is clear evidence that only a small portion of the miracles Jesus performed are recorded for us in the New Testament. John's account explains, "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I

suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25).

"Bethsaida" - This city was probably located on the Jordan River where it emptied into the Sea of Galilee. The town's name which means "house of fish" implies that the main industry was fishing. Bethsaida was the residence of Philip, Andrew and Peter (John 1:44). Two of the Lord's most well-known miracles were done near Bethsaida (Luke 9:10-17; Mark 8:22-25).

"sitting in sackcloth and ashes" - Sackcloth was a rough cloth, much like canvas, that was used by the poor for clothing because it was economical. It was customary to wear sackcloth as a sign of mourning. The Jews also would throw ashes on their heads to show their grief (Job 1:21; 2:12; Jeremiah 6:26).

"you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades" - The city of Capernaum which had flourished with prosperity would be brought low.

10:17-20 **"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"** - There have been various interpretations of this phrase. Some say this refers to the original fall of the devil (Isaiah 14:12; Jude 1:6). Others conclude that this is a prophecy concerning the eventual final fall of Satan. In the context it seems to suggest that Jesus saw that by the victories of the disciples over the demons the grip of Satan on the world was rapidly slipping away. It was happening like a bolt of lightning from the clouds (sudden and apparent).

"do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" - Jesus gave His disciples the ability to perform miracles to prove they were preaching God's truth. The miracles would show that they were not false teachers. The intended purpose of their ability to perform miracles was not for their own personal distinction and honor. The important thing was their faithfulness - having their names written in heaven (Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 21:27).

10:21-24 **"hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes"** - God did not seek to hide His revelation from the wise and understanding. They received the same exact teaching as the others. The difference was their disdain for the truth and persistent rejection of the gospel. The truth was taken from them because of their own spiritual blindness.

"many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see" - No king or prophet in Israel's history had been given the complete plan of God's salvation for man. These humble disciples from the lower ranks of society were blessed to proclaim the good news of the coming kingdom of Christ and the salvation of man (Ephesians 3:9-11; 1 Peter 1:10-12).

C. Lawyer and the good Samaritan (10:25-37)

10:25-29 **"a certain lawyer"** - The Jewish "lawyers" were also referred to as "scribes" or "teachers" or in some versions "doctors" (Luke 2:46). These men were held up as experts in the law of Moses. Their role was to study and interpret the law, to instruct the Hebrew children in the law and to decide disputes concerning questions about the law.

"tested Him" - This alerts us to the attitude and motive behind the lawyer's question. He wanted to show Jesus' level of understanding concerning the law. He may have been thinking Jesus would contradict the Scriptures which would be used against Him. Perhaps he was even seeking to gain honor and glory for himself by exposing Jesus as the fraud he thought Him to be.

"what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" - This is the most important question we can ask in this life (Acts 16:30). However, to benefit from the answer we must have a heart of genuine sincerity and honesty which is willing to hear and obey.

"What is written in the law?" - The lawyer correctly recited the requirements of the law. On a different occasion, a lawyer was given this same answer by Jesus (Matthew 22:37-39). Jesus explained on these commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:40).

Obviously Jesus would not speak against or contradict any aspect of the law. Jesus kept the law perfectly (John 8:29, 55; 1 Peter 2:22; Hebrews 4:15). Jesus was a Jew and lived under the law of Moses (Galatians 4:4). However, His death on the cross ended the old law and began the new law of Christ (Romans 10:4; Colossians 2:14). All men everywhere today are obligated to keep the law of Christ (New Testament). Following the old law will not save us from our sins.

"You have answered rightly" - The lawyer had the correct information therefore Jesus responds, "do this and you will live" (Luke 10:28).

"wanting to justify himself" - Again we see the motive of the lawyer's next question.

"who is my neighbor?" - The Jews commonly defined the word "neighbor" to mean only a fellow Israelite. They would only consider one who was of the same religion as being true neighbors.

10:30-37

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves" - It says the man went "down" from Jerusalem to Jericho, because Jerusalem stood on higher ground while Jericho was located in a valley. The descent was over 3,000 feet in eighteen miles. Jericho was northeast of Jerusalem and about 8 miles west of the Jordan river.

"a certain priest...passed by on the other side" - This was an important road in Judea used by twelve-thousand priests and Levites living in Jericho who travelled to Jerusalem to serve in the temple. The priest saw the man, but would not even come near to check on his injuries. He had no compassion for this injured man.

"a Levite...came and looked, and passed by on the other side" - This Levite actually came near to check this man's condition, but like the priest he showed no compassion.

"a certain Samaritan...when he saw him, he had compassion" - The compassion this Samaritan felt is the thing which was missing from the priest and Levite.

"pouring on oil and wine" - In the historical record we find that oil and wine were often used medicinally to assist with the healing of fresh wounds. When these two were mixed together they had a highly therapeutic quality.

"he took out two denarii (pence), gave them to the innkeeper" - Each denarius (plural = denarii) would approximately equal the wage for a skilled laborer (definition varies) for one day. In the early part of the first century the wage for a Roman soldier was 225 denarii per year. During the reign of the emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96) the soldiers pay was raised to 300 denarii per year.

"So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him" - His question is, "Which one of the three (priest, Levite or Samaritan) met the responsibility one neighbor owes to another?" (Leviticus 19:18).

"He who showed mercy on him" - Notice the lawyer could not even bring himself to say, "the Samaritan" but instead says "he" who showed mercy.

"Go and do likewise" - Even one's enemy was to be treated with kindness. This provides the answer to the question asked by the Lawyer. Whoever needs our help is our neighbor. However, we notice that Jesus provides a contrast from the lawyer's question. The lawyer was asking who was a neighbor to him; whereas, Jesus changed the focus to "What kind of neighbor are you?"

D. Jesus at Bethany with Mary and Martha (10:38-42)

10:38-40 **"He entered a certain village" -** This is the town of Bethany which is located approximately two miles from Jerusalem (John 11:1).

"Martha" - Martha was the sister of Lazarus and Mary. The facts recorded here and in John 11 show that she had a true devotion to the Lord. She also had the distinction of being named as one whom Jesus loved (John 11:5).

"Mary" - There are six women with the name Mary mentioned in the New Testament:

1. Mary, mother of our Lord (Luke 1:30-33)
2. Mary called Magdalene (Luke 8:2)
3. Mary, mother of Mark, sister to Barnabas (Acts 12:12)
4. Mary of Clopas (John 19:25)
5. Mary, a Roman Christian greeted by Paul (Romans 16:6)
6. Mary, sister of Lazarus and Martha (John 11:1)

Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha is the one in our text who sat at Jesus' feet listening closely to every word He spoke. Sitting at the feet of Jesus implies a teacher-pupil relationship (Acts 22:3).

She was also the one at the final feast of Bethany who used very costly oil (spikenard) to anoint the feet of Jesus, wiping

it with her hair after He had raised her brother Lazarus from the dead (John 12:3).

"distracted with much serving" - She thought her duties as a hostess were more important than listening to the words of Jesus. The Jewish people exalted Abraham as the example of hospitality when he welcomed the three visitors to his home (Genesis 18).

10:41-42 **"you are worried and troubled about many things"** - She was overly anxious concerning the unnecessary preparations He really did not require. Christians must not allow the anxieties of life to overwhelm them. There is a solution! God encourages us to cast all our cares and anxiety upon Him because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7).

"one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part" - Jesus was not teaching that it was wrong to provide hospitality to guests. The lesson is that one should not allow the performing of common duties to supersede the more important spiritual nourishment for the soul.

E. Teachings on prayer (11:1-13)

11:1 **"Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."** - Jesus taught His disciples how to pray on more than one occasion. In Matthew we find similar instructions on how to pray included in Jesus' sermon on a mountain or hill near Capernaum (Matthew 6:9-13). The differences in the words used on each occasion shows us that the words given were not meant to be repeated in a mechanical memorized routine using vain repetition (Matthew 6:7-8). The model prayer provided by Jesus serves almost as an outline of important general topics for which Christians should pray.

We are not given in the Bible information about how John taught his disciples to pray only that he did teach them to pray.

Some mistakenly refer to this as "The Lord's Prayer" but this is inaccurate because the prayer in this passage (and Matthew 6) is a sample or model for prayer given by Jesus to His disciples. This is not a prayer that He prayed to the Father. If you would like to read the words of a prayer Jesus actually prayed go to John 17.

- 11:2-4 **"Hallowed be Your name"** - The English word "hallowed" is a translation of the Greek word "HAGIAZŌ" which means to make holy or consecrated.
- "Your kingdom come"** - Both John and Jesus had taught that the kingdom was at hand (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mark 1:15). When this model prayer was given to the disciples the kingdom (church) had not yet come (Matthew 16:18-19; Mark 9:1). The kingdom (church) was established on the first Pentecost following the Lord's resurrection and ascension (Acts 1:6-8; 2:38, 41, 47).
- "forgive us our sins"** - The implication of this phrase is that all Christians need to pray for the forgiveness of their sins (1 John 1:8).
- "do not lead us into temptation"** - This does not mean that God is the source of the temptations that come our way, because God tempts no man (James 1:13). This is a plea that we do not meet with any temptation that will cause us to fall (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- 11:5-8 **"because of his persistence"** - We must be careful that we do not make applications with this illustration which were never intended. The friend asleep in his bed is not to be regarded as a description of God. The message of this parable is simply the power of persistence.
- 11:9-10 **"everyone who asks receives...seeks finds...to him who knocks it will be opened"** - If the thing asked for is in accordance with His will (1 John 5:14-15) it will be granted when God deems it to be the right time. The emphasis in this verse is continuing to ask, seek and knock. If it is according to His will, persistence will be the deciding factor.
- 11:11-13 **"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children"** - The word "evil" is from the Greek word PONĒROS which means full of labor and hardships or of a bad nature or condition. The Greek word is not always used to refer to sinfulness or immorality.
- "how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him"** - Matthew has "good things" (Matthew 7:11) where Luke has "Holy Spirit". We obtain the greatest good by the Holy Spirit and the "good things" we achieve through following the inspired words of the Spirit.

F. Warnings about Satan's kingdom (11:14-36)

11:14-16 **"He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons"**
- Beelzebub was the name the Hebrews invented to mock the Canaanite god, Baalzebul ("lord of the high place"). The Hebrews altered the name to Baalzebub ("lord of flies" or "the dunghill"). The name Baal was actually used for many false gods. When the Israelites entered Canaan, they found that the people in almost every region had their own local false deity to worship. The name Beelzebub eventually became a term used by the Jews to refer to Satan.

"testing Him" - This phrase shows to us that their motive to see a sign was not genuine or sincere.

11:17-20 **"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation"**
- Jesus points the obvious truth that the devil would not use his power to defeat his own workers. An army cannot win a victory by attacking itself. Satan would never threaten his own empire by casting out his demons. Jesus had come to earth to destroy Satan's empire and rescue Satan's victims.

"by whom do your sons cast them out?" - Jesus was not admitting that these people were really able to cast out demons, but was simply exposing the inconsistency of their claim.

11:21-23 **"He who is not with Me is against Me"** - There is no "neutral" ground when it comes to our response to Christ. If we are not serving Jesus we are serving the devil.

11:24-26 **"and the last state of that man is worse than the first"** - This parable makes the point that it is not enough to simply avoid evil. We must fill up our lives with good. To understand the true meaning of this parable we must keep it in the context. Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against me."

11:27-28 **"More than that"** - The role of Jesus' mother was very important, but "more than that" we should be focused on obeying God's word. We must not allow our appreciation for Mary's faithfulness to evolve into the unauthorized practice of worshipping her.

"blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it" - Jesus is stressing that spiritual kinship is far more important than any earthly relationship to Jesus (Matthew 12:50; Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21).

11:29-32 **"an evil generation"** - The word "evil" is from the Greek word PONĒROS which means full of labor and hardships or of a bad nature or condition. The Greek word is not always used to refer to sinfulness or immorality. However, in this case we must consider Matthew's account which adds "an evil and adulterous generation" which more fully explains the context.

"the sign of Jonah the prophet" - Matthew 12:40 states, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of the fish, and then was cast up on the shore alive. This was a sign (miracle) to confirm his mission and message. It showed to the Ninevites that they should repent and return to God before they would be destroyed for their disobedience. [For additional information concerning Jesus being raised the third day, please see the appendices - "DID JESUS RISE 'ON' OR 'AFTER' THE THIRD DAY?" (AP Article).]

"queen of the South" - This is most probably the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1). Sheba was a city of Arabia, situated to the south of Judea. If a queen would come so far to hear the wisdom of Solomon, surely the people should show greater interest in the words of Jesus.

11:33-36 **"The lamp of the body is the eye"** - This simile is also found in Matthew's account (Matthew 6:22-23). The eye allows those things seen into the mind. It is important that we see things correctly (according to the truth). The eye is said to be clear if it sees things in the proper way.

G. Hypocrisy of the Pharisees (11:37-12:12)

11:37-41 **"your inward part is full of greed and wickedness"** - Cleansing the outside would be of no value if their inside was full of such greed and wickedness. Proverbs 4:23 states, "Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life" (see also Matthew 15:18-19).

11:42-44 **"These you ought to have done"** - This phrase makes it clear that Jesus was not condemning them for being too strict in their obedience to the Law. Jesus never rebuked the Pharisees for being meticulous law keepers. Some make a false charge of being pharisaic or legalistic against those who seek to closely adhere to

God's law. They say it is wrong to emphasize the details. But, the Pharisees were not condemned for strictly keeping the Law. Their problem was that they kept some parts of the Law while ignoring other more important commands. The solution is to obey all of God's commands.

"best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces" - Jesus explained in Matthew 23:5, "But all their works they do to be seen by men" (see also Matthew 6:1, 5).

"For you are like graves which are not seen" - Graves which were not seen or distinguished were walked over by those who never knew of the corruption beneath them and so they were being defiled.

11:45-52 **"You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered"** - They had taken away the key of knowledge by their traditions and false teachings. They took away the true knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, which is the key of the kingdom of heaven. Because of their false teaching they were not entering the kingdom themselves neither were they allowing others to do so.

11:53-54 **"the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail Him vehemently"** - Notice their reaction to the words of Jesus. Their growing hatred of Him caused them to look for an accusation they could use against Him. They wanted to charge Him with either heresy or sedition.

12:1-3 **"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy"** - The word "leaven" is used in the Scriptures to refer to something which may be small in quantity but has great influence because of its pervasive nature.

12:4-7 **"do not be afraid of those who kill the body"** - The Christian should never fear persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). Men are able to cause physical pain and death but they can do nothing against the soul of the righteous man. We should "fear" God (to fear, be afraid, reverence, venerate and to treat with deference or reverential obedience - *Thayer's Greek Definitions*).

12:8-9 **"he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God"** - The one who continues to deny Christ will not be saved. Jesus is the one and only way to salvation (John 14:6).

- 12:10 **"to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven"** - The word "blasphemy" means to vilify, defame or speak evil against that which is holy. This same condemnation is found in Matthew 12:32. In the context of Matthew's account we see that the Pharisees were claiming that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of the devil (Matthew 12:24). It is hard to believe that these Jewish leaders were so hardened in their prejudice that they could actually see a miracle of Jesus and still call it the work of Satan. Their hardened hearts were beyond any possibility of repentance (Hebrews 6:4-6). It is not possible to be guilty of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit today. People today can obviously speak against the miracles of Jesus recorded in the Bible, but they have not seen His miracles. There is no one today who can see what the Pharisees saw.
- 12:11-12 **"the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say"** - This is an excellent passage to help us in our understanding of the inspiration of the apostles and the Holy Scriptures. They were guided into all truth (Matthew 10:18-20; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

H. Greed, anxiety and poor stewardship condemned (12:13-59)

- 12:13-15 **"beware of covetousness"** - The attitude of covetousness produces a greedy desire to always get more. The one who has this desire is never satisfied and can never be satisfied because even if they gain an abundance of wealth they will always want more. Coveting was a violation of the tenth commandment in the law of Moses (Exodus 20:17). It is also clearly condemned in the law of Christ (Romans 13:9) being classified as idolatry in Colossians 3:5 (see also, Ephesians 5:3 and Hebrews 13:5).
- 12:16-21 **"But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'"** - The rich man's folly was putting his trust in temporal things. He made arrangements for his physical necessities but he foolishly neglected his spiritual needs. Understanding that physical things are temporary while spiritual things are eternal will help us to appreciate just how foolish his decision was to put his focus and energies on those momentary possessions of this life.
- 12:22-24 **"do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on"** - This is not saying that we should not seek to find employment to financially support ourselves and those

for whom we are responsible. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 says, "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat." 1 Timothy 5:8 adds, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." We also find many passages in the book of Proverbs concerning the importance of work (Proverbs 12:11, 24; 13:4; 14:23).

- 12:25-26 **"one cubit to his stature"** - The Greek word HĒLIKIA translated as "stature" in this verse should have been translated as "age" as it is in John 9:21. At times the Scriptures will use a measured length like "cubit" or "hand's breadth" in respect of time or age (Psalm 39:5). The phrase of adding one cubit to one's stature (age) is proverbial, representing adding something small or insignificant. In this verse it applies to the smallest possible portion of time added to one's age. We cannot even do this, "the least" (verse 26), so why are we anxious for the rest?
- 12:27-28 **"How much more will He clothe you"** - God cares for and provides for His creation. Why would He neglect our needs? There are over 160 different verses in the Bible that refer to the ways God provides for us (for example: Philippians 4:12-19; Matthew 6:25-33; 7:11; Ephesians 3:20).
- 12:29-31 **"But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you"** - If we are seeking first the kingdom (Matthew 6:33) God will make sure we have the opportunity to have the necessities of life. Psalm 37:25 states, "I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread."
- 12:32-34 **"it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"** - The kingdom is the place of salvation (church) with Jesus as the King (Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 1:22-23). God is pleased to provide us a way of salvation, not wanting any to perish (1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9).
- "provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old"** - Those who are greedy for physical wealth store their money in bags full of holes (Haggai 1:6). However, the righteous store up treasures in heaven when they focus on the spiritual rewards from the Father by being benevolent to those who are in need (Matthew 6:19-20).

- 12:35-40 **"Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning"** - These are illustrations of being prepared.
- "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect"** - No one knows the time of the Lord's return (1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). Therefore, we must be ready at all times.
- 12:41-48 **"Then Peter said to Him, 'Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?'"** - Jesus does not give a direct answer to Peter's question. However, He answers in such a way that shows the application was for all who profess to be His servants.
- "many stripes"** - The degrees of reward and punishment are indicated in 1 Corinthians 3:5-15. [For additional information concerning degrees of punishment and reward please see the appendices - "ARE THERE DEGREES OF PUNISHMENT AND REWARD?" (AP Article).]
- 12:49-50 **"fire on the earth"** - The "fire" mentioned here may well refer to the widespread effects of the preaching of the gospel. In some aspects God's word is like a fire (Jeremiah 23:29). Christ was sent to preach the message of the kingdom (Luke 4:43) in all of its truth (John 18:37) which would provide the way of salvation (Luke 19:10) for sinners (1 Timothy 1:15).
- "I have a baptism to be baptized with"** - The word "baptism" mean a complete immersion. In this verse Jesus is speaking about His coming immersion in suffering (Matthew 26:54).
- 12:51-53 **"peace on earth"** - Jesus, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), came to bring peace between man and God. His message of salvation, the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15), would provide the opportunity for peace. There is a separation between man and God because of the sin of man (Isaiah 59:2). The gospel message proclaims the solution to man's problem of sin. This verse is not talking about physical peace or absence of conflict. This is a spiritual peace with God which will never come to those who continue to reject Jesus and His message.
- "division"** - The truth, which is the sword of the Spirit (Hebrews 4:12), divides the righteous from the wicked (Matthew 10:34-36).
- 12:54-56 **"Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?"** - The signs of

the "time" (work and purpose of Jesus) were as clearly displayed as the signs of approaching weather, but so many of the Jews refused to acknowledge the evidence.

12:57-59 **"make every effort along the way"** - The point Jesus is making is that action is needed now! They are being told not to wait until the judgment. They quickly take care of their business matters in their daily life, but they must also take care of spiritual business quickly, while they are on "the way" to the final accounting.

I. Parables of the barren fig tree, mustard seed and leaven (13:1-21)

13:1-5 **"the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices"** - All that is known about this incident is found in this verse. The implication is that Pilate sent soldiers into the temple to punish certain Galileans who were worshipping. The blood of these worshippers was mingled with the sacrifices being offered.

"Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans" - This is probably exactly what they were thinking. Job's friends claimed he was a sinner and therefore deserved the tragic events in his life as punishment for his sins (Job 4:7-8; 8:20; 11:14-15, 17). Even the apostles were influenced by this same false reasoning (John 9:2). It is not true that a man's sorrow and suffering is always a result of his sin. Many suffer because of the sins of others, and some for no reason at all. Often the best of men suffer greatly in this life (1 Peter 2:21-24; 2 Timothy 3:12; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28).

"unless you repent you will all likewise perish" - The point Jesus is making is that all sinners, regardless of the nature of their sins, need to repent.

13:6-9 **"A certain man had a fig tree"** - There have been many different explanations given for this parable. James Burton Coffman provides the following guide:

ANALOGIES IN THE PARABLE

Owner of the vineyard = the heavenly Father

The vinedresser = the Lord Jesus Christ

The vineyard = the world

The fig tree = the Jewish nation

Three years = the first three years of Jesus' ministry

Fruitlessness = Israel's rejection of Jesus

This year also = Jesus' final year of preaching

Thou shalt cut it down = God's judgment against Israel
(*Coffman's Commentaries on the Bible*, Luke 13)

Whatever the specific details may represent the overall theme is the patience of God, the danger of unfruitfulness and the need for repentance.

13:10-17 **"on the Sabbath"** - Once again we have Jesus confronting the misunderstanding of the Sabbath by the Jewish leaders.

"But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation" -

In the midst of this joyous occasion this ruler raises an objection. His misunderstanding is that it was a sin for Jesus to heal on the Sabbath. It is interesting to note that he does not confront Jesus but instead addresses the crowd.

The Lord rebuked the ruler of the synagogue by showing that the implications of his false doctrine would provide better treatment to animals than man. The shame of the adversaries proved the truth and wisdom of the words of Jesus.

13:18-19 **"What is the kingdom of God like?"** - The kingdom (church) is the place of salvation with Jesus as the King (Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 1:22-23). To be "like" something does not mean identical in every aspect. Jesus compares the kingdom to a mustard seed which is small but shows amazing growth.

13:20-21 **"To what shall I liken the kingdom of God?"** - The kingdom is also like leaven which has an incredible ability to spread by influencing the surrounding material.

VII. Ministry East of the Jordan River (13:22-19:27)

A. The narrow gate (13:22-30)

13:22-30 **"Lord, are there few who are saved?"** - This question seems to be will there be few or many of the Jews saved. The Jewish scholars had many theories on this topic. Some said all Israelites would be saved; while others taught only a few would escape. Out of all who came out of Egypt only two entered the promised land.

"will not be able" - Since we never read of a case in the Bible where a sinner tried to obey the commands of God and found it to

be impossible we must conclude the inability rests solely on the sinner's refusal to obey.

"I do not know you" - There will be many religious individuals disappointed on the day of judgment when they discover they never truly had a faithful relationship with the Lord. Galatians 3:27 says, "For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ." Ephesians 1:3 adds, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ.**"

B. Warnings concerning Herod (13:31-35)

13:31-33 **"Herod wants to kill you"** - The Pharisees were not friends of Jesus, so it could be they were trying to frighten Him away from their community by using this phony threat concerning Herod (Antipas). There is no reason to assume this warning was based on a true report (Luke 23:11).

"Go, tell that fox" - Jesus used this description to emphasize the sly and crafty character of Herod (Antipas).

"I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following" - Christ had more good works to do in the next few days, but would be leaving Herod's territory soon to make His journey to Jerusalem.

13:34-35 **"but you were not willing"** - It is clear from this phrase that there have been those who Christ wished to save, and eventually died to save, but nonetheless were lost because they would not come unto Him in faith and obedience.

C. Healing on the Sabbath (14:1-24)

14:1-6 **"they watched Him closely"** - The Pharisees were always looking for some way to condemn Him.

"dropsy" - This is the same condition called "edema" today which is a swelling caused by fluid in your tissues. It can be anywhere in the body, but is often in the feet and legs. It will usually make the skin feel tight, heavy, or sore. Symptoms can include: pain, tingling, aching or a burning sensation in the swollen areas.

"a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit" - Jesus is here showing that if they understood the law of Moses (Exodus 23:5) they would realize that they were authorized to help those in need

on the Sabbath. They had not been interpreting the Scriptures correctly. This stands as a great warning for us today (2 Timothy 2:15).

14:7-11 **"For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."** - God's word often teaches the importance of humility (Luke 22:26; Romans 11:20; 12:3; Philippians 2:5; James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5).

14:12-14 **"when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind"** - Jesus is not saying it is wrong to show kindness and hospitality to relatives, friends and neighbors, but He is warning against only doing good to those who can repay us. It is far better to help those in need who will never have the opportunity to return the favor.

14:15-24 **"Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"** - Since this man makes a spiritual application concerning the things said about feasts Jesus provides an expanded and deeper explanation of His teaching.

"highways and hedges" - This may represent the gospel message being preached to the Gentiles.

"I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper" - Those who made excuses would have no part in the kingdom of God. There are some who become so obsessed with their own busy lives that they neglect the more important spiritual things, but those who have less in this life are often more appreciative of spiritual blessings.

D. Counting the cost of discipleship (14:25-35)

14:25-33 **"hate"** - The word "hate" is a translation of the Greek word *MISEŌ* which means "to detest" and by extension "to love less" (please see Matthew 10:37).

"whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" - Becoming a Christian is not something that is done casually. One must fully understand the commitment required and the cost to be paid (2 Timothy 3:12; Revelation 2:10).

"whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple" - We are not ready to be a true disciple of Christ if there

is anything in our lives we are unwilling to sacrifice for His cause (Matthew 6:33).

