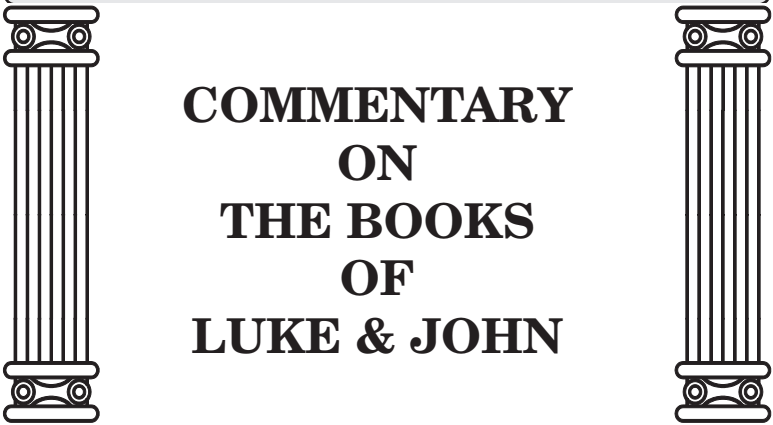


GOD'S MESSAGES BIBLE COMMENTARY SERIES

VOLUME 2

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading.
(Nehemiah 8:8).



COMMENTARY ON THE BOOKS OF LUKE & JOHN

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Murfreesboro, Tenn.
2000

Printed in the United States of America
2000

A Product Of

Sain Publications

P. O. Box 616 • Pulaski, TN 38478

931 ~ 363-6905

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Dedication

This volume of the God's Messages Commentaries
is dedicated
To:

My Preaching and teaching Brethren
Who labor so diligently to spread God's Word.

The Lord has commanded that we do more than
hearing and understanding the truth.
We are to be responsible for presenting it to others
Through our words and deeds.

I know from personal experience that preaching
is both a blessing and a challenge.
One must know enough to be confident.
But he must also know enough to be humble.
The faithful gospel preacher is usually not rich
in gold and silver.
But he is enriching both himself and others
in the treasures laid up in heaven.

Teaching the Word of God is just as valuable
as delivering it from a pulpit.
Women who teach children and other women
are precious in the sight of the Lord.
Men who teach spend countless hours in
study and preparation.
May God be with our preachers and teachers.

~ Leon Stancliff

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**The Book Of
LUKE**

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Introduction To Luke's Account Of The Gospel

I. The Author and Date of the Book:

The writer of this account of the life of Christ was Luke, the physician. He was a well educated man and found himself completely at home in his travels with Paul, who was also of high intellectual ability. There is reason to believe that Luke was a Gentile, which helps to make some of the statements in the book clearer. He was with Christ on the second missionary journey. In 2 Timothy Paul said, "Only Luke is with me." He saw Paul through to the very end.

There is reason to believe the book was written sometime between A.D. 58 and A.D. 61.

II. To whom addressed?

Luke did not limit his writing to the Gentiles. It is true that he appealed to the Greek mind when he presented Jesus as the perfect man the Greeks were searching for. However, Luke most definitely wished for his account to appeal to men of every race and every land. The Great Commission was to include all men of every nation. Luke felt that responsibility.

III. The Nature of the Book:

In tune with the training of a medical physician, the book is written in very efficient grammatical

form. There is also a heavy interest in the miracles and the parables of the Lord. This is just what we might expect from a doctor.

Jesus is seen as the Redeemer. He came in a body similar to our own. He came as a brother in the flesh. He came to offer hope of reconciliation with our Creator and Father in heaven.

IV. A Brief Outline of the Book:

- A. Introduction
- B. Birth and childhood of John.
- C. Birth and childhood of Jesus.
- D. The Galilean Ministry.
- E. Ministry in Perea and Judea.
- F. Ministry in Jerusalem.
- G. The Betrayal and Death of Jesus.
- H. The Resurrection.
- I. The Ascension.

Chapter 1

Luk 1:1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

Luk 1:2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

Luk 1:3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

Luk 1:4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

I welcome you to the study of another of the books of the New Testament. This time it will be the book of Luke. In the first volume of this commentary series we investigated both Matthew and Mark's accounts of the life of Christ. The story is not complete until we have examined what Luke and John have to tell us about the life of our Lord. Each of the four accounts of the life of the Master approach the matter in slightly different ways. By an examination of all four, we are able to see the entire picture as God would have it placed before us.

We are ready then to plunge into a study of Luke, chapter one. This chapter tells us of the promise made by angels to both Elizabeth, the mother of John the baptist, and Mary the mother of Christ.

No woman throughout all history has ever received finer and sweeter news than did those two. One was to give birth to the forerunner of Jesus. The other was to bear the Christ child himself.

We need to say just a word about Luke who was the author of this account of the life of our Lord. Luke was a physician. Physicians are noted for keeping careful and detailed records on their patients. Luke fits the mold. As we read his record of the life of Christ we can see his careful attention to details that are not necessarily given by Matthew, Mark or John. I will try to point out a few of these things as we go along.

Luke begins the book by telling us there were many who decided to make a record of Jesus life. He thought it important that he do so because he had been an eyewitness and a minister of the word. He added that he had perfect understanding of all things from the very first. By this he clearly means he had inspired help from the Father in heaven as he wrote.

He addressed his book to Theophilus. I find it interesting that so many have wondered who Theophilus was. The word Theophilus means “lover of God.” The book is then addressed to every man or woman who loves Jehovah and desires to know more about his Son. We can simply place our own name at the beginning. It was addressed to us, if we love the Lord.

Luk 1:5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named

Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

Luk 1:6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the command-ments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Luk 1:7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

Luk 1:8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

Luk 1:9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

Luk 1:10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

In the days when Herod was king of Judea, there lived a priest named Zacharias, and his wife Elizabeth. Elizabeth was barren and both of them were past the age of producing children. A woman who had not given birth to children was embarrassed at that time. Most Jewish women knew of the promise that a Messiah would come. Many dreamed of the possibility they might be the one to bring him into the world. Zacharias and Elizabeth were saddened by their lack of children. Both of them were righteous people. It was hard for them to understand.

Luk 1:11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side

of the altar of incense.

Luk 1:12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

Luk 1:13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

Luk 1:14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

Luk 1:15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

Luk 1:16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

Luk 1:17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

What a welcome announcement. Not only were Zacharias and Elizabeth to have a child. That child was to fulfil the prophecy of old that someone would come in the spirit of Elijah to act as a harbinger of the Messiah.

Their prayers had been heard and they were to be answered in glorious fashion. The promised baby would be the one who prepared the people's hearts to receive the coming Saviour and Redeemer.

Luk 1:18 And Zacharias said unto the angel,

Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

Luk 1:19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

Luk 1:20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

Zacharias went into the temple one day to burn incense before the Lord. While he was inside there were many people praying outside. Suddenly an angel from God appeared to Zacharias and the priest became very fearful. His fear was quickly removed. The angel told him not to be afraid. His wife was to have a son who was to be given the name John. The child would become very great in the sight of God. He would be filled with the Holy Spirit and would turn many people to the Lord. John was to make ready a people prepared to meet the Messiah.

Luk 1:21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

Luk 1:22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained

speechless.

Luk 1:23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

Luk 1:24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

Luk 1:25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Zacharias found these words hard to believe. How could a man and woman as old as he and his wife have children. The angel replied that because he had failed to believe the promise, he would not be able to speak. The promise would be kept. Zacharias and Elizabeth would have a son.

As Zacharias came out of the temple the people knew he had received a vision while ministering inside. He was speechless. He beckoned to them but he was not able to speak a word. Elizabeth did conceive, just as the angel had promised. She kept to herself for five months as she rejoiced in her good news.

Luk 1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

Luk 1:27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

Luk 1:28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured,

the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Luk 1:29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

Six months after Elizabeth received her good news, the angel Gabriel proclaimed even greater news to Mary, who was engaged to Joseph, of the family of David.

Mary did not fully understand what was taking place. She was much concerned. The angel attempted to soothe her troubled heart with further details of his announcement.

Luk 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

Luk 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

Luk 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Luk 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Although Mary was still a virgin and had not come together with her future husband, she was to have a son. She was pleasing to God and had been chosen to bring forth a son who was to be

called the Son of the Highest, which of course refers only to God. Her baby would come to be known as the Son of God. He would become a King and His kingdom would last forever.

Luk 1:34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Luk 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Luk 1:36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

Luk 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

Luk 1:38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

When Elizabeth was six months pregnant the angel went also to Mary who was engaged to Joseph, but who was still a virgin. The angel announced to Mary that she was to be blessed among women. She would conceive and bring forth a son who was to be called Jesus. He would be called the Son of the Highest. He would be given the throne of his ancestor David and would receive a kingdom which would never end.

When Mary wondered how these things could be since she had not had sexual relationships with a man, the angel explained that the father of this child would be God himself. Mary would be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit. Her baby would become known as the Son of God.

Mary was told that her cousin Elizabeth had also conceived a child in her old age and was already six months along. The angel explained that nothing is impossible with God. An aged woman could have a child, and so could a virgin.