14:34-35 **"if the salt has lost its flavor"** - If salt has lost its saltiness it is no longer of value. What "salt" represents in this passage is different from that used in Matthew (Matthew 5:13). At various times Jesus used His illustrations to make different points. In this verse the "salt" represented disciples who counted the cost and made the required sacrifices. Those who were not willing to do this were as worthless as flavorless salt.

E. Parables of the lost sheep, coin and son (15:1-32)

15:1-7 **"This Man receives sinners and eats with them"** - Notice the Pharisees and scribes automatically included the tax collectors in the category of sinners.

"there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" - If the Pharisees and scribes could understand the value of saving a lost sheep they should appreciate the value of saving a lost man.

15:8-10 **"there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents"** - If they could understand the value of finding a lost silver coin they should understand the importance of saving a sinner.

15:11-16 **"Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me"** - According to Jewish law the older son would receive a double portion (Deuteronomy 21:17). The greed of this son is clearly seen (1 Timothy 6:9). Also note that he gave both sons their inheritance at this time "he divided to them his livelihood").

15:17-19 **"he came to himself"** - Repentance can only occur when sound reasoning takes place and one comes to their senses. This son realized his true pitiful condition.

15:20-24 **"his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him"** - The father kissed him again and again. We can see the great affection the father has for the son.

15:25-32 **"But he was angry and would not go in"** - Jesus used this part of the parable to emphasize the lack of love and compassion of the scribes and Pharisees. They were too quick to condemn the sinners and also Jesus for eating with them.

F. Parable of the unjust steward (16:1-18)

- 16:1-7 **"There was a certain rich man who had a steward"** - The theme of this parable is showing the importance of using present opportunities to prepare for the future.
- "Give an account of your stewardship"** - All of mankind will be required to give an account on the day of judgment (Romans 14:12).
- "I have resolved what to do"** - What the steward did was wrong. We should not think that the Master was justifying his evil deeds.
- 16:8-13 **"the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly"** - The Master commended the steward only for his shrewdness. Jesus is actually teaching a lesson in Christian prudence. Prudence is defined as the appropriate use of wisdom. Jesus is commending the steward for his resourcefulness. Those in the world are often more prudent about worldly things than Christians are about spiritual things.
- "they may receive you into an everlasting home"** - Who will receive us into our everlasting home? Matthew 25:34 says, "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"
- 16:14-18 **"the Pharisees, who were lovers of money"** - The love of money, not money itself, is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:9-10).
- "what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God"** - Those things which the Pharisees emphasized, like their hypocritical displays of holiness (done for show) were abhorrent to God (Matthew 6:1-18).
- "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail"** - The Pharisees had perverted God's law. In many ways they were seeking to change the nature of the kingdom which Jesus would soon establish. They were teaching an earthly kingdom with a Messiah who would destroy the oppressive Romans. Jesus is making it clear in this verse that even the smallest parts of God's law would not be changed for their materialistic viewpoint. The "tittle" was a small mark which distinguished one Hebrew letter from another very similar letter.

"Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery" - This was one specific area where the Pharisees had perverted God's law (Matthew 19:3-9).

Adultery (fornication) is the only basis God allows for a divorce and the adultery must precede and be the reason for the divorce. If adultery (fornication) occurs the innocent spouse (not the guilty spouse) is allowed to divorce their guilty spouse and remarry with God's approval. It is not required, but it is allowed. This is the only grounds on which a married man or woman may divorce and remarry according to God's law. Marriage is for life (Romans 7:2-3) with only one possible exception - adultery. The innocent spouse is allowed to divorce their spouse and remarry a biblically eligible mate.

G. The rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31)

16:19-22 **"there was a certain rich man...there was a certain beggar"** - Many commentators say this text is one of Jesus' many parables. However, parables require a comparison which uses physical things to teach a spiritual message. There is no such comparison made by Jesus in this text. There is also no reason to take any of the words figuratively. Furthermore, if it is a parable, it is the only one in which names are used. Jesus obviously had a particular situation in mind. Jesus said, "there was" a certain man. If there was not a certain man Jesus lied. If it is a parable it must be admitted that in a parable Jesus used commonly known truths to teach a spiritual message. Therefore, those who claim this is a parable cannot say that it is not true. There is also no evidence to assume this is an allegory. Many scholars attempt to give imaginative symbolic meanings to avoid the clear teaching of the text.

16:23-31 **"between us and you there is a great gulf fixed"** - The obvious implication taught here is that our spiritual state cannot be changed after death (Revelation 22:11).

H. Forgiveness and the unprofitable servant (17:1-10)

17:1-2 **"millstone"** - Jesus teaches that physical death is a more desirable fate than the punishment reserved for those who through their example and influence cause others to lose their faith. The

Christian's example is very important (Ephesians 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8).

"little ones" - The phrase "little ones" is often used by Jesus to describe those who are new to the faith and as such are often weak (Matthew 18:6; Mark 9:42).

17:3-4 **"if he repents forgive him"** - This does not teach that if the one who offends us does not repent we should never forgive him (Luke 23:34). This text is simply showing the importance of always being ready to forgive. The Christian will not hold a grudge against those who have wronged him (Romans 12:19-21).

17:5-10 **"increase our faith"** - After hearing the Lord's teaching concerning the responsibility to forgive others the apostles felt they needed more faith to obey His command. Jesus uses two illustrations to demonstrate that it was not the size of their faith, but their willingness to do what was commanded that was the problem. He was teaching them to fully embrace their responsibility as servants who are expected to obey their master.

I. Ten lepers healed (17:11-19)

17:11-14 **"Go, show yourselves to the priests"** - This was required as part of the law of Moses (Leviticus 14). The old law was still in force until the death of Jesus on the cross when the law of Christ would then be binding on all (Colossians 2:14-16).

17:15-19 **"But, where are the nine?"** - There was an additional spiritual blessing given to this Samaritan who was the only one of the ten who showed gratitude to Jesus for the healing of his leprosy.

J. The promised Kingdom (17:20-37)

17:20-21 **"does not come with observation"** - The kingdom would not be physical to be seen like an earthly kingdom. His was to be a spiritual kingdom established in the hearts of men.

"the kingdom of God is within you" - Notice these words are spoken to the Pharisees who needed to focus on their hearts. They would have no part of the coming kingdom if they did not address their hypocrisy. The kingdom would only be "within" them if they prepared their hearts to seek it.

17:22-25 **"the days of the Son of Man"** - Jesus addresses this to His disciples. He tries to prepare them for what they would soon face. The topic here corresponds with Matthew 24. Like Matthew's passage this one first addresses the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) and then the final coming of Christ. These are two separate events which should not be mixed. [Please see the appendices - "THE REVELATION OF THE SON OF MAN" for additional information.]

"but first He must suffer many things" - Here Jesus explains that before the destruction of Jerusalem occurs there is still His suffering and crucifixion that must take place.

17:26-30 **"in the days of Noah, ...Lot, ...the Son of Man"** - There would be no warning signs for His final coming in judgment upon mankind (Matthew 24:42-44; 2 Peter 3:10).

17:31-37 **"one will be taken and the other left"** - The word "taken" is a translation of the Greek word PARALAMBANŌ which is defined as "to take to, to take with one's self, to join to one's self." Therefore, it does not mean that one person will be taken and the other will be left there. It means one will be taken to be with Christ as part of the good harvest, while the other will be gathered and burned in the fire like the tares (Matthew 13:37-43).

K. Parable of the persistent widow (18:1-8)

18:1-8 **"men always ought to pray and not lose heart"** - Jesus uses the parable to impress upon them the importance of persistence in prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We should not grow discouraged when our prayers are not granted as soon as we would desire (Galatians 6:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:13).

"did not fear God nor regard man" - This explains why he is classified by the Lord as an "unjust" or unrighteous judge in verse 6.

"when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" - We must always make sure that we do not interpret a passage in such a way that it contradicts other things clearly taught in the Bible. We do know according to the New Testament that the church with faithful members will be here when the Lord returns in the clouds (Matthew 24:40-41; 1 Corinthians 15:24, 51-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-8). Therefore we should understand that the question Jesus asks stands as a type of

warning to impress upon the minds of the listeners the importance of guarding their faith and not to let it diminish or fade.

L. Parable of the Pharisee and tax collector (18:9-14)

18:9-14 **"trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others"** - This perfectly describes the attitude of most Pharisees. The Bible often condemns the sin of self-righteousness (Proverbs 12:15; 30:12; 2 Corinthians 10:12; Revelation 3:17).

"everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" - It is vital for Christians to learn the importance of humility (Matthew 18:4; Luke 22:26; Romans 12:3; James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5).

M. Jesus welcomes the children (18:15-17)

18:15-17 **"brought infants to Him that He might touch them"** - It had become a custom of the Jewish people to ask a holy man to lay hands on the head of one who wished to receive a blessing (Genesis 48:14). The parents, nurses or care-givers recognized Jesus as one who could bestow a blessing to these children.

"the disciples saw it, they rebuked them" - The disciples did not fully understand the nature of the work Jesus was doing. They probably thought this would be a frivolous intrusion on the Lord's important work.

"of such is the kingdom of God" - We see many characteristics in children which are essential to Christianity such as humility, innocence, meekness and modesty.

N. The rich young ruler (18:18-30)

18:18-23 **"a certain ruler"** - This is the same as the rich, young ruler in Matthew's account (Matthew 19:16-22).

"Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God." - Jesus is not saying He is not good and He is not denying His deity. "Good" was a word commonly used for God, so He is asking this man, "Do you really believe I am God?"

"You still lack one thing" - Jesus, who knew and knows all things, knew the heart of this man (Matthew 9:4; John 2:24-25; 6:64; 18:4; Acts 1:24). He knew the extent of this man's love for his riches.

"he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich" - This rich young ruler chose to reject the advice of Jesus. He refused to forsake his love for the things of this world to gain the ultimate happiness in heaven. This rich, young ruler would be better classified as the rich, young, foolish ruler.

18:24-30 **"it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God"** - This was a proverb in common use among the Jewish people. Even today it is still in common usage among the Arabians. The proverb was used to describe a thing which was exceedingly difficult. We should not take this expression literally. It merely indicates something extremely difficult.

Some have foolishly tried to explain that the "Eye of the Needle" was simply a gate in Jerusalem which was opened after the main gate had been closed for the night. They say a camel could only pass through this smaller gate if it got on its knees and had its baggage removed. However, there is no evidence in the Scriptures for the existence of such a gate and this explanation fails to take into account the reaction of those who heard the words of Jesus.

"Who then can be saved?" - The listeners clearly understood the proverb used by Jesus.

"we have left all" - They had left their family, friends and occupations.

O. Jesus foretells His death (18:31-34)

18:31-34 **"all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished"** - Many of the prophecies concerning Jesus had already been accomplished. Here He is talking about those prophecies concerning His death, burial and resurrection [Please see the appendices - "OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST" for additional information.]

P. The blind beggar healed (18:35-43)

18:35-43 **"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"** - This title "Son of David" identifies Jesus as the promised Messiah (Psalm 132:11-12; 89:3-4; Matthew 1:1-17; 22:42).

"Receive your sight; your faith has made you well" - We notice here that true saving "faith" requires obedience. If he had listened to those who had warned him to be quiet he would not have received this blessing of sight.

Q. Jesus and Zacchaeus (19:1-10)

19:1-6 **"tax collector"** - This comes from the compound Greek word ARCHITELŌNĒS and is defined as a principal tax gatherer or collector of public revenue. This means he was chief among the publicans.

"The tax collectors were as a class, detested not only by the Jews, but by other nations also, both on account of their employment and of the harshness, greed, and deception, with which they did their job."
(Thayer's Greek Definitions Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament)

"he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him" - This shows to us his great desire to see Jesus.

"Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." - Since he was a publican Zacchaeus must have been shocked to hear such a thing from Jesus, but he responded with joy. He was probably both surprised and honored to be hosting this great teacher in his home.

19:7-10 **"when they saw it, they all complained"** - The people could not understand why Jesus would go to the home of a publican.

"Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." - This shows us that Zacchaeus was not like many other publicans. The best understanding of this passage is that he had already done these things in the past and also intended to do them in the future.

"Today salvation has come to this house" - He was saved not only because of his benevolence and honesty, but also for his great zeal in taking Jesus into his home and heart. Jesus the Messiah had power on earth to forgive sins (Matthew 9:1-8; 15:21-28).

R. Parable of the minas (19:11-27)

- 19:11-15 **"they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately"**
 - The word "immediately" is translated from the Greek word PARACHRĒMA which is defined as "instantly, immediately, presently, straightway or soon." They thought that since Jesus was headed to Jerusalem He would at that time establish His earthly kingdom. They did not understand that Jesus would establish a spiritual kingdom.
- "So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas"**
 - The lesson in this parable is basically the same as that found in Matthew 25:14-30 of individual responsibility. It would be a mistake to force into this parable fanciful implications which were never intended by Jesus.
- "his citizens hated him"** - The "nobleman" represents Jesus and the "far country" is heaven. These "citizens" are those in the kingdom who refused to submit to the authority of Christ. Their rebellious attitude caused them to squander the opportunities Jesus has provided to them.
- 19:16-21 **"well done good servant"** - Those who were faithful were rewarded for their obedience and service.
- "because you are an austere man"** - The rebellious often falsely charge Jesus with being too demanding.
- 19:22-27 **"you knew that I was an austere man"** - Jesus is not admitting to being unfair. He is simply making the point that if the rebellious servant had that impression of Him he should have acted differently. He should have been even more diligent to obey and serve the master well.
- "bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me"** - This may very well foretell the destruction of Jerusalem which foreshadowed the final coming of Jesus and the final judgment.

VIII. Ministry in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38)

A. Triumphal Entry (19:28-44)

- 19:28-34 **"Bethphage"** - This was a village located east of Jerusalem, near the Mount of Olives on the road between Jericho and Jerusalem. In English the name means "house of figs"

"Bethany" - Bethany was a village a little less than 2 miles from Jerusalem on the road which lead to Jericho near to the Mount of Olives (John 11:18). It was the home town of Lazarus, Martha and Mary (John 11). This is also where Mary anointed Jesus (John 12:1-7).

"the mountain called Olivet" - The English versions of the Bible "Olivet" literally means "olive garden." The Mount of Olives overlooks Jerusalem being about 700 feet high. The mount has three peaks of soft chalky limestone, mixed with flint. We will notice in our study that the Mount of Olives is specifically mentioned in many of the events leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus.

"Because the Lord has need of it" - It could be that the owner of this animal was a disciple of the Lord and had been told by Jesus that this animal would soon be needed. Some versions have it as "our Lord has need of it."

19:35-40 **"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord"** - These are the words of Psalm 118:25-26, which were commonly understood to refer to the Messiah. This was the language that was used to exalt and honor the promised Deliverer. The significance of these words provokes the Pharisees to angrily tell Jesus, "rebuke Your disciples."

"if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out" - If the people failed to sing the praises of Jesus, and credit Him with the glory and honor due to the Messiah the stones would cry out (Zechariah 9:9; Habakkuk 2:11). The magnitude of salvation being brought to the lost souls of men required a suitable tribute. If the people would not do it God would give the stones a voice to properly mark the occasion.

19:41-44 **"If you had known"** - Here Jesus speaks of the coming destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Matthew 23:37-39; 24:1-35).

"you did not know the time of your visitation" - The Jews did not know what was coming. However, Eusebius of Caesarea (A.D. 260-340) also known as Eusebius Pamphili who was a historian of Christianity tells us that all Christians were warned to flee the city some time before the outbreak of the conflict. It is reported that they escaped the Roman siege and conquest of the city by fleeing to Pella and other cities north of Jerusalem.

B. Cleansing of the Temple (19:45-48)

19:45-48 **"He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it"** - This is the second "cleansing" of the temple. The first time Jesus cleansed the temple is found in John 2:11-16 which occurred soon after the first miracle of Jesus at the wedding feast in Cana.

Deuteronomy 14:24-26 makes it clear that it was acceptable to sell doves and other animals used in the services at the altar, and it would be necessary to have exchange tables for currency because money brought in by foreigners would not be accepted in the markets of Judea. However, it was a sin to transact that business in the temple. They were desecrating a place of holiness and religious service.

"the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything" - The Jewish leaders feared the response of the people if they tried to seize Jesus publicly.

C. Confronting the Jewish leaders (20:1-47)

20:1-8 **"by what authority are You doing these things?"** - This would include both His teachings and His actions from the previous day when He "cleansed" the temple of the moneychangers.

"The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?" - This question put them in a difficult position. Either answer they gave would cause them problems. They could not say it was from heaven because their actions would condemn them and they could not say it was from men because this would anger the people who held John as a prophet.

20:9-16 **"A certain man planted a vineyard"** - The owner of the vineyard represents God. The vinedressers represent the leaders of the people. The servants are the prophets who had been sent to the Israelites through the ages.

"He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others." - This may well refer to the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) being overtaken by the Romans in the immediate sense and the entrance of the Gentiles into the kingdom in the ultimate sense.

"Certainly not!" - The leaders understood this parable was directed toward them (verse 19). Therefore they disputed the implications of the parable.

20:17-19 **"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone"** - This passage is found in Psalm 118:22. In 1 Peter this concept is developed further.

1 Peter 2:4-8, "Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.' Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,' and 'A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.' They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed."

"Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder" - Those who fall on the stone are those who stumble at the teachings of Jesus. The imagery of the stone falling and crushing was also used in Daniel 2:34, 44, to represent the destruction of the kingdoms of men and the establishment of God's spiritual kingdom (the church). Jesus calls the attention of the Jewish leaders to what God would do to their worldly kingdoms. Jesus, who is the stone, was warning these leaders that though they were planning to destroy Him there would come the time when He would fall upon and destroy them.

"they knew He had spoken this parable against them" - They were greatly troubled by His teaching, but had no way to stop Him at this time.

20:20-26 **"they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words"** - They were looking for some way to get Jesus to either offend the people or the Roman government with His teaching.

"Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" - The Jewish people despised paying taxes to the Roman government. He could gain the favor of the people by saying they should not pay, but then

the government would arrest Him for being a rebel. If He said they should pay their taxes the government would be pleased, but the people might turn against Him. Jesus did not answer either "yes" or "no." He simply reminded them of the accepted truism that if something belongs to someone it should be given to them.

"they marveled at His answer and kept silent" - The word "marveled" is defined as "to be astonished" or "to be amazed." But, it does not imply that they were impressed with His wisdom to such an extent that they were willing to obey and follow Him.

20:27-40 **"the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection"** - The Sadducees were a religious sect among the Jews who denied the existence of angels, spirits and the resurrection of man after death. They did not believe in a binding oral law being passed down through the generations as did the Pharisees.

"Moses wrote to us" - The Sadducees are referring to what was written by Moses in Deuteronomy 25:5.

"Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become?" - This was the question they had often used in their debates with the Pharisees who were never able to give an adequate reply.

"neither marry nor are given in marriage" - Jesus explained the flaw in their reasoning. They did not understand the Scriptures (Matthew 22:29; Mark 12:24).

"he called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" - Jesus used the Scriptures to show that there is life after death. If the Lord was still the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob after their death the implication is that they were still in existence.

In Exodus 3:6 we find, "Moreover He said, 'I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God."

In Exodus 3:15 God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'"

20:41-44 **"Therefore David calls Him 'LORD'; how is He then his Son?"** - The quote here is from Psalm 110:1 which says, "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" In this Psalm David says the "Lord" (God the Father) said to David's "Lord" (Jesus Christ) to sit at His right hand. When they answered he was the son of David they only recognized his blood relation, not that he was anyone higher than a human being. If Christ was no more to David than his earthly descendant why did David call him Lord?

20:45-47 **"Beware of the scribes"** - Jesus warned the people concerning the hypocrisy of the scribes. Those scribes who should have known the law the best were not living in obedience to the law.

D. The widow's mites (21:1-4)

21:1-4 **"two mites"** - According to Edward Robinson's *Greek and English Lexicon for the New Testament*, a mite was equal to about one firth of a cent in the United States.

"this poor widow has put in more than all" - Jesus explains that this widow had put in more than all not because of the amount she gave, but because of her generosity without regard to her poverty (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:7).

E. Jesus foretells the destruction of the Temple (21:5-28)

21:5-6 **"the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down"** - Their trust, reliance and pride in the temple was shown by Jesus to be misguided. He warns them of the temple's coming destruction which He had discussed before (Luke 19:43-44). The temple's destruction would take place in A.D. 70 when the Roman army conquered Jerusalem (Luke 21:20).

21:7-19 **"when will these things be"** - Matthew 24 and Mark 13 are the parallel passages to this text. Luke 21 and Mark 13 focus more on the first part of the discussion of Jesus in Matthew 24. The points Jesus makes in Matthew 24:3-36 are not as well covered in the accounts of Mark and Luke.

"what sign will there be" - There would be many signs for the coming destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, but there would be no

signs for the final coming of Jesus at the end of the world (Matthew 24:36, 42, 44).

"Take heed that you not be deceived" - The many signs before the destruction of Jerusalem would include: false Christs and false prophets (verse 8), wars and rumors of wars (verse 9), nations and kingdoms rising up against each other (verse 10), earthquakes, famine and pestilences (verse 11) and persecutions and betrayals (verse 12-19).

"not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom" - This promise was never given to all Christians. It was the apostles who were clearly in view here (John 14:26; 15:27; 16:4, 7, 13).

21:20-24 **"Jerusalem surrounded by armies"** - There were many events which led to Jerusalem's eventual destruction.

"In the year 66 AD the Jews of Judea rebelled against their Roman masters. In response, the Emperor Nero dispatched an army under the generalship of Vespasian to restore order. By the year 68, resistance in the northern part of the province had been eradicated and the Romans turned their full attention to the subjugation of Jerusalem. That same year, the Emperor Nero died by his own hand, creating a power vacuum in Rome. In the resultant chaos, Vespasian was declared Emperor and returned to the Imperial City. It fell to his son, Titus, to lead the remaining army in the assault on Jerusalem.

The Roman legions surrounded the city and began to slowly squeeze the life out of the Jewish stronghold. By the year 70, the attackers had breached Jerusalem's outer walls and began a systematic ransacking of the city. The assault culminated in the burning and destruction of the Temple that served as the center of Judaism.

In victory, the Romans slaughtered thousands. Of those spared from death: thousands more were enslaved and sent to toil in the mines of Egypt, others were dispersed to arenas throughout the Empire to be butchered for the amusement of the public. The Temple's sacred relics were taken to Rome where

they were displayed in celebration of the victory."
["The Romans Destroy the Temple at Jerusalem, 70
AD," EyeWitness to History,
www.eyewitnesstohistory.com (2005).]

"let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" - This is one of the phrases which tells us Jesus is not talking about His final coming in judgment on the world. It will do no good to flee to the mountains in the final judgment.

21:25-28 **"signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars"** - Such cataclysmic language is often used in the Bible to describe the destruction of a great city (Isaiah 13:6-10; 19:1; 34:4-5; Ezekiel 32:7-8; Joel 2:1-2; 2:28ff - quoted in Acts 2:17-21).

F. The parable of the fig tree (21:29-38)

21:29-33 **"when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near"** - This corresponds to Matthew 24:32-33.

"this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place" - The Greek word which is translated as "generation" is never used to refer to a race of people. The implications are obvious. This cannot be speaking of the final judgment.

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" - This of course is true for all of Christ's words. But in this context it is especially true in regards to all that He has said concerning the destruction of their nation, city and temple. The events are certain to be accomplished.

21:34-38 **"take heed to yourselves"** - Jesus is warning the people to not be distracted by worldly things which will leave them unprepared for the coming events.

"it will come as a snare" - A snare is an unexpected trap. The coming destruction of Jerusalem and indeed the end of the world will come unexpectedly to many. However, if Christians lead a faithful, prayerful and watchful life they will be ready for the Lord's return. They will be fully prepared to stand before Him at the judgment.

IX. Suffering and Death (22:1-23:56)

A. The Last Supper (22:1-38)

22:1-6 **"Feast of Unleavened bread"** - The Passover was a one-night observance to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites, from their Egyptian bondage, and the sparing of their firstborn. The seven days following the Passover was the feast of Unleavened Bread celebrated in the month Nisan from the 14th to the 21st (Exodus 12).

"the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him" - They were looking for a way to kill Jesus which would not cause the people to turn against their leadership because the people saw Jesus as a great prophet (Luke 7:16; Matthew 21:46). They wanted to take Him when He was not with the crowds of people (verse 6).

"Satan entered Judas" - The name "Satan" means "adversary" and "devil" means "slanderer" (check the Greek meanings of these words found in Revelation 12:9). Both words well describe his character. This is not saying that this is the first time the devil had an influence on Judas (John 6:70-71; 12:3-6) or that some supernatural, overwhelming possession by Satan had taken place. Judas simply yielded to the temptations of the devil. Today we also allow Satan to enter our hearts whenever we submit to his temptations (James 1:14-15; 4:7-8).

"chief priests and captains" - These were the chief priests and captains of the temple (Luke 22:52).

22:7-13 **"the Day of Unleavened Bread"** - This day would be the 14th of the month called Nisan.

"Go and prepare the Passover for us" - The Passover feast was commanded by God to Israel to commemorate their deliverance from their Egyptian bondage when death passed over their firstborn. For more information concerning the Passover see the following passages: Exodus 12:1-51; 13:3-10; 23:14-19; 34:18-26; Leviticus 23:4-14; Numbers 9:1-14; 28:16-25; Deuteronomy 16:1-6.

"a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water" - Some have thought that since it was the custom in the East for the women to bring water this event would be unusual and distinctive.

"guest room" - The Greek word translated as "guest room" in this verse is the same word translated as "inn" in Luke 2:7.

22:14-18 **"I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God"** - Jesus is saying that when He eats the Passover again, it will not be in a literal sense but in a spiritual sense because it would be in the kingdom of God (the church).

H. Leo Boles explains - "The 'until' does not mean that he would again eat the Passover after the establishment of the kingdom; but it does mean that the type was to vanish in the presence of the antitype; the type should be superseded by the antitype, by the sacrifice of the true paschal Lamb. Christ is declared to be our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)."
(H. Leo Boles, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 413).