Luk 1:39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

Luk 1:40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

Luk 1:41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

Luk 1:42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

Luk 1:43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Luk 1:44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

Luk 1:45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

Luk 1:46 And Mary said, My soul doth

magnify the Lord,

Luk 1:47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Luk 1:48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Mary launched into a mountain of praise for what the Lord had done for her. She was not a woman of noble estate. She was but a handmaiden. But God had lifted her from her low position to one in which generations from that time on would recognize her as being blessed through the birth of this promised child.

Luk 1:49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

Luk 1:50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Luk 1:51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Luk 1:52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

Luk 1:53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

Luk 1:54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

Luk 1:55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

Luk 1:56 And Mary abode with her about

three months, and returned to her own house.

The Lord had proven that He was no respecter of persons. He had recognized the ones who love Him and keep His commandments. If men were proud and haughty, God was able to bring them down. If they were humble and lowly, God was able to lift them up.

Mary then made a visit to her cousin Elizabeth. The two women shared their happiness for the last three months of Elizabeth's pregnancy and then Mary returned to her own house. At that time she gave birth to her son and felt that her life was enriched.

The townspeople rejoiced with her because they realized this was a very unusual happening. Here was a woman who had given up hope of having a child. Yet she had done so. They were happy for her.

Luk 1:57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

Luk 1:58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

Luk 1:59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

Luk 1:60 And his mother answered and

said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

Luk 1:61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

Luk 1:62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

Luk 1:63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

The time arrived for the circumcision and naming of Elizabeth's son. Some were insisting that his name be Zacharias, after that of his father. As we saw in verse thirteen, the angel who had announced the coming birth of Elizabeth's son commanded that he be named John. Elizabeth remembered the instructions and insisted that John would be the name of the baby.

Luk 1:64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

Luk 1:65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.

Luk 1:66 And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

The law of Moses required that every baby boy

be circumcized on the eighth day after it's birth. Often the baby was named at the time of it's circumcision. The people expected that the babe would be named after Zacharias, it's father. Elizabeth spoke up quickly and disagreed with them. She told them the baby would be named John. They were perplexed. There was no one in her family named John. Why would she choose that name?

They then turned to Zacharias who still was unable to speak. Apparently he could not hear either because we are told they made signs to him askig him what the name of his baby was to be. Zacharias asked for a writing tablet to be brought to him. He wrote on the tablet, "*His name is John.*" As soon as he had written this his speech returned and he praised God. We are told that fear came upon all those who dwelt in the neighborhood. Not only that; the events were spread around the entire land of Judaea. God had performed some mighty miracles in bringing two babies into the world in a most astounding manner.

Can you not hear the conversations which must have gone on? "The wife of a priest in Jerusalem had a baby in her old age." Can you imagine such a thing. Everyone knew she was too old. Yet there was no way anyone could deny it. Some things can be claimed by deception. But this woman's pregnancy was too obvious to be a lie." The reply would come back. "The only way a woman of that age could bear a child would be with the help of God." Then another person would chime in. "That's not all. Another woman claims she delivered a baby without ever knowing a man." Could she be

deceiving us? She claims an angel told her the baby would become a great king whose kingdom would last forever. I suppose someone will be able to check that out someday.” On and on the chatter would run. But only as time passed and the words of the angel proved to be true one time after another would men come to realize just how correct the angel was.

Luk 1:67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

Luk 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

Luk 1:69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

Luk 1:70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

Luk 1:71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

Luk 1:72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

Luk 1:73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

Luk 1:74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

Luk 1:75 In holiness and righteousness

before him, all the days of our life.

Not only was Elizabeth happy that she was to give birth to a son in her old age, Zacharias was elated with what was happening. God had made many promises to the generations past that he would bless Israel and deliver them from the hands of their enemies. These children who were coming into the world would play a very important part in making it possible for men to live righteous and holy lives before the God of Heaven.

Luk 1:76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

Luk 1:77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

Luk 1:78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

Luk 1:79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luk 1:80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

Zacharias was then filled with the Holy Spirit and began to prophesy. His prophecy needs to be looked at very carefully. He declared that God had visited his people with a way of redemption for

their sins. He had raised up a horn of salvation through a member of the house of David.

Various readers of this commentary will have different amounts of Bible knowledge. For those who have done much study this prophecy will be familiar. King David once desired to build a temple, or house for God. God told David he could not allow David to build the temple. David had shed much blood. Nevertheless, David's son Solomon would be allowed to build the house of the Lord. Then God went on to say that he would build a house for David. A king would arise from the descendants of David who would become a king over all the earth. His kingdom would last forever. Zacharias was telling us that God was in the process of bringing the promise to David into being. His newborn son, John, would introduce this source of salvation to the Jews.

Listen to the words of Zacharias. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham.*

Abraham had been promised that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

David had been promised that a king whose kingdom would last forever would come through him. Zacharias son, John, would introduce this king to the world.