Parallel passages for the institution of the Lord's Supper include: Matthew 26:26-28 and Mark 14:22-24.

22:19-20 **"He took bread"** - It is important to note that when Jesus said, "This is My body" He meant that the bread represented His body. The bread was not His literal body. Phrases which use one thing to represent something else are often found in the Scriptures (Genesis 41:26; Matthew 13:38; 1 Corinthians 10:4; Galatians 4:25).

"He took the cup" - The word "cup" here refers to what is in the cup. Jesus was not asking them to drink the container. The fruit of the vine and bread used at the Passover is what was also used here. Therefore, it is clear that they used unleavened bread and unfermented grape juice (Exodus 12:15, 19).

22:21-23 **"truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined"** - God had already determined that His Son would be required to sacrifice Himself for the sins of mankind (Isaiah 53:4-12; Daniel 9:26; Zechariah 12:10; 13:7). However, this in no way absolved Judas of his guilt for betraying the Son of God.

"they began to question among themselves" - It appears that the apostles had no suspicions concerning the loyalty of Judas. This shows us that while men can be fooled, God cannot (Galatians 6:7-8; Hebrews 4:13; Jeremiah 16:17).

22:24-30 **"there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest"** - Some religious groups would say that Peter was the greatest and was the head apostle. However, Jesus does not teach this foolish doctrine nor is it found anywhere in the scriptures.

Some have said that Peter was the chief apostle because when the apostles are named, Peter's name always comes first. Generally this is true, but it is not always true (John 1:44-46; 1 Corinthians 3:22; 9:5; Galatians 2:9). Neither was Peter first with such events as the foot washing (John 13:2-6).

Another claim made is that Jesus gave Peter the keys to the kingdom (Matthew 16:19). However, this does not take into account the fact that Jesus repeated this to all the apostles (Matthew 18:18-20). We should also note that In Matthew 16:19 the word "you" is used three times; the second and third time the word used is plural which includes all of the apostles.

Matthew 16:19, "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

When the church was founded, Peter was the main speaker, but we notice that Acts 2:14 says, "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.'" The foundation of the church was laid on all the apostles with Jesus being the chief cornerstone.

Ephesians 2:19-22, "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

Some claim that Peter was the head of the council in Jerusalem which demonstrate to us that he was in charge. However, Acts 15 shows that Peter testified at the council as had Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:7, 12). But it was James who summed up the findings (Acts 15:13). And it was James who made the recommendation on how to solve the problem (Acts 15:19-20). Also, the letter came from the group, not Peter (Acts 15:23).

We should also note that Paul said he was not inferior to the other apostles (2 Corinthians 11:5; 12:11) and Peter refused homage (Acts 10:26). He saw himself as a fellow elder, one of many (1 Peter 5:1). He was also properly rebuked by Paul for following James' lead in Galatians 2:11-12. Therefore, the Scriptures clearly show that Peter was not a head apostle. A supposed supremacy of Peter was never taught by Jesus, never claimed by Peter himself and never shown by the other apostles (Matthew 23:8-12; Acts 15:13-14; 2 Corinthians 12:11).

"I bestow upon you a kingdom" - The kingdom of Jesus would be a kingdom of service (Mark 10:43-44; John 13:14; Galatians 6:10; James 2:15-17).

"sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" - There have been several theories concerning the meaning of this phrase. However, the best seems to be that all would be judged by the inspired teachings of all the apostles.

22:31-34 **"Satan has asked for you"** - The "you" in this verse is plural which includes all the disciples, but is applied especially to Peter considering his imminent denial of the Lord.

"and when you have returned to Me" - The implications being that Peter would fail the test.

"I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death" - We are not surprised to see the boldness of Peter (Acts 4:13).

"the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me" - This prophecy of Jesus is fulfilled later that night (Luke 22:55-62; Matthew 26:69-75).

22:35-38 **"When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?"** - Jesus is referring to the limited commission (Matthew 10:5-42; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6).

"But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one" - They are told to prepare themselves for the closing days of His earthly ministry when Jesus would be arrested, scourged and crucified as a criminal just as had been prophesied (Isaiah 53:12).

"they said, 'Lord, look, here are two swords.' And He said to them, 'It is enough'" - One of these two swords may well have been the one used by Peter when he cut off the ear of the high priest's servant named Malchus when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus (Luke 22:50; John 18:10).

B. Praying in the garden (22:39-46)

22:39-46 **"He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed"** - For the past several nights Jesus had often gone to the Mount of Olives to pray (Luke 21:37).

"Pray that you may not enter into temptation." - We learn from the accounts of Matthew and Mark that Jesus said this to them after He had prayed the first time, and returned to find the disciples sleeping (Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38). The apostles would soon face a great test of their faith and they needed strength.

"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." - Jesus was praying to be spared the suffering soon to come, but only if it was consistent with the Father's plan for the salvation of man. He describes the suffering as if it were a cup filled with a bitter liquid He would need to drink. The metaphor of a "cup" was often used in Scripture, sometimes representing joy (Psalms 16:5; 23:5; 116:13) and sometimes representing sorrow (Psalms 11:6; 75:8; Isaiah 51:17; Jeremiah 25:15; Revelation 14:10, 16:19).

The key point to notice is that Jesus was completely submissive to the will of the Father. This was a fulfillment of a prophecy concerning the Messiah (Isaiah 50:5). We must follow the example of Christ by being completely submissive to the Father's commands for us today (Romans 8:7; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:6)!

"an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him" - This reminds us of the angels coming to minister to Jesus after He was tempted by the devil in the wilderness (Matthew 4:11).

"His sweat became like great drops of blood" - There have been medical cases recorded when someone faced with great mental anguish actually had drops of blood secrete from their body like sweat, but it is not clear from this verse that the sweat of Jesus was blood. This verse simply says His sweat was "like" drops of blood.

"sleeping from sorrow" - This reason is not given as an excuse for their condition, but simply as an explanation. Great sorrow can weary us physically. This should cause us to consider well the Scripture which commands us to cast all our cares (sorrows, anxiety, fears) upon God (1 Peter 5:7).

C. The arrest of Jesus (22:47-65)

22:47-53 **"a multitude"** - This "multitude" consisted of a detachment of Roman troops (John 18:3, 12) which could consist of from three to six hundred men; then there were the "captains of the temple" (Luke 22:52) with their men who guarded and kept order at the temple; and also there were some of the "chief priests" and "elders" (Luke 22:52) with servants, such as Malchus (John 18:10). This multitude was led by "Judas, one of the twelve" who came to betray Jesus (John 18:3).

"Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" - The greeting with a kiss in the culture at that time was a symbol or pledge of one's devotion and close friendship.

"one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear" - From John's account we learn that the unnamed disciple in this verse was Peter (John 18:10). We should not assume that Peter was aiming for the servant's ear. However, the Lord tells the disciples to not fight the arrest, but instead to "permit even this."

"I was with you daily in the temple" - They would not attempt to arrest Him while He was teaching in the temple because they feared the people (Luke 22:2).

"But this is your hour, and the power of darkness" - Their actions were a fulfillment of prophecy and the darkness of their evil was on full display.

22:54-62 **"the high priest's house"** - It is difficult to know if this is talking about the house of Caiaphas or Annas. From John's account we learn that Jesus was first led to Annas, and then "Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest" (John 18:24).

Annas was the legitimate high priest according to the law of Moses, but he had been deposed by the Roman authorities. Therefore Jesus was brought before Annas first (John 18:12-14), and then He was sent to Caiaphas to be officially tried and condemned under the authority given under the Roman law.

"Peter followed at a distance" - Peter was close enough to see what was happening to Jesus, but he kept himself far enough away to be out of danger.

"But he denied Him, saying, 'Woman, I do not know Him'" - This is Peter's first denial.

"after a little while another saw him and said, 'You also are of them.' But Peter said, 'Man, I am not!'" - This is Peter's second denial.

"Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.' But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are saying!'" - This is Peter's third denial.

"Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed" - This occurs just as Jesus had prophesied (Matthew 26:34; Luke 22:34; John 13:38).

"the Lord turned and looked at Peter" - This look from his Lord must have cut Peter to the heart as he remembered the warning Jesus had given to him. Peter was without excuse, and now fully understanding the depths of his guilt, he went out and wept bitter tears.

22:63-65 **"the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him"** - They pummeled Jesus with their fists.

"many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him" -
The word "blasphemously" comes from the Greek word
BLASPHEMĒO which means to vilify, defame and to revile. It is
speaking evil against that which is holy.

D. The trials of Jesus (22:66-23:25)

22:66-71 **"the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council" -** This "council" was called the Sanhedrin which was the supreme council of the Jewish people. The Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem consisted of 71 members including the high priest, elders and scribes. It included both Sadducees and Pharisees with the Sadducees holding the higher positions of the court. The members would sit in a half-circle as they judged the accused.

"Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God" - The "right hand" was a position of honor and power reserved for the Father's Son.

23:1-2 **"Pilate" -** Pontius Pilate was the sixth Roman procurator (governor) over the region of Judea appointed in the twelfth year of Tiberius Caesar.

23:3-5 **"beginning from Galilee" -** They probably mentioned that Jesus began His work in Galilee because the Galilaeans were seen as a seditious group of people by the Roman authorities. In the past Judas of Galilee had raised a rebellion during the reign of Caesar Augustus (Acts 5:37).

23:6-12 **"Herod" -** Herod (Antipas) was the son of Herod the Great who had tried to kill the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:16). Antipas ruled as "tetrarch" of Galilee from 4 B.C. until A.D. 39 (Luke 3:1). It was Antipas who had killed John the Baptist (Matthew 14:3-12).

"He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction" - Jesus had done most of His early work in Galilee where Herod ruled. Therefore, He was considered to be living under Herod's authority.

"he hoped to see some miracle done by Him" - This tells us that Herod's motive for seeing Jesus was simply curiosity.

"He answered him nothing" - This was a fulfillment of a prophecy concerning the Messiah (Isaiah 53:7).

"Herod, with his men of war" - His "men of war" were his soldiers.

"Pilate and Herod became friends" - Herod probably felt that Pilate had shown great respect and honor when he sent Jesus to be judged by him. This would be a demonstration of the respect Pilate had for Herod's authority. Pilate was probably pleased that Herod showed trust in him to deal with this matter in the proper way.

23:13-17 **"I have found no fault in this Man"** - Pilate's judgment was that Jesus was not worthy of death because he had done nothing in violation of Roman law.

"I will therefore chastise Him and release Him" - To "chastise" Him was a Roman scourging. It was a common form of torture used by the Romans to whip a "slave" before he was crucified. This brutal scourging was done to inflict the greatest amount of suffering to the victim. The leather strips of the whip often had bits of rock or bone attached to tear into the flesh. In the end Jesus was both scourged and crucified to satisfy the Jewish leaders (John 19:1).

"for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast" - It was a custom established by the Romans to release a prisoner to the people during the feast of the Passover. We do not know when this custom was first introduced, but it was probably instituted to gain popularity among the Jews.

23:18-25 **"release to us Barabbas"** - Later Peter said to the people "you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life" (Acts 3:14-15).

"Crucify Him, crucify Him!" - Matthew's account explains, "But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus" (Matthew 27:20).

"So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested" - Pilate finally relented to the savage cries of the people even though he knew that Jesus was innocent.

E. The death on the cross (23:26-56)

23:26-31 **"Simon a Cyrenian"** - Cyrene was a major city located in northern Africa between Egypt and Carthage. There were many Jews who lived in Cyrene during this time. Simon may have been one of these who came to Jerusalem to observe the Passover (Acts 2:10; 6:9).

It cannot be proven, but some assume that Rufus who was the son of this Simon and brother of Alexander (Mark 15:21) must be linked to the Rufus mentioned by Paul in Romans 16:13. The theory is that Simon eventually became a Christian and that his sons Alexander and Rufus were prominent members of the church in Rome. This is only speculation, but nevertheless interesting to consider.

"weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming" - This seems to be a reference to the events to unfold during the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army which occurred in A.D. 70 (Matthew 24:15-21).

"if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry" - This was a common proverb used here by Jesus to convey the awfulness of the coming sufferings. The green wood (living tree) is symbolic of righteousness while the dry wood (dead tree) represents wickedness (Ezekiel 20:47). If an innocent man (Jesus) should suffer in such a fashion, what would become of the wicked?

23:32-34 **"and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left"** - They are simply mentioned here to set the scene, but their role will be further explained later in the text (Luke 23:39-43).

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." - Jesus was not using their ignorance as an excuse or to justify their evil actions. Nor is He granting them forgiveness without their repentance. The prayer of Jesus shows that He held no grudge against them in His heart. However, their forgiveness still required their faith, repentance and obedience as prescribed under the terms of the gospel (Acts 2:36-38).

This is the first of seven statements that Jesus made from the cross. We do not know for certain the order of the seven statements, but this is the first recorded by Luke. The seven statements by Jesus from the cross are as follows:

1. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34)
2. "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)
3. "Woman, behold your son!" "Behold your mother!" (John 19:26-27)

4. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)
5. "I thirst!" (John 19:28)
6. "It is finished!" (John 19:30)
7. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." (Luke 23:46)

23:35-38 **"He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ"** - Their words that "He saved others" was actually an unintended admission that the miracles of Jesus were real.

"offering Him sour wine" - It appears that either two or three times "sour wine" (vinegar) was offered to the Lord (Psalm 69:21; Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:23; Luke 23:36; John 19:29). It was a custom of the day to give sour wine mixed with frankincense and myrrh to dull the senses of the condemned. Jesus refused to take what was offered to Him to alleviate His suffering.

"THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS" - It was customary to write the crime of the condemned over his head on the cross. The inscription was written in the Greek, Latin and Hebrew languages so that all could read it.

23:39-43 **"this Man has done nothing wrong"** - One of the criminals understood the innocence of Jesus. This man had led a sinful life but it appears he knew something of the work and teachings of Jesus.

"today you will be with Me in Paradise" - Some have tried to use this example as proof that baptism is not needed for salvation today. However, it is important for us to note that the thief's salvation came under the old covenant. The circumstances for his salvation do not exist for us today (Hebrews 9:15-17). Jesus had the power to save the thief because He had authority while on the earth to forgive sins (Luke 5:17-26; 7:36-50).

Baptism is a vital part of God's plan to save man. There is "one baptism" commanded under the new covenant of Christ (Ephesians 4:5). The baptism for the remission of sins was commanded after Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) and is a baptism into His death (Romans 6:3-4). Obviously the thief could not be baptized into the death of Jesus when Jesus had not yet died. Clearly the thief was never subject to the baptism of the new covenant commanded by Christ and His apostles

(although he may have obeyed John's baptism - Luke 3:3). The thief in our passage is like other saved individuals such as Noah, Moses and David who were never baptized into the death of Jesus because they lived before the death of Jesus.

23:44-49 **"it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour"** - The custom of the Jews was to divide the daylight portion of the day into twelve hours. Christ asked His disciples, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" (John 11:9). The "sixth" hour would be our 12 noon and the "ninth" hour would be 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon. This darkness was prophesied in Joel 2:30-31 and was clearly miraculous.

"the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two" - This veil was used to separate the holy place from the most holy in the temple (Exodus 26:33). The tearing of the veil symbolized the end of the Old Law (Hebrews 10:19-22). This made it clear in a dramatic way that the services of the Levitical priesthood came to an end. This demonstrates in a dramatic way that God's Son, our high priest, has paid the atonement price for our sins with His own blood (Hebrews 9:12-14, 25-26).

"Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" - Jesus demonstrated His complete trust and submission to the Father with His final words on the cross (Psalm 31:5).

"He breathed His last" - Jesus died on the cross, but He would be raised from death the third day (Luke 9:22; 24:6). [For additional information concerning Jesus being raised the third day, please see the appendices - "DID JESUS RISE 'ON' OR 'AFTER' THE THIRD DAY?" (AP Article).]

"Certainly this was a righteous Man!" - From Matthew's account it is clear that this one centurion was not the only one making this statement.

Matthew 27:54 states, "So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'"

"beat their breasts and returned" - The incidents surrounding the crucifixion (darkness, earthquake, etc.) brought terror, alarm and distress to the hearts of the people.

"the women who followed Him from Galilee" - This group would include "Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons" (Matthew 27:56; Psalm 38:11).

23:50-56 **"Joseph"** - Joseph of Arimathaea was a prosperous and devout Israelite who was either on the council of the high priest or was a member of the Sanhedrin ("a council member"). Arimathaea was a city of Judea possibly the same as Ramah which was Samuel's birthplace, which is called Armathaim in the Septuagint (1 Samuel 1:1, 19); however many associate it with modern day Ramleh located on the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. Joseph is described in this passage as "a good and just man" who had "not consented to their decision" to crucify Jesus (verse 51).

"who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God" - Matthew's account tells us that Joseph had become a disciple of Jesus (Matthew 27:57).

"laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before" - Jesus was not buried in His own tomb, but in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea (Isaiah 53:9). The fact that it was a new tomb would remove any suspicion concerning the identity of Jesus when He rose from the dead. Since it was a new tomb no one would be able to claim that He rose from the dead because His body touched the bones of one of God's prophets, as happened to the buried body that touched the bones of Elisha (2 Kings 13:21).

"they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils" - The women returned to the city to make these preparations, but they did not return to the tomb until after the Sabbath. It was the custom to use spices and oils to anoint a dead body. Sometimes the prepared spices would also be spread around the floor of the tomb to give it a sweet fragrance.

X. Resurrection and Ascension

A. The empty tomb (24:1-12)

24:1-8 **"on the first day of the week"** - Jesus arose from the dead early on the first day of the week. The Sabbath had passed (Saturday), and now the "first day of the week" (Sunday) had arrived.

"certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices" - In Mark's account "Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome" are named (Mark 16:1) while Matthew notes "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary" (Matthew 28:1) as part of the group that came to the tomb of Jesus that morning. Luke mentions "Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women" (Luke 24:10).

Sometimes one gospel account will leave out information which is supplied by another. This does not show a discrepancy or error. One writer would simply be inspired to record or emphasize something not mentioned by another inspired writer. When we put all the inspired accounts together we have the full and complete record of events.

"two men stood by them in shining garments" - These men in dazzling apparel were angels in the form of men (Matthew 28:2).

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?" - This was there way of announcing that Jesus had risen from the grave and was now alive.

"He is not here, but is risen!" - The certainty of the resurrection is emphasized on many occasions in the New Testament (Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:2; 17:18; Romans 6:5; 1 Corinthians 15:1-42; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:18).

"they remembered His words" - Since Jesus had told them about His death and resurrection they should not have been surprised to find an empty tomb (Matthew 17:23; Luke 9:22; 18:33; John 11:25).

24:9-12 **"they did not believe them"** - The eleven apostles and the rest could not believe what they were being told. The number "eleven" leaves out Judas Iscariot who had "hanged himself" (Matthew 27:5).

"But Peter arose and ran to the tomb" - From John's account we learn that both Peter and John ran to the grave to see for themselves (John 20:3-10). John arrived first, but did not go into the tomb. He simply stooped to look inside to see if the sepulcher was indeed empty. Peter, went into the tomb and saw the "linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself" (John 20:6-7).

B. Appearance on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35)

24:13-27 **"two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus"** - The "two" would be Cleopas (verse 18) and another disciple. Some say the second disciple was Luke, while others claim this was Peter (Luke 24:34). However, the text says "they" rose up and returned to Jerusalem, and "found the eleven" (Luke 24:33), so it was probably not Peter. Neither is there any evidence that this disciple was Luke. There is no way for us to know for certain the identity of this second disciple, so it is pointless to speculate.

"their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him" - In Mark's account we read, "He appeared in another form to two of them." That Greek word for "form" is defined by *Thayer's Greek Definitions* as "the form by which a person or thing strikes the vision; the external appearance." Taking the two passages together we understand that Jesus was not literally changed but since "their eyes were restrained" it caused Jesus to look like some other person whom they did not know.

"the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him" - It is interesting to note that these disciples did not mention the role the people played in the crucifixion. However, it is clear the people as a whole did play a part (Acts 2:36).

"we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel" - These disciples thought that Jesus would redeem the Jews from their Roman oppressors. They did not understand that Jesus would be a spiritual redeemer for all people, not a national redeemer for the Jews. He brought the opportunity for the redemption of sins for all mankind.

"beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" - Jesus used the Messianic prophecies through time to clearly show these two that Jesus was the Messiah. However, they still did not realize at this point that they were talking to Jesus.

24:28-35 **"Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."** - They had learned a vast amount of important information and they were eager to spend more time with the one who had taught them. The kindness they were showing was a result of their compassion and appreciation for this stranger.

"He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight." - The power by which their eyes were "restrained" had now been removed and their eyes were opened and they knew Him. It appears that once they recognized Jesus "He vanished from their sight."

"Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" - *Thayer's Greek Definitions* defines the Greek word ΚΑΙΩ which is translated "burn" as "to set on fire, light, burning; to burn, consume with fire." Now they understood the feelings they had experienced on the road when the risen Lord had expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (2 Corinthians 3:14-16).

"The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" - We know the Lord appeared to Peter because Paul mentions the Lord's appearance to Simon (Cephas, Peter) in 1 Corinthians 15:5, but we are not given any details concerning when or how this occurred. This is one of the many appearances of Jesus after His resurrection. [Please see the appendices - "THE APPEARANCES OF JESUS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION" (Chart) for additional information.]

C. Jesus appears to the eleven (24:36-49)

24:36-43 **"Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.'"** - Jesus addressed them in the common manner of the Jews to dispel their fears, and to assure them that they should not be afraid.

"they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit" - The sudden and unexpected appearance of Jesus terrified the group. The only explanation in their minds was this must be the appearing of a spirit.

"for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have" - It would be good to note that Jesus pointed them to the evidence of His physical resurrection. True biblical faith is always based on evidence. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." in Hebrews 11:1 we find, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

"they still did not believe for joy" - They were so overjoyed by the possibility of His resurrection that they found it difficult to believe. Their skepticism is well expressed by the common saying, "too good to be true."

24:44-49 **"all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me"** - Jesus fulfilled every prophecy concerning the Messiah, including His death and resurrection (Acts 3:18; 13:29). [Please see the appendices - "OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST" for additional information.]

"He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures" - Jesus used the many Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament to clearly show that He was the Messiah. He had done the same thing for the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27).

"it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" - Jesus had told them this before, but they were still having difficulty understanding what had happened (Luke 18:31-34). It made no sense to their human reasoning that the Messiah would need to die. They failed to take into account the horrible significance of man's sin and the need for a perfect sacrifice.

"you are witnesses of these things" - Those who claim to be witnesses today are not truly witnesses.

The word "witnesses" is a translation of the Greek word MARTUS which is defined by *Thayer's Greek Definitions* as "one who is a spectator of anything" in a historical sense and one who has "proved the strength and genuineness of their faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death" in an ethical sense. It is further defined by *Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words* as, "one who has seen, heard or knows; to observe." Therefore, in the Bible the term "witness" is used in the sense of stating what one has actually seen or observed or has direct knowledge of.

People who are using this term "witness" today are not using this word correctly. We can teach and tell others about the events of Jesus' life, but we are not witnesses. It is not our testimony. When we proclaim the good news of the Gospel,

we are simply passing on to our listeners, the testimony of those who were actual witnesses.

We also do not need to share "testimonies" of what the Lord did in our lives. It's not about us! Let us teach the Gospel to others by using the examples of conversions we find in the New Testament. We should leave "witnessing" to those who lived and observed these things during the days of Christ.

"tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" - In the Old Testament we can find the many prophecies concerning the sending of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Isaiah 44:3; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:27; Joel 2:28-32). The apostles were to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them. The command for them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem was also repeated just before the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:4).

The Greek word ENDUŌ is translated as "endued" meaning to be "invested with" or "to put on clothing." In other words they would be clothed with power from God. They would be invested with something which they did not naturally possess.

D. Jesus ascends to heaven (24:50-53)

24:50-53 **"He led them out as far as Bethany"** - The town of Bethany was located two miles from Jerusalem. Some have said that this Bethany was not the town, but a region or tract of Mount Olivet, which was called Bethany.

"He was parted from them and carried up into heaven" - This is recorded in greater detail in Acts 1:9-11.

"And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen." - Since the temple was the headquarters of the Jewish religion it is not surprising that they spent their time their waiting for the coming of the power promised by Jesus (Acts 2:1-47).

FINIS

APPENDICES	133
351 OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST.....	134
FIVE BAPTISMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT	140
THE GENEALOGIES OF MATTHEW AND LUKE	141
GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST (CHART)	143
MODERN-DAY MIRACLES, TONGUE-SPEAKING, AND HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM	144
THE REVELATION OF THE SON OF MAN	171
DID JESUS RISE “ON” OR “AFTER” THE THIRD DAY?	176
ARE THERE DEGREES OF PUNISHMENT AND REWARD?	179
THE APPEARANCES OF JESUS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION	188

351 Old Testament Prophecies Fulfilled In Jesus Christ

Prophecy	Description	Fulfillment
1. Gen 3:15	Seed of a woman (virgin birth)	Gal 4:4-5; Matt 1:18
2. Gen 3:15	He will bruise Satan's head	Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8
3. Gen 5:24	The bodily ascension to heaven illustrated	Mark 16:19
4. Gen 9:26-27	The God of Shem will be the Son of Shem	Luke 3:36
5. Gen 12:3	Seed of Abraham will bless all nations	Gal 3:8; Acts 3:25-26
6. Gen 12:7	The Promise made to Abraham's Seed	Gal 3:16
7. Gen 14:18	A priest after the order of Melchizedek	Heb 6:20
8. Gen 14:18	King of Peace and Righteousness	Heb 7:2
9. Gen 14:18	The Last Supper foreshadowed	Matt 26:26-29
10. Gen 17:19	Seed of Isaac (Gen 21:12)	Rom 9:7
11. Gen 22:8	The Lamb of God promised	John 1:29
12. Gen 22:18	As Isaac's seed, will bless all nations	Gal 3:16
13. Gen 26:2-5	The Seed of Isaac promised as the Redeemer	Heb 11:18
14. Gen 28:12	The Bridge to heaven	John 1:51
15. Gen 28:14	The Seed of Jacob	Luke 3:34
16. Gen 49:10	The time of His coming	Luke 2:1-7; Gal 4:4
17. Gen 49:10	The Seed of Judah	Luke 3:33
18. Gen 49:10	Called Shiloh or One Sent	John 17:3
19. Gen 49:10	Messiah to come before Judah lost identity	John 11:47-52
20. Gen 49:10	Unto Him shall the obedience of the people be	John 10:16
21. Ex 3:13-15	The Great "I AM"	John 4:26; 8:58
22. Ex 12:5	A Lamb without blemish	Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:19
23. Ex 12:13	The blood of the Lamb saves from wrath	Rom 5:8
24. Ex 12:21-27	Christ is our Passover	1 Cor 5:7
25. Ex 12:46	Not a bone of the Lamb to be broken	John 19:31-36
26. Ex 15:2	His exaltation predicted as Yeshua	Acts 7:55-56
27. Ex 15:11	His Character-Holiness	Luke 1:35; Acts 4:27
28. Ex 17:6	The Spiritual Rock of Israel	1 Cor 10:4
29. Ex 33:19	His Character-Merciful	Luke 1:72
30. Lev 1:2-9	His sacrifice a sweet smelling savor unto God	Eph 5:2
31. Lev 14:11	The leper cleansed-Sign to priesthood	Luke 5:12-14; Acts 6:7
32. Lev 16:15-17	Prefigures Christ's once-for-all death	Heb 9:7-14
33. Lev 16:27	Suffering outside the Camp	Matt 27:33; Heb. 13:11-12
34. Lev 17:11	The Blood-the life of the flesh	Matt 26:28; Mark 10:45
35. Lev 17:11	It is the blood that makes atonement	Rom. 3:23-24; 1 John 1:7
36. Lev 23:36-37	The Drink-offering: "If any man thirst"	John 7:37
37. Num 9:12	Not a bone of Him broken	John 19:31-36
38. Num 21:9	The serpent on a pole-Christ lifted up	John 3:14-18; 12:32
39. Num 24:17	Time: "I shall see him, but not now."	John 1:14; Gal 4:4
40. Deut 18:15	"This is of a truth that prophet"	John 6:14
41. Deut 18:15-16	"Had you believed Moses, you would believe me."	John 5:45-47
42. Deut 18:18	Sent by the Father to speak His word	John 8:28-29
43. Deut 18:19	Whoever will not hear must bear his sin	Acts 3:22-23
44. Deut 21:23	Cursed is he that hangs on a tree	Gal 3:10-13
45. Joshua 5:14-15	The Captain of our salvation	Heb 2:10
46. Ruth 4:4-10	Christ, our kinsman, has redeemed us	Eph 1:3-7
47. 1 Sam 2:35	A Faithful Priest	Heb. 2:17; 3:1-3, 6; 7:24-25
48. 1 Sam 2:10	Shall be an anointed King to the Lord	Matt 28:18; John 12:15
49. 2 Sam 7:12	David's Seed	Matt 1:1
50. 2 Sam 7:13	His Kingdom is everlasting	2 Pet 1:11
51. 2 Sam 7:14a	The Son of God	Luke 1:32; Rom 1:3-4
52. 2 Sam 7:16	David's house established forever	Luke 3:31; Rev 22:16
53. 2 Ki 2:11	The bodily ascension to heaven illustrated	Luke 24:51
54. 1 Chr 17:11	David's Seed	Matt 1:1; 9:27
55. 1 Chr 17:12-13	To reign on David's throne forever	Luke 1:32-33
56. 1 Chr 17:13	"I will be His Father, He...my Son."	Heb 1:5
57. Job 9:32-33	Mediator between man and God	1 Tim 2:5
58. Job 19:23-27	The Resurrection predicted	John 5:24-29
59. Psa 2:1-3	The enmity of kings foreordained	Acts 4:25-28
60. Psa 2:2	To own the title, Anointed (Christ)	John 1:41; Acts 2:36

61. Psa 2:6	His Character-Holiness	John 8:46; Rev 3:7
62. Psa 2:6	To own the title King	Matt 2:2
63. Psa 2:7	Declared the Beloved Son	Matt 3:17; Rom 1:4
64. Psa 2:7-8	The Crucifixion and Resurrection intimated	Acts 13:29-33
65. Psa 2:8-9	Rule the nations with a rod of iron	Rev 2:27; 12:5; 19:15
66. Psa 2:12	Life comes through faith in Him	John 20:31
67. Psa 8:2	The mouths of babes perfect His praise	Matt 21:16
68. Psa 8:5-6	His humiliation and exaltation	Heb 2:5-9
69. Psa 9:7-10	Judge the world in righteousness	Acts 17:31
70. Psa 16:10	Was not to see corruption	Acts 2:31; 13:35
71. Psa 16:9-11	Was to arise from the dead	John 20:9
72. Psa 17:15	The resurrection predicted	Luke 24:6
73. Psa 18:2-3	The horn of salvation	Luke 1:69-71
74. Psa 22:1	Forsaken because of sins of others	2 Cor 5:21
75. Psa 22:1	"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?"	Matt 27:46
76. Psa 22:2	Darkness upon Calvary for three hours	Matt 27:45
77. Psa 22:7	They shoot out the lip and shake the head	Matt 27:39-44
78. Psa 22:8	"He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him"	Matt 27:43
79. Psa 22:9-10	Born the Savior	Luke 2:7
80. Psa 22:12-13	They seek His death	John 19:6
81. Psa 22:14	His blood poured out when they pierced His side	John 19:34
82. Psa 22:14-15	Suffered agony on Calvary	Mark 15:34-37
83. Psa 22:15	He thirsted	John 19:28
84. Psa 22:16	They pierced His hands and His feet	John 19:34-37; 20:27
85. Psa 22:17-18	Stripped Him before the stares of men	Luke 23:34-35
86. Psa 22:18	They parted His garments	John 19:23-24
87. Psa 22:20-21	He committed Himself to God	Luke 23:46
88. Psa 22:20-21	Satanic power bruising the Redeemer's heel	Heb 2:14
89. Psa 22:22	His Resurrection declared	John 20:17
90. Psa 22:27-28	He shall be the governor of the nations	Col 1:16
91. Psa 22:31	"It is finished"	John 19:30; Heb 10:10-12, 14, 18
92. Psa 23:1	"I am the Good Shepherd"	John 10:11; 1 Pet 2:25
93. Psa 24:3	His exaltation predicted	Acts 1:11; Phil 2:9
94. Psa 30:3	His resurrection predicted	Acts 2:32
95. Psa 31:5	"Into Your hands I commit my spirit"	Luke 23:46
96. Psa 31:11	His acquaintances fled from Him	Mark 14:50
97. Psa 31:13	They took counsel to put Him to death	Matt 27:1; John 11:53
98. Psa 31:14-15	"He trusted in God, let Him deliver him"	Matt 27:43
99. Psa 34:20	Not a bone of Him broken	John 19:31-36
100. Psa 35:11	False witnesses rose up against Him	Matt 26:59
101. Psa 35:19	He was hated without a cause	John 15:25
102. Psa 38:11	His friends stood afar off	Luke 23:49
103. Psa 38:12	Enemies try to entangle Him by craft	Mark 14:1; Matt 22:15
104. Psa 38:12-13	Silent before His accusers	Matt 27:12-14
105. Psa 38:20	He went about doing good	Acts 10:38
106. Psa 40:2-5	The joy of His resurrection predicted	John 20:20
107. Psa 40:6-8	His delight-the will of the Father	John 4:34; Heb 10:5-10
108. Psa 40:9	He was to preach the Righteousness in Israel	Matt 4:17
109. Psa 40:14	Confronted by adversaries in the Garden	John 18:4-6
110. Psa 41:9	Betrayed by a familiar friend	John 13:18
111. Psa 45:2	Words of Grace come from His lips	John 1:17; Luke 4:22
112. Psa 45:6	To own the title, God or Elohim	Heb 1:8
113. Psa 45:7	A special anointing by the Holy Spirit	Matt 3:16; Heb. 1:9
114. Psa 45:7-8	Called the Christ (Messiah or Anointed)	Luke 2:11
115. Psa 45:17	His name remembered forever	Eph 1:20-21; Heb. 1:8
116. Psa 55:12-14	Betrayed by a friend, not an enemy	John 13:18
117. Psa 55:15	Unrepentant death of the Betrayer	Matt 27:3-5; Acts 1:16-19
118. Psa 68:18	To give gifts to men	Eph 4:7-16
119. Psa 68:18	Ascended into Heaven	Luke 24:51
120. Psa 69:4	Hated without a cause	John 15:25
121. Psa 69:8	A stranger to own brethren	John 1:11; 7:5
122. Psa 69:9	Zealous for the Lord's House	John 2:17
123. Psa 69:14-20	Messiah's anguish of soul before crucifixion	Matt 26:36-45
124. Psa 69:20	"My soul is exceeding sorrowful"	Matt 26:38
125. Psa 69:21	Given vinegar in thirst	Matt 27:34

126. Psa 69:26	The Savior given and smitten by God	John 17:4; 18:11
127. Psa 72:10-11	Great persons were to visit Him	Matt 2:1-11
128. Psa 72:16	The corn of wheat to fall into the Ground	John 12:24-25
129. Psa 72:17	Belief on His name will produce offspring	John 1:12-13
130. Psa 72:17	All nations shall be blessed by Him	Gal 3:8
131. Psa 72:17	All nations shall call Him blessed	John 12:13; Rev 5:8-12
132. Psa 78:1-2	He would teach in parables	Matt 13:34-35
133. Psa 78:2b	To speak the Wisdom of God with authority	Matt 7:29
134. Psa 80:17	The Man of God's right hand	Mark 14:61-62
135. Psa 88	The Suffering and Reproach of Calvary	Matt 27:26-50
136. Psa 88:8	They stood afar off and watched	Luke 23:49
137. Psa 89:27	Firstborn	Col 1:15-18
138. Psa 89:27	Emmanuel to be higher than earthly kings	Luke 1:32-33
139. Psa 89:35-37	David's Seed, throne, kingdom endure forever	Luke 1:32-33
140. Psa 89:36-37	His character-Faithfulness	Rev 1:5; 19:11
141. Psa 90:2	He is from everlasting (Micah 5:2)	John 1:1
142. Psa 91:11-12	Identified as Messianic, used to tempt Christ	Luke 4:10-11
143. Psa 97:9	His exaltation predicted	Acts 1:11; Eph 1:20
144. Psa 100:5	His character-Goodness	Matt 19:16-17
145. Psa 102:1-11	The Suffering and Reproach of Calvary	John 19:16-30
146. Psa 102:25-27	Messiah is the Preexistent Son	Heb 1:10-12
147. Psa 109:25	Ridiculed	Matt 27:39
148. Psa 110:1	Son of David	Matt 22:42-43
149. Psa 110:1	To ascend to the right-hand of the Father	Mark 16:19
150. Psa 110:1	David's son called Lord	Matt 22:44-45
151. Psa 110:4	A priest after Melchizedek's order	Heb 6:20
152. Psa 112:4	His character-Compassionate, Gracious, et al	Matt 9:36
153. Psa 118:17-18	Messiah's Resurrection assured	Luke 24:5-7; 1 Cor 15:20
154. Psa 118:22-23	The rejected stone is Head of the corner	Matt 21:42-43
155. Psa 118:26a	The Blessed One presented to Israel	Matt 21:9
156. Psa 118:26b	To come while Temple standing	Matt 21:12-15
157. Psa 132:11	The Seed of David (the fruit of His Body)	Luke 1:32; Act 2:30
158. Psa 129:3	He was scourged	Matt 27:26
159. Psa 138:1-6	The supremacy of David's Seed amazes kings	Matt 2:2-6
160. Psa 147:3-6	The earthly ministry of Christ described	Luke 4:18
161. Prov 1:23	He will send the Spirit of God	John 16:7
162. Prov 8:23	Foreordained from everlasting	Rev 13:8; 1 Pet 1:19-20
163. Song 5:16	The altogether lovely One	John 1:17
164. Isa 2:3	He shall teach all nations	John 4:25
165. Isa 2:4	He shall judge among the nations	John 5:22
166. Isa 6:1	When Isaiah saw His glory	John 12:40-41
167. Isa 6:8	The One Sent by God	John 12:38-45
168. Isa 6:9-10	Parables fall on deaf ears	Matt 13:13-15
169. Isa 6:9-12	Blinded to Christ and deaf to His words	Acts 28:23-29
170. Isa 7:14	To be born of a virgin	Luke 1:35
171. Isa 7:14	To be Emmanuel-God with us	Matt 1:18-23; 1 Tim 3:16
172. Isa 8:8	Called Emmanuel	Matt 28:20
173. Isa 8:14	A stone of stumbling, a Rock of offense	1 Pet 2:8
174. Isa 9:1-2	His ministry to begin in Galilee	Matt 4:12-17
175. Isa 9:6	A child born-Humanity	Luke 1:31
176. Isa 9:6	A Son given-Deity	Luke 1:32; John 1:14; 1 Tim 3:16
177. Isa 9:6	Declared to be the Son of God with power	Rom 1:3-4
178. Isa 9:6	The Wonderful One, Peleh	Luke 4:22
179. Isa 9:6	The Counselor, Yaatz	Matt 13:54
180. Isa 9:6	The Mighty God, El Gibor	1 Cor 1:24; Titus 2:3
181. Isa 9:6	The Everlasting Father, Avi Adth	John 8:58; 10:30
182. Isa 9:6	The Prince of Peace, Sar Shalom	John 16:33
183. Isa 9:7	To establish an everlasting kingdom	Luke 1:32-33
184. Isa 9:7	His Character-Just	John 5:30
185. Isa 9:7	No end to his Government, Throne, and Peace	Luke 1:32-33
186. Isa 11:1	Called a Nazarene-the Branch, Netzer	Matt 2:23
187. Isa 11:1	A rod out of Jesse-Son of Jesse	Luke 3:23-32
188. Isa 11:2	Anointed One by the Spirit	Matt 3:16-17; Acts 10:38
189. Isa 11:2	His Character-Wisdom, Knowledge, et al	Col 2:3
190. Isa 11:3	He would know their thoughts	Luke 6:8; John 2:25

191. Isa 11:4	Judge in righteousness	Acts 17:31
192. Isa 11:4	Judges with the sword of His mouth	Rev 2:16; 19:11, 15
193. Isa 11:5	Character: Righteous & Faithful	Rev 19:11
194. Isa 11:10	The Gentiles seek Him	John 12:18-21
195. Isa 12:2	Called Jesus-Yeshua	Matt 1:21
196. Isa 22:22	The One given all authority to govern	Rev 3:7
197. Isa 25:8	The Resurrection predicted	1 Cor 15:54
198. Isa 26:19	His power of Resurrection predicted	Matt 27:50-54
199. Isa 28:16	The Messiah is the precious corner stone	Acts 4:11-12
200. Isa 28:16	The Sure Foundation	1 Cor 3:11; Matt 16:18
201. Isa 29:13	He indicated hypocritical obedience to His Word	Matt 15:7-9
202. Isa 29:14	The wise are confounded by the Word	1 Cor 1:18-31
203. Isa 32:2	A Refuge-A man shall be a hiding place	Matt 23:37
204. Isa 35:4	He will come and save you	Matt 1:21
205. Isa 35:5-6	To have a ministry of miracles	Matt 11:2-6
206. Isa 40:3-4	Preceded by forerunner	John 1:23
207. Isa 40:9	"Behold your God"	John 1:36; 19:14
208. Isa 40:10	He will come to reward	Rev 22:12
209. Isa 40:11	A shepherd-compassionate life-giver	John 10:10-18
210. Isa 42:1-4	The Servant-as a faithful, patient redeemer	Matt 12:18-21
211. Isa 42:2	Meek and lowly	Matt 11:28-30
212. Isa 42:3	He brings hope for the hopeless	John 4
213. Isa 42:4	The nations shall wait on His teachings	John 12:20-26
214. Isa 42:6	The Light (salvation) of the Gentiles	Luke 2:32
215. Isa 42:1-6	His is a worldwide compassion	Matt 28:19-20
216. Isa 42:7	Blind eyes opened	John 9:25-38
217. Isa 43:11	He is the only Savior	Acts 4:12
218. Isa 44:3	He will send the Spirit of God	John 16:7-13
219. Isa 45:21-25	He is Lord and Savior	Phil 3:20; Titus 2:13
220. Isa 45:23	He will be the Judge	John 5:22; Rom 14:11
221. Isa 46:9-10	Declares things not yet done	John 13:19
222. Isa 48:12	The First and the Last	John 1:30; Rev 1:8, 17
223. Isa 48:16-17	He came as a Teacher	John 3:2
224. Isa 49:1	Called from the womb-His humanity	Matt 1:18
225. Isa 49:5	A Servant from the womb	Luke 1:31; Phil 2:7
226. Isa 49:6	He will restore Israel	Acts 3:19-21; 15:16-17
227. Isa 49:6	He is Salvation for Israel	Luke 2:29-32
228. Isa 49:6	He is the Light of the Gentiles	John 8:12; Acts 13:47
229. Isa 49:6	He is Salvation unto the ends of the earth	Acts 15:7-18
230. Isa 49:7	He is despised of the Nation	John 1:11; 8:48-49; 19:14-15
231. Isa 50:3	Heaven is clothed in black at His humiliation	Luke 23:44-45
232. Isa 50:4	He is a learned counselor for the weary	Matt 7:29; 11:28-29
233. Isa 50:5	The Servant bound willingly to obedience	Matt 26:39
234. Isa 50:6a	"I gave my back to those who struck Me"	Matt 27:26
235. Isa 50:6b	He was smitten on the cheeks	Matt 26:67
236. Isa 50:6c	He was spat upon	Matt 27:30
237. Isa 52:7	Published good tidings upon mountains	Matt 5:12; 15:29; 28:16
238. Isa 52:13	The Servant exalted	Acts 1:8-11; Eph 1:19-22; Phil 2:5-9
239. Isa 52:14	The Servant shockingly abused	Luke 18:31-34; Matt 26:67-68
240. Isa 52:15	Nations startled by message of the Servant	Luke 18:31-34; Matt 26:67-68
241. Isa 52:15	His blood shed sprinkles nations	Heb 9:13-14; Rev 1:5
242. Isa 53:1	His people would not believe Him	John 12:37-38
243. Isa 53:2	Appearance of an ordinary man	Phil 2:6-8
244. Isa 53:3a	Despised	Luke 4:28-29
245. Isa 53:3b	Rejected	Matt 27:21-23
246. Isa 53:3c	Great sorrow and grief	Matt 26:37-38; Luke 19:41; Heb 4:15
247. Isa 53:3d	Men hide from being associated with Him	Mark 14:50-52
248. Isa 53:4a	He would have a healing ministry	Matt 8:16-17
249. Isa 53:4b	Thought to be cursed by God	Matt 26:66; 27:41-43
250. Isa 53:5a	Bears penalty for mankind's iniquities	2 Cor 5:21; Heb 2:9
251. Isa 53:5b	His sacrifice provides peace between man and God	Col 1:20
252. Isa 53:5c	His sacrifice would heal man of sin	1 Pet 2:24
253. Isa 53:6a	He would be the sin-bearer for all mankind	1 John 2:2; 4:10
254. Isa 53:6b	God's will that He bear sin for all mankind	Gal 1:4
255. Isa 53:7a	Oppressed and afflicted	Matt 27:27-31

256. Isa 53:7b	Silent before his accusers	Matt 27:12-14
257. Isa 53:7c	Sacrificial lamb	John 1:29; 1 Pet 1:18-19
258. Isa 53:8a	Confined and persecuted	Matt 26:47-27:31
259. Isa 53:8b	He would be judged	John 18:13-22
260. Isa 53:8c	Killed	Matt 27:35
261. Isa 53:8d	Dies for the sins of the world	1 John 2:2
262. Isa 53:9a	Buried in a rich man's grave	Matt 27:57
263. Isa 53:9b	Innocent and had done no violence	Luke 23:41; John 18:38
264. Isa 53:9c	No deceit in his mouth	1 Pet 2:22
265. Isa 53:10a	God's will that He die for mankind	John 18:11
266. Isa 53:10b	An offering for sin	Matt 20:28; Gal 3:13
267. Isa 53:10c	Resurrected and live forever	Rom 6:9
268. Isa 53:10d	He would prosper	John 17:1-5
269. Isa 53:11a	God fully satisfied with His suffering	John 12:27
270. Isa 53:11b	God's servant would justify man	Rom 5:8-9, 18-19
271. Isa 53:11c	The sin-bearer for all mankind	Heb 9:28
272. Isa 53:12a	Exalted by God because of his sacrifice	Matt 28:18
273. Isa 53:12b	He would give up his life to save mankind	Luke 23:46
274. Isa 53:12c	Numbered with the transgressors	Mark 15:27-28
275. Isa 53:12d	Sin-bearer for all mankind	1 Pet 2:24
276. Isa 53:12e	Intercede to God in behalf of mankind	Luke 23:34; Rom 8:34
277. Isa 55:3	Resurrected by God	Acts 13:34
278. Isa 55:4a	A witness	John 18:37
279. Isa 55:4b	He is a leader and commander	Heb 2:10
280. Isa 55:5	God would glorify Him	Acts 3:13
281. Isa 59:16a	Intercessor between man and God	Matt 10:32
282. Isa 59:16b	He would come to provide salvation	John 6:40
283. Isa 59:20	He would come to Zion as their Redeemer	Luke 2:38
284. Isa 60:1-3	He would show light to the Gentiles	Acts 26:23
285. Isa 61:1a	The Spirit of God upon him	Matt 3:16-17
286. Isa 61:1b	The Messiah would preach the good news	Luke 4:16-21
287. Isa 61:1c	Provide freedom from the bondage of sin	John 8:31-36
288. Isa 61:1-2a	Proclaim a period of grace	Gal 4:4-5
289. Jer 23:5-6	Descendant of David	Luke 3:23-31
290. Jer 23:5-6	The Messiah would be both God and Man	John 13:13; 1 Tim 3:16
291. Jer 31:22	Born of a virgin	Matt 1:18-20
292. Jer 31:31	The Messiah would be the new covenant	Matt 26:28
293. Jer 33:14-15	Descendant of David	Luke 3:23-31
294. Ezek 34:23-24	Descendant of David	Matt 1:1
295. Ezek 37:24-25	Descendant of David	Luke 1:31-33
296. Dan 2:44-45	The Stone that shall break the kingdoms	Matt 21:44
297. Dan 7:13-14a	He would ascend into heaven	Acts 1:9-11
298. Dan 7:13-14b	Highly exalted	Eph 1:20-22
299. Dan 7:13-14c	His dominion would be everlasting	Luke 1:31-33
300. Dan 9:24a	To make an end to sins	Gal 1:3-5
301. Dan 9:24a	To make reconciliation for iniquity	Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18-21
302. Dan 9:24b	He would be holy	Luke 1:35
303. Dan 9:25	His announcement	John 12:12-13
304. Dan 9:26a	Cut off	Matt 16:21; 21:38-39
305. Dan 9:26b	Die for the sins of the world	Heb 2:9
306. Dan 9:26c	Killed before the destruction of the temple	Matt 27:50-51
307. Dan 10:5-6	Messiah in a glorified state	Rev 1:13-16
308. Hos 11:1	He would be called out of Egypt	Matt 2:15
309. Hos 13:14	He would defeat death	1 Cor 15:55-57
310. Joel 2:32	Offer salvation to all mankind	Rom 10:9-13
311. Jonah 1:17	Death and resurrection of Christ	Matt 12:40; 16:4
312. Mic 5:2a	Born in Bethlehem	Matt 2:1-6
313. Mic 5:2b	Ruler in Israel	Luke 1:33
314. Mic 5:2c	From everlasting	John 8:58
315. Hag 2:6-9	He would visit the second Temple	Luke 2:27-32
316. Hag 2:23	Descendant of Zerubbabel	Luke 2:27-32
317. Zech 3:8	God's servant	John 17:4
318. Zech 6:12-13	Priest and King	Heb 8:1
319. Zech 9:9a	Greeted with rejoicing in Jerusalem	Matt 21:8-10
320. Zech 9:9b	Beheld as King	John 12:12-13

321. Zech 9:9c	The Messiah would be just	John 5:30
322. Zech 9:9d	The Messiah would bring salvation	Luke 19:10
323. Zech 9:9e	The Messiah would be humble	Matt 11:29
324. Zech 9:9f	Presented to Jerusalem riding on a donkey	Matt 21:6-9
325. Zech 10:4	The cornerstone	Eph 2:20
326. Zech 11:4-6a	At His coming, Israel to have unfit leaders	Matt 23:1-4
327. Zech 11:4-6b	Rejection causes God to remove His protection	Luke 19:41-44
328. Zech 11:4-6c	Rejected in favor of another king	John 19:13-15
329. Zech 11:7	Ministry to "poor," the believing remnant	Matt 9:35-36
330. Zech 11:8a	Unbelief forces Messiah to reject them	Matt 23:33
331. Zech 11:8b	Despised	Matt 27:20
332. Zech 11:9	Stops ministering to those who rejected Him	Matt 13:10-11
333. Zech 11:10-11a	Rejection causes God to remove protection	Luke 19:41-44
334. Zech 11:10-11b	The Messiah would be God	John 14:7
335. Zech 11:12-13a	Betrayed for thirty pieces of silver	Matt 26:14-15
336. Zech 11:12-13b	Rejected	Matt 26:14-15
337. Zech 11:12-13c	Thirty pieces of silver cast in the house of the Lord	Matt 27:3-5
338. Zech 11:12-13d	The Messiah would be God	John 12:45
339. Zech 12:10a	The Messiah's body would be pierced	John 19:34-37
340. Zech 12:10b	The Messiah would be both God and man	John 10:30
341. Zech 12:10c	The Messiah would be rejected	John 1:11
342. Zech 13:7a	God's will He die for mankind	John 18:11
343. Zech 13:7b	A violent death	Mark 14:27
344. Zech 13:7c	Both God and man	John 14:9
345. Zech 13:7d	Israel scattered as a result of rejecting Him	Matt 26:31-56
346. Zech 14:4	He would return to the Mt. of Olives	Acts 1:11-12
347. Mal 3:1a	Messenger to prepare the way for Messiah	Mark 1:1-8
348. Mal 3:1b	Sudden appearance at the temple	Mark 11:15-16
349. Mal 3:1c	Messenger of the new covenant	Luke 4:43
350. Mal 4:5	Forerunner in spirit of Elijah	Matt 3:1-3; 11:10-14; 17:11-13
351. Mal 4:6	Forerunner would turn many to righteousness	Luke 1:16-17

<https://www.newtestamentchristians.com/bible-study-resources/351-old-testament-prophecies-fulfilled-in-jesus-christ/>

Five Baptisms of the New Testament

	NATURE	PURPOSE	BY	SUBJECTS	ELEMENT	ACT	DURATION
JOHN'S	Commandment Lk 7:29-30	To Prepare for the Messiah Jn 1:31; Lk 3:3-6; Acts 19:4	John Mk 1:5	Penitent Jews Mk 1:4-5	Water Jn 1:26	Immersion Mk 1:10; Jn 3:23	Ceased before Cross Acts 19:3-5
SUFFERING	Experience Mk 10:38-39	1. To Bring Salvation 1 Pet 2:24; 2 Cor 1:5-6 2. Resulting Glory Heb 12:2; 2 Tim 2:12	Wicked Men Acts 2:23 2 Thess 3:1-2	1. Jesus Mk 10:38 2. His Followers Mk 10:39	Suffering Mk 10:39	Overwhelming Mt 27:46, 50	1. On the Cross Mt 27:50 2. Till Jesus Returns 2 Tim 3:12
HOLY SPIRIT	Promise Acts 1:4-5	1. To Empower for Special Work Acts 1:8; Jn 16:13; Jn 14:26; 2 Cor 12:12 2. To Prove God's Acceptance of Gentiles Acts 11:15-18	Christ Mt 3:11	1. Apostles Acts 2:1-4 2. Cornelius' household Acts 11:15-16	Holy Spirit Mt 3:11	Overpowering Mt 10:19-20 Acts 2:4	Occurred but Twice Acts 2,10 Each a Special Case
FIRE	Warning Mt 3:11-12	Punishment Mt 25:45-46	Christ Mt 3:11	Wicked Mt 3:10; 2 Thess 1:7-8	Fire Mt 3:11	Overwhelming Rev 20:15	Everlasting Mt 25:41
GREAT COMMISSION	Commandment Mt 28:19; Acts 2:38	Forgiveness Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 3:21	Disciples Mt 28:19	Penitent Believers Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38	Water Acts 8:36-39	Immersion Rom 6:3-5	Till end Mt 28:19-20

The Genealogies of Matthew and Luke

by Dave Miller, Ph.D.