The tie between John the baptist and Christ was so close that it almost seems as if Zacharias is talking about his own son as he praised the son of Mary. What he is really doing is saying that his own son will have the blessed privilege of introducing the Messiah. He says, *And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.* Zacharias son was to be called a prophet of the Highest because he would tell the world of the Son of God who is to fulfil the promises to Abraham and to David. You need to take notice that Zacharias said his own son would prepare the way of the Lord by letting the people know of the need for remission of their sins. That is just what John did. He cried out to his listeners, *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

The reason John was to prepare the way of the Lord was that Jesus was to be a *“Dayspring from on high who would give light to them who sat in darkness.”* A number of times in the scripture the truth is spoken of as being like the sun. The prophet Malachi closed his book in the Old Testament by saying, *But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves*

of the stall.

In the New Testament the apostle Peter spoke of a day star which can arise in men's hearts. *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:* In the book of Revelation, John talked about the New Jerusalem where the Lamb is the light thereof.

Chapter 2

Luk 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.

Luk 2:2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

Luk 2:3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

Luk 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

Luk 2:5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Luk 2:6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

Luk 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

We are ready for the second chapter of Luke. At the time of Jesus birth, Palestine was under the rule of the Roman Empire. The Emperor, Caesar Augustus, ordered that a tax be collected from every part of the empire. Each citizen had to go to his own city to pay that tax. Joseph and Mary were required to go to Bethlehem. This must have been difficult for Mary because she was ready to give birth to her child. The baby was not born in

a mansion. He was born in a barn. There was no room in the inn at Bethlehem. Jesus was wrapped in clothing brought along for the purpose and he was laid in a manger.

Luk 2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Luk 2:9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Luk 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luk 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Luk 2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luk 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Luk 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Out in the fields nearby there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock at night. Suddenly the glory of the Lord shone upon them and they were afraid. An angel then announced to them that they need not be afraid. Something had happened

that would be good news for all people. In the city of Bethlehem a Saviour had been born. They would know it was He when they found Him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. A host of angels then cried out in praise to God.

Luk 2:15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

Luk 2:16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Luk 2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

Luk 2:18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Luk 2:19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Luk 2:20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

After the angels had left, the shepherds decided to go to Bethlehem and investigate that which they had been told. As the angels had promised, the shepherds found Joseph and Mary, along with the

newborn babe who was lying in the manger. The shepherds began to spread the good news to all others who would listen. In the meantime, Mary pondered these exciting events in her heart. What did the future hold?

Luk 2:21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Luk 2:22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

Luk 2:23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

Luk 2:24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

God had commanded that every Jewish baby boy must be circumcized on the eighth day after its birth. The angel had said that the baby should be called Jesus, and so that was the name Mary and Joseph gave to the child. Jewish law required that the firstborn child must be redeemed by the offering of a sacrifice. Those who could do so often sacrificed a lamb. Those who could not afford a lamb were allowed to offer pigeons or turtledoves. Since Joseph and Mary were poor, they offered the less

valuable sacrifice. This sacrifice was to be offered in the temple at Jerusalem.

Luk 2:25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

Luk 2:26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Luk 2:27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

Luk 2:28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Luk 2:29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

Luk 2:30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

Luk 2:31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

Luk 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

In the city of Jerusalem, there was an aged man whose name was Simeon. He was a good man. He had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Christ. He had waited patiently for this great event to take place. The Holy Spirit had led Simeon to the temple at the

time Joseph and Mary arrived with Jesus. When Simeon saw the babe he took him up in his arms and blessed God.

Oh how much I wish that men would take the same attitude today that Simeon had when he found Christ. Vast numbers of men today are surrounded with information regarding the Saviour, and yet they ignore it as if it were not there. How could Simeon long so whole-heartedly for such news and rejoice so when he found it fulfilled when multiplied millions now go on their way mocking the greatest gift the world has ever had presented to it?

You need to notice, my friends, that Simeon included all people in his blessing. The Jews had been God's chosen people for thousands of years. This was a strange new thought that the Saviour would come to men and women of every place and every race. Nevertheless, we still have a difficult time realizing that God does not play favorites today. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all men would come to repentance.

Luk 2:33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

Luk 2:34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

Luk 2:35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many

hearts may be revealed.

Joseph and Mary were amazed at the words of Simeon. They were probably less surprised than they might have been because of the previous promises made to Elizabeth and Mary concerning their expected children. The shocks just kept on coming, one after the other.

Then Simeon said something which must have been very puzzling to Mary. He said, *This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against.* Simeon then added that, *A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed.* Mary could not know at that point that this baby to which she had just given birth would have to die upon the cross of Calvary for the sins of the world.

Luk 2:36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

Luk 2:37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

Luk 2:38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Luk 2:39 And when they had performed

all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

Simeon was not the only one who visited the proud parents of Jesus while they were in Jerusalem for the purification of Mary and the sacrifice of the two turtledoves. There was a prophetess called Anna who had lived with her husband for seven years before his death. She was now eighty-four years old and had visited the temple regularly through all those years. She served God in fasting and prayer night and day.

When Anna saw the Christ child, she gave thanks to God and spread the word around that those who had looked for redemption from sin for Israel had seen their prayers answered. It sometimes takes a lot of perserverance to wait for God to give us an answer to our prayers. Anna is an example of just how much patience may be required. I do not know just how old Anna was when she married. However I think we may assume she was somewhere in the vicinity of twenty years of age. This would mean she had been praying and waiting for around sixty years. Dear listener, how long have you waited for God to give you an answer? Don't give up.

When Joseph and Mary had done all the things the law of Moses required of them, they returned to their own city of Nazareth. This was the place where Jesus was to spend his boyhood. I think we should say just a word more about this village. It was not a large place. But it had a reputation that

reached out for some distance. When Jesus apostles were being selected, as recorded in the first chapter of John's account of the gospel, we find Philip searching out Nathaniel. He informed Nathaniel that they had found the one of whom Moses had written in the law and the prophets. Obviously he was talking about the Messiah. Nathaniel replied with a question. Was it possible that any good thing could come out of Nazareth?

It is not difficult to conclude from this that Jesus was not surrounded by a very wholesome environment while he was reaching manhood. In spite of this he was able to overcome every difficulty and rise above all of them. We hear so many today excusing themselves for their evil acts by saying they could not help acting in the way they did. It was because they were raised in poor surroundings. With the help of God we can overcome every obstacle Satan places in our way. Jesus did it, and we can too.

Philip's answer to Nathaniel was an invitation to "*Come and see.*" If more people who wonder about the claims of Jesus would do a bit more investigation they would find the evidence that He is truly the Son of God overwhelming.

I find it interesting that when Nathaniel and Jesus came together, the shoe was on the other foot. Rather than Nathaniel's judgment concerning Christ coming first. Jesus saw Nathaniel coming and said, "*Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile.*" Nathaniel then wanted to know how Jesus knew anything about him. Jesus replied that He

knew Nathaniel when Nathaniel was under a fig tree before they had ever come together. Nathaniel then came back with the statement, "*Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.*" Jesus told him he would see greater things than that which he had just seen.

Let us return to the main line of our story now. As Jesus grew up in the village of Nazareth, he is said to have increased in wisdom and in spirit. We are told in another place that he increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. Most parents watch anxiously to see just how well their children are developing. They watch to see how old they are when they begin to talk, when they begin to walk and when they can first count to ten. How simple the record is with respect to Jesus. We might expect that it would be filled with details about such things as I have just suggested. Instead, we have a simple statement that includes everything from his birth to the time he was twelve years of age. These were not the important things concerning Jesus. The important things were those which took place as he prepared to give himself as an example of the good life, and as a sacrifice for our sins.

Luk 2:40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Luk 2:41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

Luk 2:42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom

of the feast.

Luk 2:43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

Luk 2:44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

Luk 2:45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

Luk 2:46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

Luk 2:47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

Luk 2:48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

At the age of twelve Jesus was taken by his parents to the city of Jerusalem in order that they might attend the Passover Feast. The Passover was one of three great feasts every male Jew was expected to attend. After they had gone through the ceremonies and partaken of the Passover meal, the family started back to Nazareth. After some time they realized Jesus was not with them. What had

happened to him? They did not find him among their kinsfolk who had traveled with them. Would they be able to find the lad in the midst of the crowd of people who were in Jerusalem? They did not have to search far. Jesus had not even left the temple area.

It was amazing! When they found him he was sitting in the midst of the learned doctors of the law of Moses. He was listening to them carefully and asking them questions. I want you to take careful note that Jesus later on criticized some of these same learned men for being hypocrites. Did he already wonder about some of the things they were saying while he was asking them questions at the age of twelve? I think it is quite possible that he already realized there was a mixture of truth and error in their teachings. I say this partly because of what Luke then tells us about what was going on. He says all that heard Jesus were astonished at his understanding and his answers to their questions.

We can guess that Joseph and Mary politely removed Jesus from the presence of the doctors of the law as soon as they could do so. Joseph himself would probably have been embarrassed to have held a conversation with them. His parents then decided to scold the lad a bit for disappointing them. Did he not know he had caused them to be filled with sorrow and anxiety? Surely he should have been responsible enough to be with them when they left the city of Jerusalem.