One of the charges of contradiction brought by skeptics against the Bible is the surface appearance of contradiction between Matthew's genealogical list (1:1-17) and the one provided by Luke (3:23-38). As is always the case, the charge of contradiction is premature and reflects an immature appraisal of the extant evidence. In every case of alleged contradiction, further investigation has yielded additional evidence that exonerates the Bible and further verifies its inerrancy. The alleged discrepancies pertaining to Matthew and Luke's genealogies were explained and answered long ago (e.g., Haley, 1977, pp. 325-326; McGarvey, 1910, pp. 344-346; McGarvey, 1974, pp. 51-55; cf. Lyons, 2003).

When one places the two genealogical lists side by side, several factors become immediately apparent that combine to dispel the appearance of conflict.

First, Matthew reported the lineage of Christ only back to Abraham; Luke traced it all the way back to Adam. Second, Matthew used the expression "begat;" Luke used the expression "son of," which results in his list being a complete reversal of Matthew's. Third, the two genealogical lines parallel each other from Abraham to David. Fourth, beginning with David, Matthew traced the **paternal** line of descent through Solomon; Luke traced the **maternal** line through Solomon's brother, Nathan.

A fifth factor that must be recognized is that the two lines (paternal and maternal) link together in the intermarriage of Shealtiel and Zerubbabel. But the linkage separates again in the two sons of Zerubbabel—Rhesa and Abiud. Sixth, the two lines come together once again for a final time in the marriage of Joseph and Mary. Joseph was the end of the **paternal** line, while Mary was the last of the **maternal** line as the daughter of Heli.

The reason Joseph is said to be the "son" of Heli (Mary's father) brings forth a seventh consideration: the Jewish use of "son." Hebrews used the word in at least five distinct senses: (1) in the sense used today of a one-generation offspring; (2) in the sense of a descendant, whether a grandson or a more remote descendant many generations previous, e.g., Matthew 1:1; 21:9; 22:42 ("begat" had this same flexibility in application); (3) as a son-in-law (the Jews had no word to express this concept and so just used "son"—e.g., 1 Samuel 24:16; 26:17); (4) in accordance with the Levirate marriage law (Deuteronomy 25:5-10; cf. Matthew 22:24-26), a deceased man would have a son through a surrogate father who legally married the deceased man's widow (e.g., Ruth 2:20; 3:9,12; 4:3-5); and (5) in the sense of a step-son who took on the legal status of his step-father—the relationship sustained by Jesus to Joseph (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Luke 3:23; 4:22; John 6:42).

Notice carefully that Joseph was a direct-line, blood descendant of David and, therefore, of David's throne. Here is the precise purpose of Matthew's genealogy: it demonstrated

Jesus' **legal** right to inherit the throne of David—a necessary prerequisite to authenticating His Messianic claim. However, an equally critical credential was His **blood**/physical descent from David—a point that could not be established through Joseph since “after His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child **of the Holy Spirit**” (Matthew 1:18, emp. added). This feature of Christ's Messiahship was established through His mother Mary, who was also a blood descendant of David (Luke 1:30-32). Both the blood of David and the throne of David were necessary variables to qualify and authenticate Jesus as the Messiah.

Once again, the Bible's intricate complexities shine forth to dispel the critic's accusations, while simultaneously demonstrating its own infallible representations. The more one delves into its intricacies and plummets its intriguing depths, the more one is driven to the inescapable conclusion that the Bible is, indeed, the Book of books—the inspired Word of God.

REFERENCES

Haley, John W. (1977), *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker).

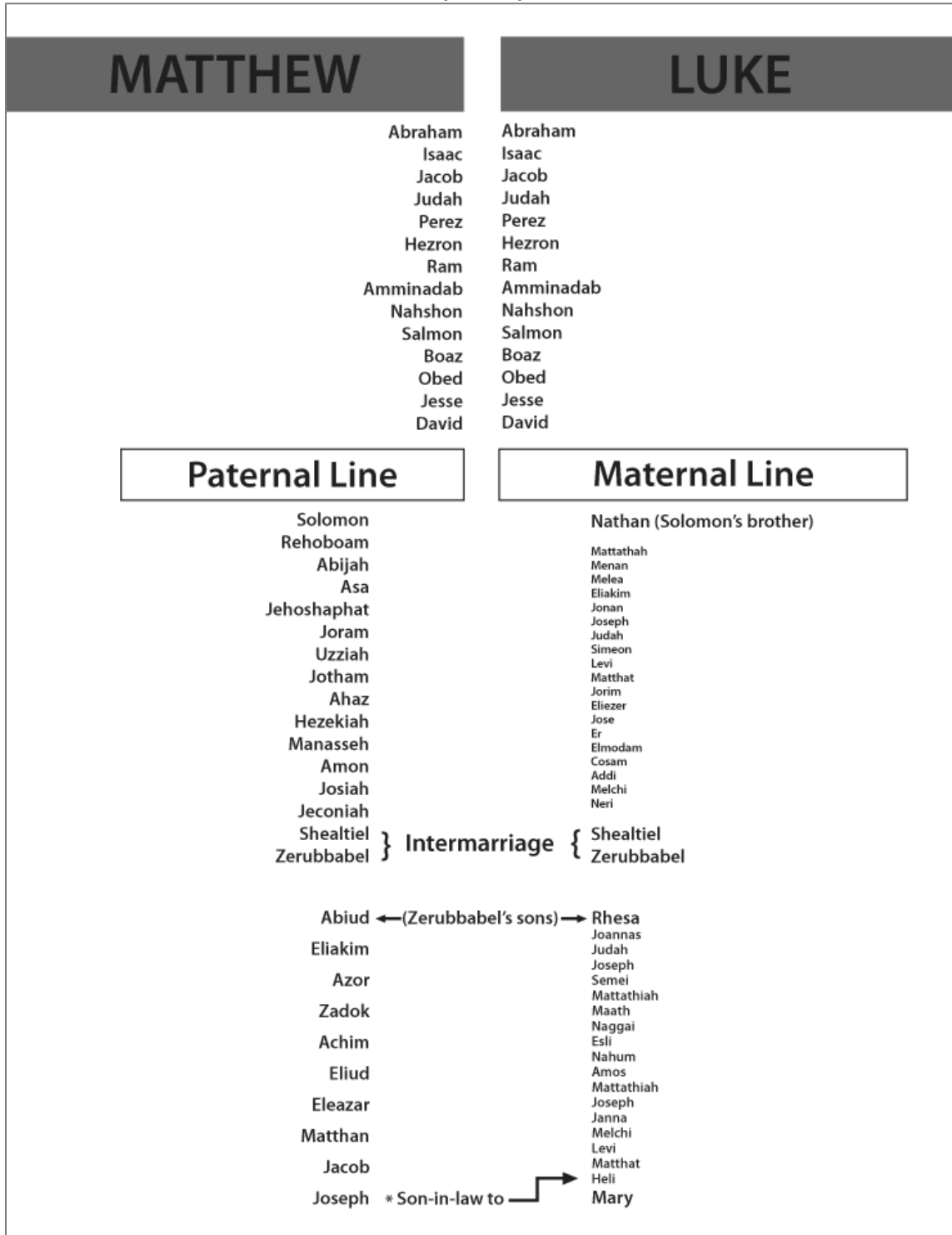
Lyons, Eric (2003), *The Anvil Rings* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

McGarvey, J.W. (1910), *Biblical Criticism* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard).

McGarvey, J.W. (1974 reprint), *Evidences of Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate).

<http://apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=13&article=932&topic=100>

Genealogy of Jesus Christ (Chart)



<http://apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=13&article=932&topic=100>

MODERN-DAY MIRACLES, TONGUE-SPEAKING, AND HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM: A REFUTATION--EXTENDED VERSION

by Dave Miller, Ph.D.

Numerous religious groups commonly claim the assistance of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Famed religious television personalities boldly announce the active influence of the Holy Spirit even as they speak. Supposedly, the Holy Spirit talks to them personally, heals viewers instantaneously, and enables them to babble uncontrollably in an “unknown tongue.” All of this is claimed to be “proof positive” of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Do miracles still happen? Can people speak in tongues today? Does God, in the 21st century, supernaturally countermand the laws of nature and heal people miraculously?

“Come now, and let us reason together.” (Isaiah 1:18). It is absolutely imperative that we examine **Scripture**—not our feelings, not what someone else says happened to them, and not our own experience. The only sure and certain approach is to ask: What does the Bible teach? The reader must ask: “Do I honestly believe the Bible to be the Word of God?” Answers to critical questions of human existence require that a person be willing to spend time in the Word, “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). One must “search the scriptures” (Acts 17:11). One must be honest and willing to go where the evidence takes him. If you had to choose between what you genuinely think you have experienced or seen firsthand and what the Bible actually says, which would you choose? You must ask yourself: “Will I honestly accept God’s written Word on the matter of miracles?” If you will, I invite you to join me in an examination of what the Bible teaches pertaining to miracles.

THE DEFINITION OF MIRACLES

First of all, what exactly is a “miracle”? How does the Bible use the word? The three central terms used in the Bible to designate a supernatural (as contrasted with a natural) manifestation are: (1) “miracle” (*dunamis*); (2) “sign” (*semeion*); and (3) “wonder” (*teras*). All three terms occur together in Acts 2:22, Hebrews 2:4, and 2 Corinthians 12:12. Related terms include “work” (*ergon*) and “mighty deed” (*kratos*). The occurrence of a miracle in the Bible meant that God worked **outside** the laws of nature. W.E. Vine, whose Greek scholarship, according to F.F. Bruce, was “wide, accurate and up-to-date” (Vine, 1952, Foreword), stated that “miracle” (*dunamis*) is used in the New Testament of “works of a **supernatural** origin and character, such as could not be produced by **natural** agents and means” (1952, p. 75, emp. added). Otfried Hofius noted that a “sign” (*semeion*) “contradicts the **natural** course of things” (1976, 2:626, emp. added) and, similarly, “wonder” (*teras*) referred to events that “contradict the ordered unity of nature” (2:633, emp. added). Thus a miracle in the Bible was not merely an event that was astonishing, incredible, extraordinary, or unusual—like the the birth of a baby, or a flower, or the narrow avoidance of an accident. A miracle in the Bible was a **supernatural** act. It was an event that was contrary to the usual course of

nature (Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 755). The miraculous is not to be confused with the **providential**, where God operates **within** the usual course of nature.

THE DESIGN OF MIRACLES

Second, it is absolutely imperative that one recognizes the **purpose** of the miraculous. Miracles in the New Testament served the singular function of **confirmation**. When an inspired speaker stepped forward to declare God's Word, God **validated** or **endorsed** the speaker's remarks by empowering the speaker to perform a miracle. Many New Testament passages articulate this fact quite plainly. For example, the apostles "went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and **confirming** the word by the **signs** that followed" (Mark 16:20, emp. added). The Hebrews writer asked: "[H]ow shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be **spoken** by the Lord, and was **confirmed** to us by those who heard, God also **bearing witness** both with **signs and wonders**, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Hebrews 2:3-4). Referring to the initial proclamation of the Gospel to the Samaritans, Luke stated: "And the multitudes with one accord heeded **the things spoken** by Philip, hearing and seeing the **miracles** which he did" (Acts 8:6). The apostles prayed to God: "[G]rant to Your servants that with all boldness they may **speak Your word**, by stretching out Your hand to **heal**, and that **signs and wonders** may be done" (Acts 4:29-30).

These passages, and many others (e.g., Acts 13:12; 14:3; 15:12; Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; cf. Exodus 4:30), show that the purpose of miracles was to **authenticate** the oral/spoken word as God's Word. Miracles **legitimized** and **verified** the teaching of God's messengers, as over against the many false teachers (like Simon in Acts 8:9, or Pharaoh's magicians in Exodus 7:11) who attempted to mislead the people. In the late 19th century, Greek lexicographer Joseph Thayer worded this point well when he noted that "sign" (semeion) was used in the New Testament "of miracles and wonders by which God authenticates the men sent by him, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's" (1901, p. 573). Even the miracles that Jesus performed were designed to back up His claim (i.e., spoken words) to be deity. Consider two examples: (1) Using the parallel term "works" (a key word in the book of John), Jesus remarked to Philip, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the **words** that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his **works**. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very **works'** sake" (John 14:10-11, emp. added); (2) Nicodemus said to Jesus: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these **signs** that thou doest except God be with him" (John 3:2, emp. added). This pattern is repeated in the New Testament many times over (e.g., John 2:23; 5:36; 6:14; 7:31; 10:37-38,41-42; 20:30-31; Acts 2:22). In other words, Jesus performed signs and miracles to prove His divine identity and thereby authenticate His message. His message, in turn, generated faith in those who chose to believe His teachings (cf. Romans 10:17). Here is the consistent sequence presented in Scripture:

Signs → Word → Faith

(1) Signs confirmed the Word; (2) the Word was presented to hearers; and (3) faith was created (by the Word) in those who received it.

An excellent demonstration of this process is provided by Luke in his report of the conversion of the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus. Elymas the sorcerer attempted to thwart Paul's effort to teach Sergius the Gospel. So Paul performed a miracle by striking Elymas blind. Luke next recorded: "Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the **teaching** of the Lord" (Acts 13:12, emp. added). One might well expect the text to have said that Sergius was astonished at the **miracle** that Paul performed. But Luke was careful to report the situation with precision. The miracle that Paul performed captured Sergius' attention, causing him to recognize the divine origin of Paul's Gospel message. The Gospel message, in turn, generated faith in the proconsul—in harmony with Paul's later affirmation to Christians in Rome that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Over and over again in the New Testament, a close correlation is seen between the performance of miracles and the preaching of the Word of God (cf. Mark 6:12-13; Luke 9:2,6).

MIRACLES CONFIRM THE WORD			
PASSAGE	MESSAGE	CONFIRMATION	RESPONSE
Acts 4:29-32	"Speak Your Word with all boldness"	"by stretching out Your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done"	"those who believed were of one heart and soul"
Acts 8:5-12	"the things spoken by Philip;" "Philip...preached Christ"	"hearing and seeing the miracles which he did"	"they believed Philip as he preached the things...and were baptized"
Acts 13:7-12	"sought to hear the word of God"	"You shall be blind, not seeing"	"the proconsul believed...being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord"
Acts 14:2-3	"speaking boldly in the Lord"	"The Lord...was bearing witness to the word...granting signs/wonders to be done"	"a great multitude...believed"
Romans 15:18-19	"I have fully preached the gospel of Christ"	"in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God"	"to make the Gentiles obedient"

1 Corinthians 2:4-5	“my speech and my preaching”	“in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”	“that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God”
1 Thessalonians 1:5-6	“our gospel did not come to you in word only”	“but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance”	“you became followers of us and the Lord, having received the word”
Hebrews 2:1-4	“so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord”	“God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit”	“give the more earnest heed”
Mark 16:15-20	“preach the gospel...they went out and preached...the word”	“the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs”	“he who believes and is baptized will be saved”
John 2:22	“He had said this...the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said”	“when he had risen from the dead”	“they believed”
John 2:23	“in His name”	“they saw the signs which He did”	“many believed”

Other Purposes: Super-Spiritual?

But some maintain that there are other reasons for divine healing and tongue-speaking. Some say tongue-speaking is a sign that the tongue-speaker is super-spiritual. Others say miraculous healing serves the purpose of making the believer well—a mere act of mercy to relieve his pain and suffering. They say God does not want us to suffer, and so He will heal us just to ease our pain in this life because we are His children.

Regarding the first claim, in Paul’s admonitions directed to the church of Christ at Corinth, he insisted that the person who possessed the ability to speak in tongues was not spiritually superior to the one who had no such ability. The tongue-speaker had a responsibility to utilize his gift appropriately, i.e., to help others (1 Corinthians 14:6,9,12,19). His gift no more placed him in a spiritually superior position than did any other gift possessed by any other member—whether the ability was miraculous or non-miraculous (1 Corinthians 12:11-27). Tongue-speaking was simply one miraculous capability among many bestowed by God without regard to a member’s spiritual status, let alone his spiritual **superiority** over another member (1 Corinthians 12:7-11,28-30).

Other Purposes: To Make Well?

Regarding the second claim, certainly, the compassion of God was evident when people received miraculous healing in New Testament times. And, surely, relief from suffering would have been a side effect of being healed. But the Bible teaches that **relieving suffering was not the purpose of miracles**. Such a purpose would contradict—even thwart—the divine intent of this created Earth as a place where hardship exists to prepare us for eternity (see Warren, 1972). Death and sin entered the world due to human choice, and God allows the circumstances caused by human decisions to take their course. God is not going to interfere with the natural order of things to show partiality to some over others. The Christian is subject to the same diseases, the same tragedies, and the same physical death that befall non-Christians: “for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19). The Bible, in fact, warns Christians that they can **expect** to be the recipients of all sorts of hardship, opposition, temptation, and suffering (e.g., 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-17). Commenting on the purpose of miracles, J.W. McGarvey wrote: “[T]o say that they were wrought for the single purpose of showing divine compassion toward the sick, and those oppressed by the devil, would be to ignore a purpose which is easily discerned, which is openly avowed by Christ himself, and which is of much greater importance (1910, p. 354). That purpose was “to support his proclamation...a necessary proof of the claim of Jesus” (pp. 355-356).

If God’s intention was to exempt Christians from sickness and disease, He certainly has fallen down on the job, since the vast majority of Christians throughout the last 2,000 years have experienced the exact same afflictions suffered by unbelievers. If miracles in the first century had as their object to improve the health or physical well-being of the recipient, then Jesus and the apostles were failures, because they left untouched a lot of sick and dying folk! Jesus healed the minority of the sick people of Palestine, and healed **none** outside of that tiny geographical region (with the exception of the Canaanite woman’s daughter). In fact, one would be forced to conclude that God’s compassion did not extend to **everybody**. But the Bible affirms that **God loves the entire world of humanity** (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). Hence, miracles did not have as their central purpose to demonstrate God’s compassion, nor to ease pain, sickness, and suffering. Writing in 1898, McGarvey made the following observations:

[U]nlike these modern advocates of “divine healing,” the apostles were never known to go about exhorting people to come forward for the healing of the body. They effected miraculous cures in a few instances, “as a sign to the unbelievers,” but they never proclaimed, either to saints or sinners, that the healing of all diseases was a part of the gospel which they were sent to preach. These so-called faith-cure churches, therefore, and the preachers who officiate in them as “divine healers,” or what not, are not modeled after the apostolic type, but are misleading the people by humbuggery (p. 351).

Insufficient Faith?

The usual rebuttal to these observations is that the reason some people do not receive a miracle is that “they do not have sufficient faith.” But this objection is likewise unscriptural. It is true that some individuals in the New Testament were commended for the faith that they possessed **prior** to being the recipient of a miracle (e.g., Mark 5:34). It does not automatically follow, however, that faith was a **necessary** prerequisite to miraculous reception. Many people were **not** required to have faith as a prerequisite. For example, all individuals who were raised from the dead obviously were not in a position to “have faith” (e.g., John 11:44). Nor did those possessed by demons have faith before being healed, since they were not in their right mind (e.g., Luke 9:42; 11:14). The man who was blind from birth actually showed uncertainty regarding the identity of Jesus (John 9:11-12, 17, 25, 35-36). The man who was healed by Jesus as he laid beside a pool of water, in fact, did not even know who healed him (John 5:13). On one occasion, Jesus healed a paralytic after observing, not his faith, but the faith of **his companions** (Mark 2:5). Additional texts indicate that many who received the benefits of miracles were not required to have faith (Luke 13:12; 14:4; Acts 3:1-10).

The opposite was true as well. There were individuals who possessed faith, and yet were not healed of their ailments. The apostle Paul obviously had plenty of faith. He had an “infirmity” that was so painful that he called it “a thorn in the flesh” and “a messenger of Satan” (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Yet his earnest prayers to God for relief did not result in his being healed. Timothy was a faithful and effective servant of the Lord. He had “frequent illnesses” and stomach trouble of such severity as to warrant Paul referring to it by inspiration. But rather than simply healing him, or telling him to “pray for healing,” Paul advised him to use a little wine as a tonic (1 Timothy 5:23). Another Christian worker and companion of Paul in his evangelistic travels, Trophimus (Acts 20:4; 21:29), had to be left at Miletus due to his sickness (2 Timothy 4:20). Epaphroditus was an extremely valuable worker in the kingdom of Christ, so much so that Paul referred to him as “my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier...and minister to my need” (Philippians 2:25). When he became sick “nigh unto death” (Philippians 2:27, 30)—likely due to his exhausting kingdom activity and service to Paul—Paul did not heal him. These examples demonstrate that personal faith was not prerequisite to the reception of a miracle in the first century. Miracles were inextricably bound to the authentication of the spoken Word of God.

But what about those verses that seem to indicate that faith **did** have something to do with whether a miracle would be forthcoming? For instance, what of Matthew’s observation that when Jesus went to His own country, He “did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:58)? Notice that the text cannot be correlating the presence of the miraculous with the presence of belief. After all, “not many” implies that **some** miracles were performed—even though unbelief was rampant. The point that Matthew was making, therefore, was that when Jesus performed a few miracles to authenticate His oral claim to deity, the evidence was rejected, making it

superfluous for Christ to offer any further miraculous demonstrations. Albert Barnes explained this matter succinctly:

We are not to suppose that his [Jesus—DM] **power** was limited by the belief or unbelief of men; but they were so **prejudiced**, so set against him, that they were not in a condition to **judge of evidence** and to be convinced. ... It would have been of no use, therefore, in proving **to them** that he was from God, to have worked miracles. ... He gave sufficient proof of his mission, and left them in their chosen unbelief without excuse (1956, p. 150, emp. in orig.).

Jesus was simply doing what He instructed the Twelve to do: “whatsoever place shall not receive you, and they hear you not, ...shake off the dust that is under your feet” (Mark 6:11). He also had said: “[N]either cast your pearls before the swine” (Matthew 7:6). If performing additional miracles would have confirmed the Word, Jesus would have performed them.

John actually settled this question for the unbiased searcher. He worded the thematic statement of his Gospel record in the following words: “Many other **signs** therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, **that ye may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name” (John 20:30-31, emp. added). John said that belief occurs **after** the miracle—not before, in order to receive a miracle! The New Testament teaches the very opposite of those who claim that miracles occur today. They say a person must have faith **before** he or she can receive a miracle. The New Testament teaches that miracles were performed to authenticate the divine origin of the speaker’s message and/or identity. The message, in turn, generated faith in the hearer (cf. Romans 10:17). Hence, **miracles preceded faith**. Even tongue-speaking was designed to convince the unbeliever to give heed to the message (1 Corinthians 14:22).

What About Elders?