Luk 2:49 And he said unto them, How is

it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

Luk 2:50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

Luk 2:51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.z

Luk 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Jesus answer was most surprising. He replied that they should have realized he must be about his Father's business. I wonder how many sermons have been preached about tending to our Father's business. It is by far the most important activity occurring on this earth. General Motors and both the stock markets of London and New York are but drops in the bucket when compared to the importance of the business operated by Jehovah God. Jesus understood the priorities of life better than his parents did even at the age of twelve years. His parents did not fully understand the meaning of what he had said to them.

Even though Jesus was so far advanced in many ways, he did not attempt to manipulate either his mother or Joseph. We are told he went down to Nazareth with them and was subject unto them. The chapter ends by saying Mary kept these things in her heart and pondered them as any mother might do.

BLANK

Chapter 3

I have been reading recently about a Jewish man who decided to follow Christ. His father was a Rabbi. The father expected his son to follow in his steps. The son departed from his father's beliefs in that he preaches Christ as the Messiah the Jews expected. The father has rejected his son and considers him the same as dead. The younger man went into the Jewish regions of many cities to preach to his people. He was spit upon. He was beaten. He was accused of being a fool. But he kept on preaching that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. It is not always easy to hold one's faith when the water is rough. I hope this lesson is helpful to men and women in every condition.

Luke chapter three is a record of the baptism of Christ. It is a touching story and one that should inspire all of us to follow in the footsteps of our Lord.

Chapter two of Luke closed by saying Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. The remark covered an otherwise silent period of some seventeen years. Jesus was twelve years of age when he amazed the doctors of the Law of Moses with his understanding and answers to their questions. The Bible record is silent from that time in the life of the Lord until he was about twenty-nine years old. The third chapter of Luke picks up at that point. If man had been writing the life of Christ he would have spent considerable time talking about Jesus' teen years and his early twenties. But God does not always do things in the same way men would do them. We can only trust

that God knows better than we what needed to be included in the Bible record.

Luk 3:1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

Luk 3:2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Luk 3:3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

Luk 3:4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

The date is carefully spelled out as chapter three begins. It was in the fifteenth year of the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar. Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea and Annas and Caiaphas were High Priests. There are many who believe the Bible is untrustworthy. This is not the case. Notice how the details are given to us here. It is possible to go back in history and check out such things. Those who take the time to do so will be much less apt to make fun of the book of God.

We are told that in this fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar John, the son of Zacharias, received the Word of the Lord and began to preach in the wilderness.

If we allow our minds to go back to the second chapter of Luke we will remember that John was a cousin of the Lord. Mary and Elizabeth were sisters. John was six months older than Jesus. There will be those who become suspicious that John and Jesus got together and planned a program that would make both of them very important in the eyes of the world. A close look at what took place will soon remove any possibility of deception on the part of the two. There were too many witnesses to the wondrous miracles the Lord performed to deny that he was exactly what he claimed to be. He claimed God was his Father. The miracles support his claim.

The word of God came to John while he was in the wilderness of Judea, near the Jordan River. His instructions from God were to preach baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. It had been prophesied as far back as the time of Isaiah that someone would come crying out in the wilderness for men to repent of their sins and be baptized. It was John's privilege to fulfil this prophecy. The exact prophecy, as it was given by Isaiah reads this way. *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*

Luk 3:5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

This verse tells us that the valleys shall be filled

and the hills shall be brought low. The crooked will be made straight and the rough ways shall be made smooth. This was the task God gave to John the baptist. He was to prepare the way for Christ by crying out for men to repent of their sins and be baptized. There would be many difficulties in the way of the Christ when he came with the gospel. John was to remove some of these difficulties.

Luk 3:6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

The statement is made then in verse six that all flesh would be given the opportunity to see the salvation of God. This was new. Up to this time God had worked through the Jews as his chosen people. If a Gentile desired to receive God's spiritual blessings it was necessary for him to accept the customs and teachings of the Jews, and to live under the commandments of the law of Moses. This would change under the coming Messiah. All flesh would now be invited to share in the blessings of God. There would no longer be Jew and Gentile. All would become one in Christ Jesus. John the baptist was the one who was to teach men these truths.

Luk 3:7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

John cried out that those to whom he preached were the generation of vipers. In other words, they were the offspring of poisonous teachers. They needed to turn from their sins and quit depending upon being the fleshly descendants of Abraham to be approved of God.