Some have suggested that James 5:14-15 indicates that elders can heal people today. But James refers to the first century phenomenon of supernatural healing that is mentioned as one of the gifts available to the first century church (1 Corinthians 12:9,30; see also Mark 6:13). Yet, as demonstrated above, all such miraculous gifts have ceased. Elders in the first century churches would have acquired the ability to heal by receiving the laying on of the apostles' hands. The olive oil, though used medicinally in the first century, was merely a symbol of Christ’s power to heal, which the elders would have applied to the sick person as they prayed for God to heal the individual. The miraculous healing was not imparted by either the oil or the elders' hands, but by “the prayer of faith” (vs. 15). Such miraculous intervention on God's part would have been immediate with complete and full recovery. Those who believe these verses apply today are inevitably stymied when the sick individual is not instantaneously healed, and then must resort to excuses and unscriptural explanations. It is obvious from the text that the

illness referred to is a **life-threatening one**, since “save” in verse 15 refers, not to spiritual salvation, but to physical salvation, i.e., he will be made well (cf. “the Lord will raise him up”). When they bring elders to pray over a person who has been diagnosed with terminal cancer, does he recover? What if the elders pray over and anoint a person who lost his hand or arm in an accident? Will his arm be restored? Again, the desire to have miraculous healing in the church today fails completely to grasp why healing occurred in Bible times: not merely to make people well, but to spotlight the validity of God’s Word as conveyed by His emissaries.

SUMMARY

A good summary passage that pinpoints precisely the purpose of miracles throughout the Bible is seen in the incident concerning the widow of Zarephath to whom Elijah was sent for assistance in surviving the famine during the reign of King Ahab. When her son’s serious illness culminated in his death, Elijah brought the boy back to life, raising him from the dead. Her subsequent verbal observation summarizes succinctly the function of the miraculous: “Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth” (1 Kings 17:24). The miracle fulfilled its intended purpose: to verify that, as a genuine emissary of the one true God, Elijah was a communicator of God’s Word. The restoration of the life of her son—though magnificent and thrilling in itself—was secondary to the verified realization that Elijah was a legitimate communicator of the Word of the one true God.

THE DURATION OF MIRACLES

These observations bring us to a third extremely critical realization: once God revealed the entirety of the information that He wished to make available to mankind (later contained in what we call the New Testament), the need for miraculous confirmation of the oral Word came to an end. Now, people can sit down with a New Testament, the written Word of God, and, with honest and diligent study, conclude that it is God’s Word. Many preachers and teachers today have failed to acknowledge this crucial biblical factor. They fail to face the fact that we have absolutely no need for the miraculous. Since the purpose of miracles has been achieved, the miracles, themselves, have ceased. I repeat: the Bible teaches that miracles are no longer necessary. We have everything we need to function in this life, to be pleasing to God, and to survive spiritually (2 Peter 1:3). Spiritual maturity is now within the grasp of every single individual who chooses to access the means to maturity—the written Word of God. To insist that we have need for the miraculous today is to undermine, and to cast aspersions upon, the all-sufficiency of God’s Word (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The most detailed treatment of the phenomena of miracles in the New Testament, including tongue-speaking, healing, and prophecy, is 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. These three chapters were written to Christians at Corinth because miracles were being abused and misused. Chapter 12 defines the miracles. Chapter 13 indicates their

duration. Chapter 14 explains their disposition. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul argued that the body (the church) should function harmoniously by using miraculous gifts properly. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul argued that love is a more excellent attribute than miraculous gifts. After all, miraculous gifts (i.e., prophecy, tongue-speaking, supernatural knowledge, etc.) were going to fail, cease, vanish, and be done away (13:8). These miraculous gifts are identified in the text with the expression “in part” (13:9-10). The “in part,” or miraculous, would cease and be done away when the “perfect” had come. But to what does the “perfect” refer?

The Greek word translated “perfect” is *teleios*. The term does not refer to “perfect” in the sense typically understood by the average modern English reader, i.e., to be sinless. Following this faulty notion, some have concluded that the “perfect” refers to Jesus—since He has been the only perfect person. Other interpretations apply “perfect” to heaven (the only perfect place that will be free of sin and imperfection), or Christian maturity and perfect love (the perfect condition or quality). But, in context, Paul was not contrasting qualities or places. He was contrasting quantities, i.e., those things that were incomplete and partial (miraculous gifts) with that which would be total and complete (the fully revealed Word of God). The inaccuracy of these interpretations is seen further in the Greek definition of *teleios*. The word refers to totality, that which is whole, brought to its end, finished, and lacking nothing necessary to completeness (Delling, 1972, 8:73; Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 816; Thayer, 1901, p. 618). When referring to persons, *teleios* refers to being full-grown, adult, and mature (Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 817; Thayer, 1977, p. 618). Used in its neuter form, Paul was referring to a thing—not a person—something that, when completed or finished, would replace the incomplete or partial, i.e., the miraculous gifts—which clearly had only temporary significance. Commenting on the abolition of the miraculous gifts of prophecy and supernatural knowledge (mentioned in vss. 8 and 9), W.R. Nicoll observed that “these charisms are **partial** in scope, and therefore temporary: the **fragmentary** gives place to the **complete**” (1900, 2:900, emp. added). Kenneth Wuest agreed: “In 1 Corinthians 13:10, the word means ‘complete,’ and is contrasted to that which is incomplete” (1943a, pp. 117-118). Whereas James used the term *teleios* to refer to the all-sufficiency of God’s Word in its ability to achieve everything it was intended to do (James 1:25), the exegete is forced to conclude that Paul’s use of “perfect” referred to the completed revelation or totally revealed New Testament Scriptures. The revelation of God’s will was completed in its entirety when the final book of the New Testament, Revelation, was written by John prior to A.D. 100.

Paul offered a useful illustration to clarify his point. When the church possessed only bits and pieces of God’s will, as revealed through scattered miraculous gifts and the gradual production, between approximately A.D. 57 and A.D. 95, of the written documents from the inspired writers of the New Testament, it could not achieve full spiritual maturity. It therefore was like a child (13:11). It lacked the necessary constituent elements to reach spiritual adulthood. However, when the totality of God’s will, which became the New Testament, had been revealed, the church then had the means available to become “a man” (13:11). Once the church had access to all of God’s

written Word, the means by which the Word was given (i.e., miraculous gifts) would be obsolete, useless, and therefore “put away” (13:11). Notice that in this illustration, Paul likened miracles to “childish things” (13:11). In other words, miracles were the spiritual equivalents of pacifiers that were necessary while the church was in a state of infancy. Now that the church has access to “all truth” (John 16:13), the use of tongue-speaking and other miraculous enhancements in the church today would be comparable to an adult man or woman sucking on a pacifier!

Paul then explained his point by making a contrast between the initial necessity of miracles to reveal and confirm God’s Word, and the idea of looking through a clouded mirror (see Workman, 1983, p. 8). Once the entire contents of the New Testament had been revealed, the miraculous gifts no longer would be necessary. Having all of God’s revealed Word would enable one to be face to face with that Word rather than “looking through a clouded mirror,” i.e., having partial access. Paul wrote (13:11): “Now I know in part [i.e., my knowledge of God’s revelation is incomplete and partial due to limited access via the miraculous element—DM], but then [i.e., when all of God’s Word is revealed—DM] shall I know fully even as also I was fully known [i.e., I shall be made to know or taught thoroughly (which is the figure of speech known as heterosis of the verb in which the intransitive is put for the transitive—see Bullinger, 1898, p. 512)—DM].”

Paul made essentially the same point to the Ephesians that he made to the Corinthians. Miracles—the “gifts” given by Christ (Ephesians 4:8)—were to last “**till** the unity of **the** faith and **the** knowledge of the Son of God” (Ephesians 4:13, emp. added). Two significant observations emerge from this latter verse. First, the word translated “till” (Middle English for “until”) is *mechri*, and was used as a conjunction to indicate the terminus ad quem [finishing point] of the miraculous offices (mentioned in vs. 11) bestowed as gifts by Christ. [For treatments of the use of *mechri* in this verse, see Thayer, 1977, p. 408; Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 517; Moulton and Milligan, 1982, p. 407; Blass, et al., 1961, pp. 193-194; Robertson, 1934, pp. 974-975; Dana and Mantey, 1927, p. 281; see also the use of the term in Mark 13:30 and Galatians 4:19]. Nicoll observed: “The statement of the great object of Christ’s gifts and the provision made by Him for its fulfillment is now followed by a statement of the **time** this provision and the consequent service are to last” (1900, 3:332, emp. in orig.). Paul was “[s]pecifying the **time** up to which this ministry and impartation of gifts are to last” (Vincent, 1890, p. 390, emp. added).

Second, the phrase “the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God” often is misunderstood to refer to the eventual **unifying** of all believers in Christ. But this conclusion cannot be correct. Both Scripture and common sense dispel such a notion. Complete unity within Christendom will never occur. Those who profess affiliation with Christianity are in a hopeless state of disunity. Catholicism and Protestant denominationalism are fractured into a plethora of factions and splinter groups—literally thousands of divisions and disagreements. Besides, Protestant denominationalism did not exist in the New Testament era, and the New Testament neither countenances nor legitimizes any such “manifestation” of Christianity. Nor will unity ever be achieved even

within churches of Christ. The first-century congregations did not attain complete internal unity. Nor have the post first-century congregations achieved unity within.

In contrast with this interpretation, notice the use of the articles in the phrases: “**the** faith” and “**the** knowledge.” Contextually, Paul was referring to **the system of faith** alluded to so often in the New Testament. Jude urged his readers to “contend earnestly for **the** faith” (Jude 3). Paul referred to himself when he quoted others as saying, “He that once persecuted us now preacheth **the** faith of which he once made havoc” (Galatians 1:23). Luke reported that “a great company of the priests were obedient to **the** faith” (Acts 6:7). Elymas sought to “turn aside the proconsul from the faith” (Acts 13:8). The early disciples were exhorted to “continue in **the** faith” (Acts 14:22). Due to Paul’s repeat visits in Lycaonia, “the churches were strengthened in **the** faith” (Acts 16:5).

So “the faith” and “the knowledge” refer to the **completed body of information** that constitutes the Christian religion. Indeed, eight verses earlier (Ephesians 4:5), Paul already had referred to “the faith” as the summation and totality of Christian doctrine—now situated in the repository of the New Testament. An honest exegete is driven to conclude that once the precepts of New Testament Christianity were revealed on Earth, the miraculous element no longer was necessary. Miracles lasted until “the faith” was completely revealed. They had served their purpose, in the same way that scaffolding is useful while a building is under construction. However, once construction is complete, the scaffolding is removed and discarded as unnecessary and superfluous paraphernalia.

THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF MIRACLES IN CORINTH AND EPHESUS	
1 Corinthians 12-14	Ephesians 4
“Gifts” (12:4,9, 28,30,31)	“Gifts” (4:7-8)
“no schism in the body” (12:25)	“joined and knit together” (4:16)
“one body, many members” (12:12,14,18-20,27)	“whole body, every part” (4:16)
“apostles, prophets, teachers” (12:29)	“apostles, prophets, pastor-teachers” (4:11)
“prophecies, knowledge” (13:8)	“prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers” (4:11)
“fail, cease, vanish, done away” (13:8-10)	“until” (4:13) “we come to the unity of the faith” (4:13)
“when perfect comes” (13:10)	“the knowledge/the fullness of Christ” (4:13)
“shall know” (13:12)	“the knowledge/the fullness of Christ” (4:13)
“child” (13:11)	“children” (4:14)

“man” (13:11)	“man” (4:13)
“put away childish things” (13:11)	“grow up” (4:15)
“love” (13:1-8)	“love” (4:15-16)
“edification of the church” (14:3-5,12,17)	“edifying the body of Christ” (4:12)

THE DISPLAY AND DISPOSITION OF MIRACLES

Fourth, the actual exercise of miraculous gifts by Christians is addressed in 1 Corinthians 14. In this context, Paul used the term “gifts” (charismata, from charisma) in a technical sense (like pneumatika) to refer to miraculous abilities, designated by Thayer “**extraordinary** powers...by the Holy Spirit” (1901, p. 667, emp. added; cf. Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 887). Hans Conzelmann stated that the term indicated that “[t]he operations are **supernatural**” and of “**supernatural** potency” (1974, 9:405, emp. added). [The word is so used in the Pauline corpus in 10 of its 16 occurrences (Romans 1:11; 12:6; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 12:4,9,28,30,31; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). The only other occurrence of the word in the New Testament was Peter’s comparable use, i.e., to refer to supernatural ability (1 Peter 4:10)—see Moulton, et al., 1978, p. 1005]. In the Corinthian context of chapter 14, special attention was given by Paul to two of the miraculous gifts in particular: prophecy and tongue-speaking. Several relevant points occur with regard to the gift of tongue-speaking that help one to understand both the temporary nature of miracles as well as their irrelevance to a contemporary pursuit and practice of New Testament Christianity.

Tongue-Speaking

First, in 1 Corinthians 14, the term “unknown” (in regard to tongues) was italicized in the KJV because it does not appear in the original Greek text (14:2,4,13-14,19,27). By inserting this word into their translation, the translators were attempting to aid the English reader. They undoubtedly were hoping to convey the idea that the languages to which Paul referred were **unknown** to the speaker, i.e., the speaker had no prior training by which to learn or know the language. He spoke the language strictly by God’s miraculous empowerment. “Unknown” certainly was not intended to convey the idea that the tongues were unknown **to all humans** and, as such, were non-earthly, non-human languages.

Second, the events reported at the very beginning of the Christian religion (Acts 2) set the precedent for understanding that tongue-speaking entailed no more than the ability to speak a foreign human language (which the speaker had not studied) to people from a variety of geographical locales (e.g., Parthians, Medes, Arabians—Acts 2:9-11). The unbiased Bible student must conclude that what is described in detail in Acts 2 is the same phenomenon alluded to in 1 Corinthians 14. All tongue-speaking in the Bible consisted of known human languages (ideally known to the very audience being addressed) that were unknown (i.e., unstudied, unlearned) by the one who was speaking the language.

Third, there is simply no such thing as an “ecstatic utterance” in the New Testament. The tongue-speaking of 1 Corinthians 14 entailed human language—not incoherent gibberish. A simple reading of the chapter demonstrates that known human languages are under consideration. For example, Paul paralleled tongue-speaking with the use of the trumpet in warfare. If the bugler sounded meaningless noise, the military would be thrown into confusion. It was imperative for the bugler to blow the proper notes and tones, i.e., meaningful musical “language,” so that the army would understand what was being communicated (whether to charge, engage, or retreat). Sound without sense fails to achieve the very purpose of tongue-speaking. Paul then stated:

So likewise ye, unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye will be speaking into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages **in the world**, and no kind is without signification. If then I know not the meaning of the language, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh will be a barbarian unto me (1 Corinthians 14:9-11, emp. added).

Obviously, Paul was referring to human languages—those that exist “in the world.” He envisioned a scenario where two individuals, who spoke different languages, are attempting to communicate with each other. If one speaks in Spanish and the other in German, as they attempt to speak to one another, each would be a “foreigner” to the other. Neither would understand what the other was attempting to say. Hence the need for tongue-speaking, i.e., the ability to speak human language unknown to the speaker but known to the recipient.

Later in the chapter, Paul quoted Isaiah 28:11-12 where God threatened the Israelites with the fact that their failure to listen to Him (by means of the words spoken by His prophets) meant that He soon would be communicating to them through the language of their Assyrian conquerors—conquerors whom God would send against them. This powerful illustration presupposes the fact that in both Isaiah and 1 Corinthians, human languages are under consideration. After quoting Isaiah, Paul drew the conclusion that tongue-speaking was intended by God to be directed to **unbelievers**. Why? Because it would prove to the unbeliever that the tongue-speaker, who did not possess the natural ability to speak that language, was being empowered by God to speak in the language spoken by the unbeliever. The unbeliever would recognize the divine origin of the tongue-speaker’s ability, and thereby be willing to consider the words being spoken as the instructions of God. Again, an examination of 1 Corinthians 14 yields the result that no contextual justification exists for drawing the conclusion that the Bible refers to, let alone endorses, the notion of “**ecstatic**” speech.

Tongues of Angels?

But what about Paul’s passing reference to the “tongues of angels” in 1 Corinthians 13:1? Would not this reference prove that tongue-speaking could involve languages

beyond those spoken by humans? In the first place, consider the role, purpose, and activity of angels described in the Bible. The word “angel” (Greek—angelos; Hebrew—malak) simply means “messenger”—one who “speaks and acts in the place of the one who has sent him” (Bietenhard, 1975, 1:101; Botterweck, et al., 1997, 8:308; Grundmann, 1964, 1:74ff; Gesenius, 1847, p. 475; Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 7). It does not mean merely “to send,” but rather “to send a messenger/message” (Ringgren, 1997, 8:310). It is true that angels in both the Old and New Testaments carried out a wide range of activities beyond message-bearing, including: worshipping God (Revelation 5:11-12); comforting, aiding, and protecting (Daniel 6:22; Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43; Acts 5:19; Hebrews 1:14); and executing judgment and inflicting punishment and death (e.g., Matthew 13:49; Acts 12:23). But it still remains true to say that the meaning of the term “angel” is a messenger—one who communicates a spoken message. Therefore, their principal role in God’s scheme of things was to function as messengers to humans (Grundmann, 1964, 1:74). Consequently, angels always are represented in Scripture as communicating in human language.

In the second place, what logical reason exists for humans to speak in an alleged “angelic” language that is different from human language? What would be the spiritual benefit? The Bible certainly makes no provision for humans to communicate with angels in such a language, nor would there be any need for an angel to communicate to a human in a non-earthly language. The whole point of 1 Corinthians 12-13 was to stress the need to function in the church in ways that were meaningful and understandable. Since God, by His very nature, never would do anything that is superfluous, unnecessary, or frivolous, it follows that He would not bestow upon a human being the ability to speak in a non-human language. The ability would serve no purpose! The Bible simply offers no rationale nor justification for identifying the “tongues of angels” in 1 Corinthians 13:1 with some heavenly, otherworldly, non-earthly languages.

In the third place, if, in fact, the “tongues of angels” refers to known human languages, what was Paul’s point? Since angels were God’s appointed spokesmen, they naturally would perform their assignment in such a way that God would be represented as He would want to be. God’s own angelic emissaries would have complied with their responsibility in such a way and manner that they would have God’s approval. In other words, angels would naturally articulate God’s message as well as it could be expressed (i.e., perfectly). When God inspired mere humans to communicate His will, He integrated their own educational background, stylistic idiosyncrasies, and vocabulary into their oral and literary productions. No such need would have existed for angels. Their communications would have been unfiltered through human agency. Their announcements would have been the epitome and pinnacle of eloquence and oratorical skill.

Perhaps, then, Paul was not drawing a contrast between human and nonhuman languages at all. Before referring to the “tongues of angels,” he referred to “the tongues of men.” Why would Paul say, “Though I speak with the tongues of men”? After all, isn’t that precisely what all adult humans do? We humans speak at least one human

language! Paul must have been referring, then, not to the ability to speak a human language, but to the ability to speak all human languages. No tongue-speaker in the first-century church had the ability to speak all human languages. In fact, the textual evidence indicates that most tongue-speakers probably had the ability to speak only one human language—which he, himself, did not understand—thus necessitating the need for an inspired interpreter (1 Corinthians 12:30; 14:26-28). Paul could apparently speak more languages than any of the others (1 Corinthians 14:18). If the “tongues of men” referred to the number of human languages (rather than referring to the ability to speak a human language), then the “tongues of angels” would refer—not to the ability to speak an angelic language—but to the ability to speak human languages **the way angels do**.

Here, then, would have been Paul’s point: even if a tongue-speaker could speak every human language known to man, and even if that tongue-speaker could speak those human languages with the efficiency, skill, and perfection that God’s angelic messengers have spoken them in history, without love, the ability would be wasted. With this understanding of the text, Paul was not contrasting human with nonhuman language. He was encompassing both the quantity (if I could speak all human languages) and the quality (if I could speak them perfectly) of speaking human language.

One final point on the matter of the “tongues of angels” merits mention. Even if the expression actually refers to angelic tongues that are nonhuman, it still is likely that tongue-speakers were incapable of speaking such languages. Why? Paul was speaking hypothetically and hyperbolically. No human being (with the exception of perhaps Jesus) has ever been able to speak in all human languages. For Paul to suggest such was to pose a hypothetical situation. It was to exaggerate the facts. So Paul’s meaning was: “even if I were capable of speaking all human languages—which I’m not.” Likewise, no human being has ever been able to speak the tongues of angels. So Paul’s meaning was: “even if I were capable of speaking the languages of angels—which I’m not.” This conclusion is supported further by the verse that follows the reference to the “tongues of angels.” There, Paul used two additional hypothetical events when he said, “if I...know all mysteries and all knowledge” and “if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains” (1 Corinthians 13:2). But no one on the planet (with the exception of deity) has understood all mysteries and all knowledge, nor has had faith that could literally remove mountains. Again, Paul was merely saying, “even if I could do such things—which I can’t.”

Fourth, Paul stated very clearly that tongue-speaking was a sign to **unbelievers**—not believers (14:22). Tongue-speaking was to be done in **their** presence, to convince **them** of the truth being spoken, i.e., to confirm the Word. The tongue-speaking being practiced today is done in the presence of those who **already believe** that tongue-speaking is occurring and, when an unbeliever, who is skeptical of the genuineness of the activity, makes an appearance in such an assembly, the claim often is made that tongue-speaking cannot occur because of the presence of unbelief. Once again, the

New Testament teaches the very opposite of those who claim the ability to speak in tongues today.

Fifth, the recipient of a miraculous gift in the New Testament could control himself (14:32). He was not overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit so that he began to babble or flail about. Tongue-speaking today is frequently practiced in a setting where the individuals who claim to be exercising the gift are speaking uncontrollably at the very time that others are either doing the same thing or engaging in some other action. This overlapping activity is in direct violation of three of Paul's commands: (1) that each individual take their turn one at a time; (2) that no more than three tongue-speakers speak per service; and (3) that tongue-speakers remain silent if no interpreter is present (14:27-28).

The claim by many today to be able to speak in tongues is simply out of harmony with New Testament teaching. Anyone can babble, make up sounds, and claim he or she is speaking in tongues. But such conduct is no **sign** today. It is precisely the same phenomenon that pagan religions have practiced through the centuries. In the New Testament, however, no one questioned the authenticity of tongue-speaking. Why? The speaker was speaking a known human language that could be understood by those present who knew that language and knew that that particular speaker did not know that language beforehand. As McGarvey observed about Acts 2: "Not only did the apostles speak in foreign languages that were understood by the hearers, some understanding one and some another, but the fact that this was done by Galileans, who knew only their mother tongue, was the one significant fact that gave to Peter's speech which followed all of its power over the multitude" (1910, p. 318). If and when self-proclaimed tongue-speakers today demonstrate that genuine New Testament gift, their message could be accepted as being from God. But no one today has demonstrated that genuine New Testament gift.

Holy Spirit Baptism

Where does the baptism of the Holy Spirit fit into this discussion? Today's alleged practitioners typically associate the expression "Holy Spirit baptism" with the phenomenon that enables the believer to speak in tongues, heal someone, or work other miracles. In other words, Holy Spirit baptism is simply a generic reference to miraculous empowerment. Anyone who can speak in a tongue or perform any other miraculous action is said to have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. He is said to be "Spirit-filled." However, it might surprise the reader to find that the Bible alludes to Holy Spirit baptism in a very narrow, specialized, even technical sense. Just because a person could speak in tongues or work miracles did not necessarily mean he had been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The very first allusion to Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament is John's statement: "I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me...will **baptize you in the Holy Spirit**" (Matthew 3:11, emp. added). From this statement

alone, one might be tempted to assume that Christians **in general** would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. But this assumption would be a premature conclusion. John was not addressing a Christian audience. He was speaking to Jews. Nothing in the context allows the interpreter to distinguish John's intended recipients of the promise of Holy Spirit baptism—whether all humans, all Jews, all Christians, or merely some of those in one or more of these categories. Likewise, the exact recipients of the baptism of fire (i.e., hell) are not specified. However, as is often the case in the Bible, the specific recipients of this promise are clarified in later passages.

Just before His ascension, Jesus told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). In John chapters 14-16, Jesus made several specific promises to the apostles concerning the coming of the Spirit—the “Comforter” or “Helper” (parakletos)—upon them, to empower them to do the peculiar work of an apostle (i.e., to recall the words Jesus had spoken to them, to speak and write by inspiration, and to launch the Christian religion). If these verses apply to all Christians, then all Christians ought to have been personally guided “into all the truth” (John 16:13), and thus would have absolutely no need of written Scripture (John 14:26). However, in context, these verses clearly refer to **the apostolic office**.

Jesus further clarified the application of Holy Spirit baptism when He told the apostles that the earlier statement made in Luke 24:49 applied to **them**, and would come to pass “not many days hence” (Acts 1:4-5). Jesus also stated that the “power” that they would receive would be from the Holy Spirit, which would enable them to witness to the world what they had experienced by being with Jesus (Acts 1:8). Notice very carefully that on this occasion Jesus made an explicit reference to the very statement that John had uttered previously in Matthew 3: “for John indeed baptized with water; but **ye** [apostles—DM] shall be **baptized in the Holy Spirit** not many days hence” (Acts 1:5, emp. added). Jesus specifically and explicitly identified the Holy Spirit baptism that He would administer (in keeping with John's prediction) would take place within a few days, and would be confined to the apostles.

All one need do is turn the page to see the promise of Holy Spirit baptism achieve dramatic and climactic fulfillment in Acts 2 when the Spirit was poured out only upon the apostles. The antecedent of “they” in Acts 2:4 is “the apostles” in Acts 1:26. The apostles were the ones who spoke in tongues and taught the people. **They** were the recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as is evident from the following contextual indicators: (1) “are not all these that speak **Galileans?**” (2:7); (2) “Peter, standing up with the eleven” (2:14); (3) “they...said unto Peter and the rest of **the apostles**” (2:37); (4) Peter quoted Joel 2:28-32 and applied it to that occasion as proof that **the apostles** were not intoxicated; and (5) the text even states explicitly that the signs and wonders were “done through **the apostles**” (2:43). This pattern continues in the book of Acts: “And by the hands of **the apostles** were many signs and wonders wrought among the people” (5:12); “the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by **their hands**” (14:3); “what signs and wonders God had wrought...through **them**” (15:12).