Luk 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Luk 3:9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

This was a constant problem throughout the life of Jesus. The Jews felt that simply because they were Jews and descendants of Abraham that was all that was needed to cause God to approve of them. John the baptist said this was very wrong. If God desired he could raise up children of Abraham from the stones lying on the ground. God expected good fruit from those who claimed they were following him. If a man came along and examined his fruit trees he would cut down those that bore no good fruit. John was saying the test of God was not whether a man or woman was a fleshly descendant of Abraham. It was whether or not his life produced holy and pure speech and actions. Those whose lives did not produce such fruit needed to change immediately and bring forth good fruit. If they did not do so, they were in serious danger of being cut

off and cast into the fires of hell.

Luk 3:10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

Luk 3:11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

Luk 3:12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

Luk 3:13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

While John was preaching and baptizing men and women in the Jordan River, some of the Publicans came to be baptized. They asked him what they must do that they might be ready for baptism. John replied to them that they must exact no more than that which it had been appointed for them to collect. The point is that these publicans were collectors of taxes. They had a list of people and a list of due taxes. They were altogether to ready to tell a man he owed more taxes than he really owed. Then, when they had collected these extra funds, they would put them into their own pocket. As we can see from this, dishonest politics is not new in our time. It has been around as long as there has been government. John said, the tax collectors, or publicans, must cease cheating the people if they were to be prepared to be baptized.

Luk 3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And

he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

Luk 3:15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

The publicans were followed by some soldiers. They also asked what they must do before they could be baptized. John told them they must not accuse anyone of crimes they had not done. They must not treat those they arrested violently, and they must be satisfied with their wages. Apparently these were common sins among the soldiers of that day.

After John gave these answers to various groups of people, they began to wonder if he was actually the Messiah Isaiah had promised would come. John made it clear that he was not the one. I suppose he may have been flattered that men would even consider that he might be the Messiah. But John was not like some men. Rather than claiming to be something he was not, he quickly denied that he was the one about which Isaiah had spoken.

Luk 3:16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

Luk 3:17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he

will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Luk 3:18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

It was true, John said, that he was baptizing men in water for the remission of their sins. However; that fact did not mean he was the Christ. There was one coming after him who was far more important than he was. There was so much difference in their importance that John felt himself to be unworthy to untie the shoe laces of the one about whom Isaiah had prophesied. He said, *“I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”*

Later on in the book of Acts we can see the words of John coming true. The apostles waited in an upper room on the day of Pentecost. They had been told by Christ that they should wait until they were endued with power from on high before setting out to preach the gospel. Suddenly, there came a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind and tongues like as of fire sat on each of them. The apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance. On the day of Pentecost Peter preached to a vast multitude. He also called out for men to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. He promised that they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The tenth chapter of Acts records the

preaching of Peter to the household of Cornelius. When this man and his household recognized the need to repent and be baptized they also received the gift of the Holy Spirit. God is no respecter of persons.

There is, of course, a difference in the manner in which the Holy Spirit was provided to the apostles and the way it is provided for men today. The baptism of the Holy Spirit enable the apostles to perform miracles proving what they taught was the Word of God. Once the Word was confirmed there was no more need for the miraculous activity of the Holy Spirit. From that point on the gift of the Holy Spirit has been provided as a source of spiritual life, comfort and guidance for all men who hear the gospel, repent of their sins, confess Jesus Christ to be the Son of the living God, and are baptized in water for the remission of their sins. Those who refuse to hear and obey the commandments of God will be cast into the fires of hell at the time of the judgment. God will gather his precious wheat into his garners. He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Luk 3:19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

Luk 3:20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

John the baptist included many other things in his sermons. Some of them were not very popular.

One in particular did not go down very well with a ruler called Herod. John had condemned Herod for living in sin with his own brother's wife. There were other sins Herod had committed and John did not hesitate to remind him of them also. Like many men in places of power, Herod did not intend to take such criticism without doing something about it. He decided to close John's mouth by putting him into prison.

How sad it is that some persons are unwilling to take correction. The wrong things they do may be quite obvious to both themselves and to others who are around them. Yet they act as if they are responsible to no one. They will do as they please regardless of the amount of damage they do to their own soul, or the example they set before others who may follow in their footsteps. Herod mistakenly thought all that was necessary for him to continue on his wicked way was to throw the preacher into a dungeon. It is not quite that easy my friends. Your sins will find you out regardless of how well you think you may have covered them up.

Luk 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

Luk 3:22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Luk 3:23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was

supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

Now while John had been baptizing in the Jordan River, Jesus came to him to be baptized. John objected. He did not believe Jesus needed to be baptized. He felt that Jesus should baptize him rather than the other way around. Jesus told him that was not the case. In order to fulfil all righteousness it was necessary that Jesus himself be baptized. When John agreed to do the baptizing the heavens opened. The Holy Spirit descended to alight upon the Lord in the form of a dove. God then spoke from heaven and declared that *Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.* My friends, may I suggest that when persons are baptized today, God looks down from heaven and approves of each of them as His children in whom he is well pleased.