The next direct reference to Holy Spirit baptism consisted of Peter describing the experience of the Gentiles in Acts 10. Referring to their empowerment to speak in tongues, Peter explicitly identified it as being comparable to the experience of the apostles in Acts 2. Note his explanation: “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on **us** [apostles—DM] at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us [apostles—DM]...” (Acts 11:15-17, emp. added). Peter unmistakably linked the baptism of the Holy Spirit predicted by John in Matthew 3:11, and applied by Jesus to the apostles in Acts 1:5, with the unique and exclusive bestowal of the same on the first Gentile candidates of salvation. If the baptism of the Holy Spirit had occurred between Acts 2 and Acts 10, why did Peter compare the Gentiles’ experience with the experience of the **apostles**—rather than comparing it with many other Christians who allegedly would have received it during the intervening years? The answer lies in the fact that the baptism of the Holy Spirit did not occur during the intervening years. Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a unique and infrequent occurrence that came directly from deity.

This understanding harmonizes with additional facts. The great prophecy of the Old Testament, which made special reference to the coming New Testament era as the dispensation of the Spirit, incorporated a most noteworthy expression. God declared, “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28). Peter repeated it on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17). What did God mean by the expression “**all flesh**”? Members of the charismatic community insist that “all flesh” means “all **Christians**.” They maintain that every Christian can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They claim that to narrow the application of the promise of Holy Spirit baptism to a select group of individuals would deprive all other Christians of the opportunity to receive miraculous power. However, upon what **biblical** basis may such a claim be made?

Those who claim the presence of miraculous gifts are guilty of the very thing they condemn—narrowing the expression “all flesh.” Surely no one would take the position that it means all **animal** flesh—since animals are not the recipients of God’s spiritual provisions. Nor would anyone contend that it means all **human** flesh—since all wicked, disobedient, unbelieving people would hardly expect, let alone desire, to receive God’s Spirit. Those who agree that the expression “all flesh” must undoubtedly be qualified to exclude the animals and the unbelieving will nonetheless insist that narrowing the meaning to less than “all Christians” is unjustifiable.

To understand the proper meaning and application of the expression “all flesh,” one must examine the **biblical** use of the expression. “All flesh” often is used in the Bible to refer to the bulk of humanity (e.g., Genesis 6:12-13). It also can include all animal flesh (e.g., Genesis 6:17,19). However, with God’s special utilization of the descendants of Abraham in His scheme of redemption, “all flesh” often has the more technical meaning of “all **nationalities**.” The primary reason for this specialized use of the expression was due to the fact that most of the Old Testament was written against the backdrop of the

presence of the nation of Israel. God is certainly “no respecter of persons” (Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17; Acts 10:34-35). He does not favor one ethnic group over another. However, since His redemptive intention included bringing Jesus into the world for the benefit of all, someone had to be selected through whom Jesus’ arrival might be achieved. That man was Abraham (Galatians 3:8,16) and, consequently, his descendents.

As a result of this circumstance, the Jewish writers of the Bible frequently divided humanity into **only two** racial groupings, i.e., Jew and non-Jew (Gentile). For example, in what is obviously a strongly Messianic passage, Isaiah (the “Messianic prophet”) predicted the coming of John the baptizer who would prepare the way for Jesus. He exclaimed: “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” (40:5). The reference to “all flesh” was an unmistakable reference to the availability of salvation to both Jew and Gentile in the Christian era, as evinced by Luke’s quotation of the passage (Luke 3:6). The same is true in another prophecy that Isaiah uttered pertaining to the coming Christian era: “All flesh shall come to worship before Me” (Isaiah 66:23). The Jews of Isaiah’s day would not have been very pleased with Isaiah’s declarations, since they most certainly would have understood him to be predicting the incorporation of Gentiles into God’s favor—which the Jews felt they alone enjoyed.

Paul cinched the meaning of “all flesh” in his premiere treatise on justification by faith. He drew a clear distinction between the two ethnic categories by first declaring the sins of the Gentiles (Romans 1:18-32) and then declaring the sins of the Jews (Romans 2:1-3:8). Notice carefully his concluding remarks as he brought the first section of the book to its climax: “What then? are **we** [the Jews—DM] better than **they** [the Gentiles—DM]? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge **both** of Jews and Greeks, that they are **all** under sin” (Romans 3:9, emp. added). He then quoted a series of Old Testament verses, which verified his emphasis upon the two (and only two) categories of human flesh, using two significant terms: “none” and “all.” “None” means neither Jew nor Gentile. “All” means both Jew and Gentile. Then he articulated his grand and climactic conclusion: “because by the works of the law shall **no flesh** be justified” (Romans 3:20, emp. added). “No flesh” referred to Jew and Gentile. In other words, neither Jew nor Gentile could be justified by law alone. “No flesh” and “all flesh” were technical allusions to the two **categories** of human flesh, i.e., Jew and non-Jew (cf. John 17:2).

Observe, then, that the first recipients of Holy Spirit baptism, as we have seen, were the **Jewish** apostles on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. It equipped them to establish the church and to write, speak, and confirm inspired truth. The second recipients of Holy Spirit baptism were the **Gentile** members of the household of Cornelius in Acts 10. It convinced Jewish Christians that Gentiles were fit prospects for the reception of the Gospel, and valid candidates for entrance into the kingdom (Acts 10:34-35,45; 11:18). So Joel’s statement, that God would pour out His Spirit on “all flesh,” applied to the outpouring on **Jews** in Acts 2 and on **Gentiles** in Acts 10. The only other conceivable occurrence of Holy Spirit baptism would have been Paul, who would have received direct miraculous ability from God as well. His reception was obviously unique because

(1) he was not an apostle when the Twelve received the Spirit, and (2) he was “one born out of due time” (1 Corinthians 15:8). Holy Spirit baptism, then, filled two unique and exclusive purposes: (1) to prepare the apostles for their apostolic (not Christian) roles, and (2) to provide divine demonstration that Gentiles were to be allowed to become Christians.

One additional consideration deserves comment regarding Joel’s prophecy. If “all flesh” referred exclusively to the Jewish apostles and the first Gentile converts, why did Joel include “sons, daughters, old men, young men, servants, and handmaids” in the reception of God’s Spirit (Joel 2:28-29)? As was typical of Hebrew prophecy, progressive, sequential, and complete fulfillment would be forthcoming. A prophecy could possess several features that found fulfillment in a variety of circumstances. It is apparent, on the basis of the references already discussed (e.g., Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5; 11:15-17), that only the **first part** of Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. The “last days” (Acts 2:17) referred to the **entire** Christian dispensation from Pentecost to the Judgment. The outpouring of the Spirit, therefore, would include more than just the baptism of the Holy Spirit that was confined to the Jewish apostles on Pentecost and the Gentiles a few years later. Though the peculiar phenomenon of Holy Spirit baptism was limited to those two specific ethnic groups (i.e., the twelve apostles and the household of Cornelius), **additional** activity of the Spirit would include the impartation of miraculous gifts through the laying on of the apostles’ hands (discussed below). This conclusion is evident from the fact that no “**daughters**” or “**handmaids**” received Holy Spirit baptism on Pentecost. Nor is there any evidence of the occurrence of “**dreams**” or “**visions**” on Pentecost. With the Holy Spirit’s expanded presence in the instigation of Christianity in the first century came the eventual impartation of miraculous ability separate and apart from Holy Spirit baptism. The broadened fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (subsequent to Acts 2) is seen in the references to Philip’s **daughters** who prophesied (Acts 21:9) and in the occurrence of **visions** (Acts 9:10; 10:3,10; 16:9). However, these miraculous manifestations, though included in Joel’s prophecy, were not instances of Holy Spirit baptism. The common link in the Holy Spirit’s outpouring on Pentecost and the manifestations of the Spirit thereafter was the baptism of the Holy Spirit on **the apostles**—who were the keys to the further distribution of miraculous power in the early years of Christianity.

1 Corinthians 12:13

But what about Paul’s statement to the Corinthians? He wrote: “For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body...and were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Some have insisted that this verse teaches that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is imparted to **all Christians**. Careful analysis of the verse, however, demonstrates that Paul was not referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit that was received only twice in the New Testament (if you omit Paul). If the Corinthians had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, Paul likely would have worded the verse: “We were all baptized in one Spirit into one body.” This wording would have made it plain that their baptism was Holy Spirit baptism. However, Paul connected “baptized” with “into one body,” and placed “in one

Spirit” **before** both “baptized” and “into one body.” Did he mean to say that their baptism entailed being indwelt with the Spirit, or having the Spirit overwhelm (i.e., immerse) them, or come upon them, i.e., that the Holy Spirit, **Himself**, was what the Corinthians had received or been baptized in?

The grammar of the passage provides a decisive and definitive answer. The word “Spirit” is in the instrumental case in Greek, indicating personal agency. The personal agent in the passage who did the baptizing is the Holy Spirit. His baptizing resulted in the placement of the individuals into the one body of Christ. The verb is aorist, showing that Paul was referring to a once-for-all act in the past. Wuest explained: “It is not the baptism with the Spirit or **of** the Spirit, in the sense that the Holy Spirit is the element which is applied to us. It is the baptism **by** the Spirit. This baptism does not bring the Spirit to us in the sense that God places the Spirit **upon** or **in** us. Rather, this baptism brings the believer into vital union with Jesus Christ” (1943b, p. 86, emp. added). The Corinthians were the beneficiaries—not of the Spirit—but of the Spirit’s guidance or assistance. They were baptized **by** the Spirit (cf. KJV, NKJV, NASV, RSV, NIV).

Further grammatical evidence in the context supports this conclusion. Earlier in the chapter, Paul said that no person could say that Jesus is Lord “but in the Holy Spirit” (vs. 3). A person could say Jesus is Lord without being **in** the Spirit or having the Holy Spirit **in** or **on** him. But a person could not say Jesus is Lord if the Holy Spirit had not revealed such information about Jesus—as He did by empowering the apostles to produce written revelation. A few verses later, Paul pinpointed several gifts that were given “through the Spirit,” “according to the same Spirit,” and “in the same Spirit” (vss. 8-9, ASV). All three phrases are equivalent, and refer to the Holy Spirit’s **action**, not the **state of being** in the Holy Spirit. Paul’s summary of the section verifies that this meaning is intended: “But one and the same Spirit **works** all these things, **distributing to** each one individually as He wills” (vs. 11).

In view of these contextual details, one is forced to conclude that in verse 13, Paul could be referring to no other baptism than the baptism enjoined by Christ in the Great Commission, i.e., the “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5, the baptism which Paul, himself, administered to the Corinthians (Acts 18:8)—**water** baptism. The Holy Spirit was the agent through Whom Christ enjoined water baptism by means of the preached message. When a person complies with the instruction to be baptized in water, that person is baptized into the one body of Christ. Other verses in the New Testament confirm this understanding. Jesus announced: “[U]nless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Jesus meant what Paul meant, that when one obeys the teaching of the Spirit to be baptized in water, he is granted entrance into the kingdom. Paul reiterated this same teaching on two other occasions. To the Ephesian church, he pointed out that Jesus gave His life for the church “that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:26). He meant that an individual is permitted to be a part of the cleansed church of Christ when he submits to water baptism in accordance with the Holy Spirit’s inspired Word. Likewise, Paul told young Titus that Jesus “saved us, through the washing of

regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). Again, he meant that one is saved (and hence added to the body) at the point of water immersion, in which spiritual renewal is extended by the Holy Spirit.

We are forced to conclude that 1 Corinthians 12:13 does not refer to Holy Spirit baptism (see also McGarvey, 1910, pp. 254-256, and Reese, 1976, p. 76). The two instances of Holy Spirit baptism previously discussed (i.e., in Acts 2 and 10) stand unmistakably in stark contrast with the baptism alluded to by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:13. The Corinthian baptism placed the Corinthians into the body of Christ, i.e., at their conversion. But when the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they were **already** saved. When the household of Cornelius was baptized in the Holy Spirit, they were not yet saved and were inducted into the body of Christ only **after** Peter called for “water” (Acts 10:47-48).

Laying on of Hands

If Acts 2 and Acts 10 are the only instances of Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament, how then do we account for the fact that many others in the New Testament performed miracles or spoke in tongues? If they were not recipients of Holy Spirit baptism, how did they get the ability? The New Testament dictates only one other way to receive miraculous capability: through the laying on of the apostles’ hands. Only the apostles possessed the ability to transfer miraculous capability to others. This phenomenon is described succinctly by Luke:

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that **through the laying on of the apostles’ hands** the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God” (Acts 8:17-21, emp. added).

This description establishes two important facts: (1) only the apostles had the ability to impart to others the ability to perform miracles; and (2) those other than the apostles who could perform miracles received their ability **indirectly** through the **apostles**—not **directly from God via Holy Spirit baptism**.

This fascinating feature of the existence of the miraculous in the first century makes it possible to understand how other individuals received their supernatural powers. For example, Philip, who was not an apostle, possessed the ability to perform miracles (Acts 8:6,13). If he was not an apostle, and he did not receive direct ability from God via baptism of the Holy Spirit, where, then, did he derive his ability? Luke informs us that Philip previously received the laying on of the apostles’ hands (Acts 6:5-6). Likewise, the first Christians in Ephesus were enabled to speak in tongues when the apostle Paul

laid his hands on them (Acts 19:6). Even Timothy received his gift from the laying on of Paul's hands (2 Timothy 1:6).

Some have challenged the exclusivity of the role of the apostles in their unique ability to impart the miraculous element by calling attention to the admonition given by Paul to Timothy: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands **of the presbytery**" (1 Timothy 4:14, emp. added). Even though Paul plainly declared that the "gift of God" which Timothy possessed was conferred "through the laying on of my hands" (2 Timothy 1:6), how does one explain the fact that Paul also stated that Timothy's gift came through the presbytery (i.e., the eldership) as well? Once again, the grammar of the text provides the answer. In 2 Timothy 1:6, where Paul claimed sole credit for imparting the gift to Timothy, he employed the Greek preposition *dia* with the genitive, which means "through" or "by means of" (Machen, 1923, p. 41; Dana and Mantey, 1927, p. 101). However, in 1 Timothy 4:14, where Paul included the eldership in the action of impartation, he employed a completely different Greek preposition—*meta*. The root meaning of *meta* is "in the midst of" (Dana and Mantey, p. 107). It denotes the **attendant circumstances** of something that takes place—the **accompanying** phenomena (Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, pp. 510-511). It means "in association with" or "accompanied by" (Moule, 1959, p. 61; Thayer, 1901, p. 404; cf. Robertson, 1934, p. 611). In other words, Paul—as an apostle—imparted the miraculous gift to Timothy. It came from God through Paul. However, on that occasion, the local eldership of the church was present and participated with Paul in the event, lending their simultaneous support and accompanying commendation. After examining the grammatical data on the matter, Nicoll concluded: "[I]t was the imposition of hands by St. Paul that was the instrument used by God in the communication of the charisma to Timothy" (1900, 4:127; cf. Jamieson, et al., n.d., 2:414; Williams, 1960, p. 956). Consequently, 1 Timothy 4:14 provides no proof that miraculous capability could be received through other means in addition to apostolic imposition of hands and the two clear instances of Holy Spirit baptism.

CONCLUSION

In light of all the biblical data set forth in this study, certain conclusions are quite evident. Since there are no apostles living today, and since Holy Spirit baptism was unique to the apostles (Acts 2) and the first Gentile converts (Acts 10), there is no Holy Spirit baptism today. Likewise, there is no miraculous healing today. There are no tongue-speakers today. The miraculous element in the Christian religion was terminated by God near the close of the first century. Once the last apostle died, the means by which miraculous capability was made available was dissolved. With the completion of God's revelation to humanity, now available in the Bible, people living today have all that is needed to be complete and to enjoy the fullness of Christian existence (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 4:14).

The alleged miracles and tongue-speaking of today simply do not measure up to the Bible's description of the miraculous. They are unverifiable, ambiguous, and counterfeit.

Today's "divine healing" consists of vague, unseen, non-quantifiable aches and pains like arthritis and headaches. But in the New Testament, people were raised from the dead—even days after death (e.g., John 11:17). Severed body parts were instantly restored (e.g., Luke 22:50-51). People who had been **born** blind had their sight restored (e.g., John 9:1). Those lame **from birth** were empowered to walk (Acts 3:2). First-century miracles were not limited only to certain ailments and psychosomatic illnesses that could be cured through natural means, or by mental adjustments on the part of the infirm. Jesus healed "**all** kinds of sickness and **all** kinds of disease" (Matthew 4:23, emp. added). No disease or sickness was exempt in the New Testament (cf. Acts 28:8-9). Where are these instances today? When has anyone restored a severed limb lost in an accident? When has a self-proclaimed "faith-healer" raised anyone from the dead? Where are the miracle workers who have healed the blind, the crippled, the paralyzed, and those whose infirmities have been documented as having been in existence for many years (John 5:3,5)? Where are the televangelists who will go to the children's hospitals and rectify birth defects and childhood diseases? Where are those who have ingested poison or been bitten by a venomous snake and remained unharmed (Mark 16:18; Acts 28:3-5)? An honest searcher for the truth is forced to conclude that the miraculous age has passed.

But human beings always are looking for something new, something exciting, and something flashy. They grasp for the attractive and the appealing, they want the easy way out, and they want something that makes them **feel** religious and secure—without having to face up to personal responsibilities. Hence, there will always be those who, instead of searching the Scriptures to find out whether these things are so (Acts 17:11), will simply disengage their minds, their spiritual sense, and their ability to assess "the words of truth and reason" (Acts 26:25).

Genuine Christianity today consists of simply taking the written Word of God, and studying it carefully in order to learn what God expects of us: simple meditation and reflection upon the Word of God—no brass bands or circus theatrics, no flash of light, or dream, or vision, no sudden rush attributable to the Holy Spirit. The pathway to heaven consists of honest, intensive investigation of written revelation, and a life of diligent self-discipline and self-denial that strives to incorporate spiritual attributes into one's life—attributes like patience, compassion, kindness, humility, forgiveness, honesty, integrity, peace of soul, joy, and clean, moral living. There are no short cuts to spirituality. **The miraculous is no answer.** Even in the first century, miracles were not designed to develop these spiritual attributes.

Certainly, God loves us and has promised to care for us (e.g., Matthew 6:33). But His workings in the Universe and in our lives are undertaken today providentially through the natural laws that He set into motion. After the first century, He has not—and will not—violate His own purposes by interfering with these laws in order to perform a miracle. In the final analysis, we are under obligation to seek His assistance by listening to the instructions found in His written Word. Only words from God, then and now, will equip us and prepare us for eternity. As Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we

go? thou hast the **words** of eternal life” (John 6:68, emp. added). Jesus said to the Father, “Sanctify them in the truth: thy **word** is truth” (John 17:17, emp. added). When Satan attempted to prod Jesus into performing a miracle, Jesus said to him, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every **word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4, emp. added).

REFERENCES

- Arndt, William and F.W. Gingrich (1957), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press).
- Barnes, Albert (1956 reprint), *Notes on the New Testament: Matthew and Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker).
- Bietenhard, Hans (1975), “Angel,” *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).
- Blass, F., A. Debrunner, and Robert Funk (1961), *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press).
- Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. (1997), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).
- Bullinger, E.W. (1898), *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968 reprint).
- Conzelmann, Hans (1974), “charismata,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).
- Dana, H.E. and Julius Mantey (1927), *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto, Canada: Macmillan).
- Delling, Gerhard (1972), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).
- Gesenius, William (1847), *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979 reprint).
- Grundmann, Walter (1964), “angelos,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).
- Hofius, Otfried (1976), “Miracle,” *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).

Jamieson, Robert, A.R. Fausset, and David Brown (no date), *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).

Machen, J. Gresham (1923), *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (Toronto, Canada: Macmillan).

McGarvey, J.W. (1910), *Biblical Criticism* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard).

Moule, C.F.D. (1959), *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: University Press, 1977 reprint).

Moulton, W.F., A.S. Geden, and H.K. Moulton (1978), *A Concordance to the Greek Testament* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), fifth edition.

Moulton, James and George Milligan (1982 reprint), *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).

Nicoll, W. Robertson, ed. (1900), *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).

Reese, Gareth (1976), *New Testament History—Acts* (Joplin, MO: College Press).

Ringgren, Helmer (1997), "malak," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).

Robertson, A.T. (1934), *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press).

Thayer, J.H. (1901), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977 reprint).

Vincent, M.R. (1890), *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1946 reprint).

Vine, W.E. (1952), *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell).

Warren, Thomas B. (1972), *Have Atheists Proved There Is No God* (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press).

Williams, George (1960), *The Student's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel), sixth edition.

Workman, Gary (1983), "That Which Is Perfect," *The Restorer*, 3[9]:6-9, September.

Wuest, Kenneth S. (1943a), *Treasures from the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).

Wuest, Kenneth S. (1943b), *Untranslatable Riches from the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).

<https://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&article=1399>

The Revelation of the Son of Man

Luke 17:22-37

By: Steven Lloyd

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Jesus and His disciples were on the border of Samaria and Galilee when the Pharisees bring up a question concerning the kingdom of God.
 - 1. They ask Him when the kingdom of God is supposed to come (Luke 17:20).
 - 2. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." In other words it is not an observable process (Leifeld, p. 997).

- B. By the time Luke writes this book rumors were already abroad that the day of the Lord had already come (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, Leifeld, p. 996). Later, others would question whether He would return at all (2 Peter 3:3-4).
 - 1. Jesus has already established the fact that He viewed the time between His departure and His return as considerable and unknown.
 - a. He characterized some people as thinking He had delayed His coming (Luke 12:45 - "My lord delayeth his coming").
 - b. The faithful are characterized by their waiting up and readying themselves no matter what watch of the night He comes.
 - c. The time of His return is unknown.
 - 1) "For in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Luke 12: 40).
 - 2) "...the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the unfaithful" (Luke 12:46).
 - 2. The topic of Luke 17:22-37 is the day of the Son of man (17:22, 24, 26, 30). While this phrase may have several referents, in this context I see no reason not to view it as pointing to the last day. Verses 22-37 are addressed to Jesus' disciples.

THE DAY OF THE SON OF MAN:

- A. Jesus makes reference to "the days of the Son of man," but also to "his day" (v. 24) or "the day that the Son of Man is revealed" (v. 30).
 - 1. Of that day, He warns His disciples of those who would lead them astray by saying, "Lo, there! Lo, here!" as if they had located Him.
 - 2. But Jesus tells them, "...go not away, nor follow after them: for as the lightening, when it lighteneth out of the one point under heaven, shineth unto the other part of heaven, so shall the Son of man be in His day" (17: 24).

- a. Just as lightening is universally experienced and unannounced by human heralders, so shall Jesus' coming be.
 - b. The point being that no one will need to direct us to see Him in that day, for every eye shall see Him and every knee shall bow.
 - c. It will be evident to all.
- B. But, first things first: "But first must he suffer many things and be rejected of this generation" (17:25).
- C. Another point Jesus makes with reference to the day of the Son of Man is that it cannot be foreseen from signs (vv. 26-31).
1. If you were to take the time to compare this text with Jesus' message in Matthew 24 here is what you would find.
 - a. In Matthew 24 Jesus provides a number of precursory signs which will warn the faithful of the impending doom and will accompany the destruction of Jerusalem, i.e.:
 - 1) Wars and rumors of wars,
 - 2) Nation shall rise up against nation and
 - 3) Famines and earthquakes in divers places.
 - b. But with regard to the coming of the Son of man and the simultaneous passing away of heaven and earth, no precursory signs are given.
 2. In Luke 17:26-31 Jesus identifies no precursory signs that will alert the faithful to His coming.
 - a. He compares His coming to the days of Noah.
 - b. He compares His coming to the days of Lot.
 - c. Notice also this comparison:
 - 1) In the days of Noah until the flood people ate, drank, married and were given in marriage.
 - 2) In the days of Lot, until the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, people ate, drank, bought, sold, planted and built.
 - 3) Not only do these descriptions indicate "life as usual," I wonder if it is not the same thing as:
 - a) The rich fool who said, "...take thine ease, eat drink, be merry" (Luke 12:19).
 - b) The foolish servant who thought his master had delayed His coming, so ate, drank and became drunk (Luke 12:45).
 - c) The rich man of Luke 16:19-31 who fared sumptuously and was clothed in purple.
 - 4) Whether death or the Lord's return, both took each character off-guard.
 - 5) "Despite all warnings, they were taken by surprise when completely off their guard" (McGarvey, p. 532, *Fourfold Gospel*).
 - 6) The Lord's message in Luke 17:22-37 is "Do not let My coming catch you off-guard."

- D. Jesus' instructions in verses 31-33 are rather interesting.
1. Some have concluded that this may very well be a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and that Jesus is warning them not to delay leaving Jerusalem when they see the precursory signs of its destruction surrounding them.
 - a. In the Matthew text they are exhorted to "flee unto the mountains" (Luke 24:16).
 - b. In Luke 17:22-37 there is no reference to fleeing anywhere.
 2. If these instructions pertain to the final coming of our Lord, what sense would it make to warn people not to return for goods from their house?
 - a. J. W. McGarvey wondered the same thing. "It seems strange that the terrors of the last day should be accompanied by any thought or concern for property, but such is the plain intimation of the text. If our hope has been centered upon earthly things we will be found seeking them even in that hour, just as the face of Lot's wife was turned toward Sodom despite the glare of the penal fires. Our earthy characters become fixed, and great catastrophes do not change them (Revelation 22:10-12). If in that hour we be found seeking to save our carnal treasures, it will be a sign that we have lost the spiritual from our lives and have no heavenly treasures" (p. 533).
 - b. Thus, our Lord's admonition, "Remember Lot's wife."
 - 1) Lot and his family left the plain cities with the divine warning not to look back lest they be consumed (Genesis 19:17).
 - 2) But Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26).
 - c. There is also the warning of verse 33.
 3. This also fits in with instructions Jesus has already given concerning where a person's treasures are.
 - a. After delivering the parable of the rich fool Jesus said, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21).
 - b. After His discourse on anxiety, He exhorted His disciples to make for themselves treasures in heaven that fail not, where no thief can break through and steal and where moth cannot destroy (Matthew 6:19).
 - c. He warns us that discipleship requires us to renounce all that we have (Luke 14:33).
- E. This event (Luke 17:34-35) will not be isolated to one geographical location on the globe. It will be a world-wide event.
1. Some will be sleeping, others grinding together.
 2. What is meant by, "One shall be taken and the other shall be left."?
 - a. My personal judgment is that some shall be taken to glory while those who are left are abandoned to judgment (Leifeld concurs).

- b. This has, for a long time, been my conviction with reference to Matthew 24:40-41.
- c. This coincides with the teaching of Paul that there will be an order to the resurrection of the just.
 - 1) "The dead in Christ shall rise first,"
 - 2) "Then we that are alive..." (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
 - 3) Perhaps the unjust shall be left and be the last to be raised - but raised to judgment.
- 3. Verses 34-35 tell us what will happen in the day of the Son of man.

RESPONSE:

- A. The disciples' response to all of this is, "Where, Lord?" (The Pharisees asked, "When?" His disciples asked, "Where?")
 - 1. Jesus said to them, "Where the body is, thither will be the eagles (vultures) also be gathered together."
 - a. Jesus' reference to "the body" paints for us a picture of the dead.
 - b. He refers to eagles (lit. "vultures") which always seek out the dead.
 - 2. It is apparently a picture of spiritual judgment on the spiritually dead.
 - 3. So, where will all this occur? Wherever bodies and the vultures are. Everywhere!
 - a. Geldenhuys: "Where there is spiritual decay judgment will follow relentlessly and assuredly - this refers to what happens through all ages, but especially to the time of the end, when the judgments of God will visit the unregenerated after the faithful have been finally united to their glorified Lord and Redeemer" (p. 446, *New International Critical Commentary, Luke*). Geldenhuys believes this last statement to be a well-known Palestinian proverb (p. 447).
 - b. McGarvey, pp. 533-534, "The disciples desired to know where this manifestation and division would take place, looking upon it as a local prediction. Jesus gave a proverbial answer, the meaning of which is that sin courts and draws to itself punishment and destruction just as a carcass draws winged scavengers. Applying his words, we may say that as the corruption of the antediluvians drew upon them the devastation of the flood and as the crimes of the Sodomites called down upon them the fires from heaven, and as the unbelief of the Jews of Christ's day caused the destruction of Jerusalem and the death of the nation, so the wickedness of the men of the last times will result in the ending of the world."

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. In this section of Luke (Luke 19:51-58):
 - 1. "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on" (Luke 12:22),

2. Be rich toward God (Luke 12:21, 33-34),
3. Be ready (Luke 12:40),
4. Be penitent (Luke 15:18),
5. Be prudent (Luke 16:1-13),
6. Be kind (Luke 16:19-31),
7. Be forgiving (Luke 17:1-4),
8. Be faithful (Luke 17:5) and
9. Be prepared (Luke 17:22-37).

Did Jesus Rise “On” or “After” the Third Day?

by Eric Lyons, M.Min.

The most frequent reference to Jesus’ resurrection reveals that He rose from the grave **on** the third day of His entombment. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record Jesus as prophesying that He would arise from the grave on this day (Matthew 17:23; Mark 9:31; Luke 9:22). The apostle Paul wrote in his first epistle to the Corinthians that Jesus arose from the grave “the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:4). What’s more, while preaching to Cornelius and his household, Peter taught that God raised Jesus up “on the third day” (Acts 10:40, emp. added). The fact is, however, Jesus also taught (and Mark recorded) “that the Son of Man” would “be killed, and **after three days** rise again” (Mark 8:31, emp. added). Furthermore, Jesus elsewhere prophesied that He would be in the heart of the Earth for “three days and three nights” (Matthew 12:40). So which is it? Did Jesus rise from the dead **on** the third day or **after** three days?

While to the 21st-century reader these statements may initially appear to contradict one another, in reality, they harmonize perfectly if one understands the different, and sometimes more liberal, methods ancients often used when reckoning time. In the first century, any part of a day could be computed for the whole day and the night following it (cf. Lightfoot, 1979, pp. 210-211). The Jerusalem Talmud quotes rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, who lived around A.D. 100, as saying: “A day and night are an Onah [‘a portion of time’] and the portion of an Onah is as the whole of it” (from Jerusalem Talmud: Shabbath ix. 3, as quoted in Hoehner, 1974, pp. 248-249, bracketed comment in orig.). Azariah indicated that a portion of a 24-hour period could be considered the same “as the whole of it.” Thus, as awkward as it may sound to an American living in the 21st century, a person in ancient times could legitimately speak of something occurring “on the third day,” “after three days,” or after “three days and three nights,” yet still be referring to the same exact day.

The Scriptures contain several examples which clearly show that in Bible times a part of a day was often equivalent to the whole day.

- According to Genesis 7:12, the rain of the Noahic Flood was upon the Earth “forty days and forty nights.” Verse 17 of that same chapter says it was on the Earth for just “forty days.” Who would argue that it had to rain precisely 960 hours (40 days x 24 hours) for both of these statements to be true?
- In Genesis 42:17 Joseph incarcerated his brothers **for three days**. Then, according to verse 18, he spoke to them **on the third day** and released them (all but one, that is).
- In 1 Samuel 30:12,13, the phrases “three days and three nights” and “three days” are used interchangeably.
- When Queen Esther was about to risk her life by going before the king uninvited, she instructed her fellow Jews to follow her example by not eating “for three

days, night or day” (Esther 4:16). The text goes on to tell us that Esther went in unto the king “on the third day” (5:1, emp. added).

- Perhaps the most compelling Old Testament passage which clearly testifies that the ancients (at least occasionally) considered a portion of a twenty-four hour period “as the whole of it” is found in 2 Chronicles 10. When Israel asked King Rehoboam to lighten their burdens, he wanted time to contemplate their request, so he instructed Jeroboam and the people of Israel to return “**after** three days” (2 Chronicles 10:5, emp. added). Verse 12, however, indicates that Jeroboam and the people of Israel came to Rehoboam “on the third day, as the king had directed, saying, ‘Come back to me **the** third day’ ” (emp. added). Fascinating, is it not, that even though Rehoboam instructed his people to return “**after** three days,” they understood this to mean “**on** the third day.”
- From Acts 10, we can glean further insight into the ancient practice of counting consecutive days (in part or in whole) as complete days. Luke recorded how an angel appeared to Cornelius at “about the ninth hour of the day” (approximately 3:00 p.m.; Acts 10:3). “**The next day**” (10:9) Peter received a vision from God and welcomed visitors sent by Cornelius. “**On the next day**” (10:23) Peter and the servants of Cornelius departed for Caesarea. “And **the following day** they entered Caesarea” where Peter taught Cornelius and his household the Gospel (10:24). At one point during Peter’s visit, Cornelius spoke about his encounter with the angel of God. Notice carefully how he began the rehearsal of the event. He stated: “**Four days ago to this hour**, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour...” (10:30, NASB, emp. added). Although the event actually had occurred only 72 hours (or three literal days) earlier, Cornelius spoke of it as taking place “**four days ago to this hour**.” Why four days instead of three? Because according to the first-century method of reckoning time, a part of the first day and a part of the fourth day could be counted as whole days. Surely one can see how this information aligns itself perfectly with Jesus’ burial taking place on Friday and His resurrection occurring on Sunday. A part of Friday, all day Saturday, and a part of Sunday would be considered **three** days in ancient times, not one or two.

Even though in modern times some may find this reasoning somewhat confusing, similar idiomatic expressions frequently are used today. For example, we consider a baseball game that ends after only completing 8½ innings a “9-inning game.” And even though the losing pitcher on the visiting team only pitched 8 innings (and not 9 innings like the winning pitcher from the home team), he is said to have pitched a **complete** game. Consider also the guest at a hotel who checks in at 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, and checks out at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday—less than 24 hours later. Did the man stay one day or two days at the hotel? Technically, the guest was there for less than one full day (24-hour period), yet the hotel legally can charge him for two days since he did not leave before the mandatory 11:00 a.m. checkout time. Considering how flexible we are in measuring time, depending on the context, perhaps we should not be surprised at how liberal the ancients could be in calculating time.

Further evidence proving that Jesus' statements regarding His burial were not contradictory centers around the fact that even His enemies did not accuse Him of contradicting Himself. No doubt this was due to their familiarity with and use of the flexible, customary method of stating time. In fact, the chief priests and Pharisees even said to Pilate the day after Jesus was crucified: "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure **until** the third day" (Matthew 27:63-64, emp. added). The phrase "after three days" must have been equivalent to "the third day," else surely the Pharisees would have asked for a guard of soldiers until the fourth day. Interesting, is it not, that modern skeptics charge Jesus with contradicting Himself, but not the hypercritical Pharisees of His own day.

The idiomatic expressions that Jesus and the Bible writers employed to denote how long Jesus would remain in the grave do not mean that He literally was buried for 72 hours. If we interpret the account of Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection in light of the cultural setting of the first century, and not according to the present-day (mis)understanding of skeptics, we find no errors in any of the expressions that Jesus and the gospel writers used.

REFERENCES

Hoehner, Harold W (1974), "Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ—Part IV: The Day of Christ's Crucifixion," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 131:241-264, July.

Lightfoot, John (1979 reprint), *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker).

<https://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?&article=756>

Are There Degrees of Punishment and Reward?

by Kyle Butt, M.Div.

Alden Bass

Bert Thompson, Ph.D.

Q.

Will there be degrees of reward in heaven? Similarly, will there be degrees of punishment in hell?

A.

Any topic relating to the specific nature of man's ultimate, eternal abode should be of great interest to all accountable people, since every human eventually will inhabit eternity (see Thompson, 2000a, pp. 33-39; 2000b, pp. 41-47; 2000c, pp. 49-55). It is not surprising, then, that questions of what conditions will be like in the afterlife often occupy our thoughts. Whenever questions of spiritual import are under consideration—as they are when discussing the destiny of the soul—the only reliable source of information must by necessity be the One Who is the Originator and Sustainer of the soul. God, as Creator of all things physical and spiritual (Genesis 1:1ff.; Exodus 20:11), and Himself a Spirit Being (John 4:24), is the ultimate wellspring of the soul (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The Bible, then, as God's inspired Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21), must be the preeminent authority on this subject. It therefore is to Holy Writ that we must turn to answer any question about eternity.

DEGREES OF ETERNAL REWARD

First, it is important to note that **every** faithful follower of God eventually will receive an **eternal reward**. Writing in the book of Revelation, the apostle John described in striking language the destiny of the righteous when this world finally comes to an end: "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them.... He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (21:3,7, RSV). Earlier, John had encouraged his readers with these words: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). John's coworker, the apostle Paul, referred to those who had served Jesus faithfully as "heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7). The writer of the book of Hebrews spoke of Christ as having become "unto all them that obey him, the author of eternal salvation" (5:9).

Second, it is equally important to realize that every saint will be rewarded "according to his deeds." Matthew wrote: "For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds" (16:27). Paul used practically identical words in Romans 2:5-7: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his works."

Such a concept was taught even in Old Testament times. Solomon wrote: "If thou sayest, 'We knew not this,' doth not he that weigheth the heart consider it? And he that keepeth thy soul, doth he not know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his work?" (Proverbs 24:12).

Parables from the mouth of the Lord similarly demonstrate that every person will be judged according to his or her deeds. The parable of the pounds, recorded in Luke 19:11-27, is a perfect example.

A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called ten servants of his, and gave them each ten pounds, and said unto them, "Trade ye herewith till I come." But his citizens hated him, and sent an ambassage after him, saying, "We will not that this man reign over us." And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, that he commanded these servants, unto whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading. And the first came before him, saying, "Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more." And he said unto him, "Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." And the second came, saying, "Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds." And he said unto him also, "Be thou also over five cities." And another came, saying, "Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that which thou layedst not down, and reapest that which thou didst not sow." He saith unto him, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up that which I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow; then wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank, and I at my coming should have required it with interest?" And he said unto them that stood by, "Take from him the pound, and give it unto him that hath the ten pounds." And they said unto him, "Lord, he hath ten pounds." I say unto you, that unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him.

After reading this parable (and the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30), it is clear that certain individuals receive—and thus are responsible for—more pounds/talents than some others. The faithful servant who soundly invested ten pounds was awarded authority over ten cities. The second servant also was recompensed in proportion to the degree with which he fulfilled his responsibility to the master. He wisely invested five pounds, and in return was given authority over five cities. There is no reason to disbelieve, then, that had the third servant been equally faithful, he, too, would have been rewarded commensurate with his investment (which likely would have been authority over one city). This parable, then, teaches the following: (1) all of God's servants are blessed with varied abilities; (2) all who are faithful stewards of the ability with which they have been endowed will obtain a reward; and (3) God's stewards will be rewarded based on what they accomplished with the abilities that were entrusted to

them. [This is not to say, of course, that heaven is “earned” by any human works (see Thompson, 1999, pp. 47-49). Ephesians 2:8-9 states unequivocally that salvation is a free gift of God, not something bestowed because of any human merit. Rather, the works done in the here and now provide for the Christian an eternal weight of glory—a weight that differs from person to person (2 Corinthians 4:17).]

If believers are to be judged according to their works (Matthew 16:27; 25:31-46; Revelation 20:12), it logically follows that those with the **greatest responsibility** can expect the **strictest judgment**. Indeed, the Good Book teaches exactly such a principle. Jehovah charged the prophet Ezekiel:

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, “Thou shalt surely die,” and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thy hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning; and thou hast delivered thy soul (Ezekiel 3:17-21).

What an awesome and terrifying responsibility that ancient preacher and prophet was given. Millennia later, James offered this warning: “Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive **heavier judgment**” (James 3:1).

Those who suggest that God will reward every saint **equally** often appeal to the parable that Christ presented in Matthew 20:1-15 for support of their position. There, the Lord told of a certain landowner who was in need of workers to assist him in his vineyard. The man went to the marketplace to find laborers and, when he had located some men, agreed to pay them a denarius each. About the third hour, he went to the market again in order to seek additional laborers. He went out twice more and then, at the eleventh hour, he found still more men to help. This last group worked only one hour, and yet when the end of the day arrived and all the men lined up to be paid, those “eleventh-hour” workers received their wages first—a full denarius. The rest of the men were given equal dues. When the master finally got to the laborers he had hired first thing that morning, he gave them the same amount he had given everyone else. Those “first-hour” workers were outraged! The very idea that they—who had been hired first and worked longest—should receive the same recompense as those who worked only one hour, was more than they could handle. The text in Matthew says that “they murmured against the householder” (vs. 11). But the man who had hired them responded simply: “Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what

is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things?" (vss. 13-15).

Those who teach that God will reward each of His faithful followers equally suggest that the denarius in this parable represents eternal life (see, for example: Wright, 1980, 122:531; Coffman, 1974, p. 307), and since every worker received a denarius, the implication is that there can be no "degrees" of reward. This, however, cannot be what the parable is teaching. In his commentary on the book of Matthew, renowned biblical scholar R.C.H. Lenski explained why.

Those who think that the denarius is eternal life, of course, regard the evening as the final judgment or the hour of death. Even in this verse this cannot be the sense, for eternal life is never **earned** by any man's work. The combination of a)po/ with do/j (di/dwmi) means "give what is due." Eternal life is never **due** anyone either at the time of its first bestowal in conversion or at the time of its full enjoyment when the believer enters heaven (1943, pp. 772-773, emp. added).

If this parable were speaking about final judgment, it would indeed provide a cogent argument for the equality of each person's eternal reward. But is the parable addressing final judgment and eternal rewards? No, it is not. In Matthew 20:11 the text clearly indicates that the ones who worked all day "murmured against the householder." In regard to those who did so, H. Leo Boles commented that "they were envious; their eyes were evil" (1952, p. 400). But the Scriptures make it clear that there will be no envy in heaven (Revelation 21:27). Lenski correctly observed: "Here, it ought to be plain, the possibility of making the denarius equal to eternal life is removed. The thought that a saint in heaven may murmur against God is appalling" (p. 775).

In addition, the master of the vineyard commanded the workers who labored in the field all day: "Take up that which is thine and **go thy way**" (vs. 14, emp. added). Lenski rendered the phrase, "Take up thine own and **be gone**," and then observed:

This lord is done with him. And this is the climax of the parable. This u(/page [be gone] cannot mean, "Go and be content with thy wages!" It is exactly like the imperative found in 4:10, and always means to leave, cf., 8:13; 19:21.... This is a man who works in the church for what he can get out of the church. He has what he worked for—and nothing more. He is treated exactly as the hypocrites are who are mentioned in 6:2,5: "Verily, I say unto you, They have received their reward!" i.e., are paid in full.... Those who will learn nothing about divine grace even when they are working in the church will finally be left without this grace; those who are set on justice and refuse to go beyond it shall finally have justice (p. 777).

If we interpret the parable to mean that the master of the vineyard represents God, and the denarius represents eternal reward, how, then, are we to interpret the fact that those who worked all day received a denarius, but were **sent away from the master** of the

vineyard? Can such a view be squared with Paul's word in 1 Thessalonians 4:17—"And so shall we **ever** be with the Lord"?

If this parable is not discussing final judgment (and it is not), and if the denarius does not represent eternal life (and it does not), what, then, is the point of the parable? It appears that Christ was instructing His Jewish listeners about the Gentiles' place in the Kingdom—a topic that, as we learn from later New Testament writings, became somewhat controversial among first-century Christians. The late Guy N. Woods, former editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, wrote concerning Christ's discussion:

It is possible, indeed probable, in the minds of many scholars that it was delivered to show that the Gentiles, who came in at "the eleventh hour," would enjoy in the kingdom (soon to be established when these words were uttered) the same privileges as the Jews who had been the favored and chosen people of the Lord for many centuries. Though last in point of invitation, they were to become first through their acceptance of, and dedication to, the gospel; whereas, the Jews, through their rebellion and disbelief, would be cut off (1976, p. 231, parenthetical comment in orig.).

Numerous conservative biblical commentators have suggested exactly such a view, including Adam Clarke (n.d. 5:194-197) and H. Leo Boles (1952, pp. 400-401). One writer by the name of Watts put it like this:

It is not the design of this parable to represent the final rewards of the saints at the day of judgment, but to show that the nation of the Jews, who had been called to be the people of God above a thousand years before, and had borne the burden and heat of the day, i.e., the toil and bondage of many ceremonies, should have no preference in the esteem of God above the Gentiles, who were called at the last hour, or at the end of the Jewish dispensation (as quoted in Woods, 1980, 122:532).

While the parable of the laborers established that all who are deserving (Jew or Gentile) would inherit a reward, it also emphasized God's grace. As Lenski remarked:

The warning represented in this parable suggests our responsibility. If we close eye and heart against grace, no matter how high we stand in the church or how much we work, we shall lose life eternal (1943, p. 781).

But what of the denarius? What does it represent, if not eternal life? Lenski concluded—correctly, we believe—that the denarius represents the blessings one receives here on Earth by being a member of the Lord's church.

The denarius paid at evening constitutes the temporal blessings connected with our Christian profession and work, and these blessings are made ours already during the entire time that we work. Every one of us gets his denarius; every one

enjoys the same temporal benefits that are connected with life in the church. They come to the new convert exactly as they do to the old, to the preacher as well as to the [member], to the child as well as to the octogenarian (p. 772).

REASONS FOR UNEQUAL REWARDS

Lending credence to the idea that Jesus' parable in Matthew 20 is not discussing equality of eternal rewards is the fact that the Bible plainly depicts certain people being awarded a unique and distinguished position in heaven. Revelation 15:3 notes that in heaven "they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." Surely none of us would be so bold as to suggest that the hosts of heaven will sing a song about **us** as they do about Moses. Furthermore, in Revelation 21:14 John wrote that "the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." While we recognize the somewhat figurative nature of certain terms employed by John, the principle nevertheless remains: the apostles ultimately will occupy a place of greater preeminence in the heavenly abode. Also, Luke 16 portrays Abraham as having more prominence and authority in the afterlife than Lazarus. Consider also Mark 10:40, wherein James and John asked the Lord to allow them to sit next to Him in glory—one on His right side and one on His left. Jesus replied: "To sit on my right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared." Some glorified beings (whether angelic or human) will occupy a place of distinction beside the Savior—a unique and special place reserved solely for them.

Some have argued against the idea of differing rewards by claiming that heaven will be perfect, and that something perfect can be neither improved nor diminished. However, Jesus observed that "even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, **more** [joy] than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7, emp. added). In at least some sense, then, joy in heaven can differ in degrees. The principle of degrees of heavenly reward—which is taught quite plainly in Scripture—should motivate every Christian to "work while it is yet day, for the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4).

DEGREES OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

But if there are degrees of reward in heaven, will there likewise be degrees of punishment in hell? Yes indeed. On several occasions, when speaking of eternal torment, the Bible mentions those who will suffer to a lesser or greater degree. And each time such a reference occurs, the punishment is proportionate to the opportunities missed. Those who are blessed with numerous opportunities to obey the gospel and still reject it will receive greater condemnation than those who have little or no occasion to accept Christ. Jesus echoed this sentiment in His rebuke to the inhabitants of the cities of Bethsaida and Chorazin.

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be **more tolerable** for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you that it shall be **more tolerable** for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee (Matthew 11:21-24, emp. added).

Jesus offered this censure to those Jewish cities where He had done much of His preaching, and where, on occasion, He even had performed miracles. The citizens of those towns had more opportunity to accept the Messiah than many others living around them, yet they persisted in their rejection of Him. On the other hand, the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon—renowned for their wickedness—would receive a **lesser** punishment at the Day of Judgment for the simple reason that they had been deprived of direct exposure to Christ’s message and miracles. All were to endure punishment, for all had rejected God’s law. But it would not be **equal** punishment. The writer of Hebrews further emphasized this point when he addressed the “sorer punishment” that was to befall those who had “trodden underfoot the Son of God” (10:29). Notice also Peter’s stinging statement regarding the terrible fate that awaits unfaithful, backsliding Christians:

For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, **the last state is become worse with them than the first** (2 Peter 2:20-21, emp. added).

If Peter’s statement teaches anything, it teaches degrees of punishment.

But perhaps the most convincing argument for the concept of degrees of punishment derives from Jesus’ parable of the wicked servant, as recorded in Luke 12:42-48.

And the Lord said, “Who, then, is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. But if that servant shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delayeth his coming,’ and shall begin to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the unfaithful. And that servant, who knew his lord’s will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with **many** stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with **few** stripes. And to whomsoever

much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more” (emp. added).

The meaning of the last section of this parable is inescapable. All the wicked will be punished; however, those limited in their opportunities to learn about Christ will be punished “with fewer stripes” than those who knew the truth and obeyed it not.

Does the Bible teach degrees of reward in heaven? Yes, it does. Does it also teach degrees of punishment in hell? Yes, it does. The good news, of course, is that heaven’s offer of salvation is open to everyone (John 3:16; Romans 6:23). No one **has** to go to hell. When Christ was ransomed on our behalf (1 Timothy 2:4), He paid a debt He did not owe, and a debt we could not pay—so that we could live forever in the presence of our Creator (Matthew 25:46). God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11). Nor should we. As one writer put it: “No one who has been snatched from the burning himself can feel anything but compassion and concern for the lost” (Woodson, 1973, p. 32). As we discover the hideous nature of our sin, we not only should desire to save ourselves “from this crooked generation” (Acts 2:40), but we also should be passionate about warning the wicked of their impending doom (Ezekiel 3:17-19).

REFERENCES

- Boles, H. Leo (1952), *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate).
- Clarke, Adam (no date), *Clarke’s Commentary* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury).
- Coffman, Burton (1974), *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Abilene, Texas: ACU Press).
- Kurfees, M.C., ed. (1921), *Questions and Answers by Lipscomb and Sewell* (Nashville, TN: McQuiddy).
- Lenski, R.C.H. (1943), *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg).
- Thompson, Bert (1999), *My Sovereign, My Sin, My Salvation* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- Thompson, Bert (2000a), “The Origin, Nature, and Destiny of the Soul—Part III,” *Reason and Revelation*, 20:33-39, May.
- Thompson, Bert (2000b), “The Origin, Nature, and Destiny of the Soul—Part IV,” *Reason and Revelation*, 20:41-47, June.

Thompson, Bert (2000c), "The Origin, Nature, and Destiny of the Soul—Part V," Reason and Revelation, 20:49-55, July.

Woods, Guy N. (1976), Questions and Answers (Henderson, TN: Freed-Hardeman University).

Woods, Guy N. (1980), "Editorial Note" accompanying an article by Cecil N. Wright, "Are There Degrees of Reward and Punishment in Eternity," Gospel Advocate, 122:531-532, August 21.

Woodson, Leslie (1973), Hell and Salvation (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell).

Wright, Cecil N. (1980), "Are There Degrees of Reward and Punishment in Eternity," Gospel Advocate, 122:531-532, August 21.

<http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=22&article=212>

The Appearances of Jesus after His Resurrection

Order	Time	To Whom	Place	Record
1 st	Early Sunday morning	Mary Magdalene	Near the tomb at Jerusalem	Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18
2 nd	Sunday morning	Women returning from the tomb	Near Jerusalem	Matthew 28:9-10
3 rd	Sunday	Simon Peter alone	Near Jerusalem	Luke 24:34
4 th	Sunday afternoon	Two disciples going to Emmaus	Between Jerusalem and Emmaus, and at Emmaus	Luke 24:13-31
5 th	Sunday evening	Apostles, except Thomas	Jerusalem	John 20:19-25
6 th	Sunday evening of next week	Apostles, Thomas present	Jerusalem	John 20:26-29
7 th ?	Unknown	Seven disciples fishing	Sea of Galilee	John 21:1-13
8 th ?	Unknown	Eleven disciples on mountain	Galilee	Matthew 28:16-20
9 th ?	Unknown	About 500 brethren at once	Galilee	1 Corinthians 15:6
10 th ?	Unknown	James only	Probably Jerusalem	1 Corinthians 15:7
11 th ?	Unknown	All the apostles at ascension	Mount of Olives, near Bethany	Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:6-12