At the time of his baptism Jesus was about thirty years of age. He then taught for a little over three years before he was crucified on Calvary.

Luk 3:24 Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,

Luk 3:25 Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,

Luk 3:26 Which was the son of Maath,

which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda,

Luk 3:27 Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,

Luk 3:28 Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,

Luk 3:29 Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,

Luk 3:30 Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,

Luk 3:31 Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,

Here is one of the reasons why this long list of names was given. David had been promised that a King would come who would be of his seed. Jesus Christ is declared to be the son of David in this genealogical list.

Luk 3:32 Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which

was the son of Naasson,

Luk 3:33 Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda,

Luk 3:34 Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,

Here is a second anchor point. Abraham was also made some promises. One of those promises was that from his seed would come one who would bless all nations. The promise was repeated to Isaac and Jacob. Jesus Christ was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Luk 3:35 Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala,

Luk 3:36 Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,

Luk 3:37 Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan,

Luk 3:38 Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

~~— Luke was not satisfied to trace Jesus lineage~~

back to Abraham. Luke was a Gentile. He proceeded to show that Christ is of the seed of Adam, and is thus related to every human on the face of the earth.

Chapter 4

The fourth chapter of Luke deals with Satan's attempt to destroy the influence of Jesus by tempting him to sin against his Father in heaven. It also tells of some of the first miracles done by the Lord. If Jesus could resist the Devil and continue with the work he knew his Father in heaven expected him to do, we can follow in his footsteps.

The very first verse of this fourth chapter tells us that right after Jesus was baptized, he was full of the Holy Spirit and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. I cannot help but be impressed with the thought that later when Peter called out for those to whom he preached on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized, he promised them they could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now there is a difference. We are told that Jesus had the Spirit without measure. That cannot be said about any of us. I do think that when each Christian is truly baptized into Christ, that Christian will be led by the Spirit and he will be strengthened by the Spirit of God. We may expect the Father in heaven to treat his children with guidance and comfort

Luk 4:1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Jesus went out into the wilderness. That simply means he left the heavily populated areas near Jerusalem and moved out into a place where he could be alone. The trouble is that he was not to be alone. The Devil was ready to stop him then and

there. This was not the first time Satan tried. He had influenced Herod to kill many little boy babies at the time Jesus was born. He had failed then, and he was now ready to try again.

Luk 4:2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

Luk 4:3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

Luk 4:4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Jesus was hungry. He had eaten nothing for forty days. That is about the length of time one can remain alive without food. Fasting and prayer are an important part of the Christian life. Gluttony and self pride will destroy the soul. Depriving ourselves temporarily of some of the things we take for granted can strengthen our souls. We can begin to realize how much we really depend on God. Satan knew very well just how hungry Christ was. He suggested that if Christ was truly the Son of God, he could satisfy his hunger by turning stones into bread. Jesus reply was that man was not to live by bread alone, but by every word of God. Yes, Jesus could have done just what Satan suggested. However, the filling of his stomach was far less important than feeding upon the Word of

God. Jesus had been feeding his soul. He would take care of his stomach later.

Luk 4:5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Luk 4:6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

Luk 4:7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

Luk 4:8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

The Devil then took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him the kingdoms of this world. He offered to give Christ control of all of them if he would just fall down and worship him. Some believe this means Christians should avoid getting involved in politics. If the Devil truly could offer Jesus control of the kingdoms of this world, he must have them in the palm of his hand. Certainly there are many wicked and selfish men in government. But hopefully there are some good men also. Perhaps the Devil was lying to Christ in saying he had the power to turn these kingdoms over to him.

Jesus had little problem with that temptation either. He had no intention of falling down before the Devil and worshipping him. The only one worthy of worship is God in heaven. He is the only one

men are to recognize as the King of the universe. You should notice dear reader that Jesus was later to receive a much greater kingdom than all of the kingdoms of this world put together. The kingdoms of this world rise and fall. The kingdom of heaven lasts forever. When time is no more Jesus will still be king of the everlasting kingdom.

Luk 4:9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

Luk 4:10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

Luk 4:11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Luk 4:12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

We should also notice that we face a very serious temptation. There is an inner voice in man that tries to persuade him it would be nice for others to glorify and give great honor to him. There is nothing wrong with appreciating the nice things others say about us. But when we let it get out of hand and set out to lift ourselves up as little gods, we are wrong. Jesus refused to worship Satan.

The Devil was not quite through. He caused Jesus to be placed on one of the highest parts of the temple. Then he called for Him to jump off and

see if he would survive the fall. If so, he could claim to be the Son of God. Again, I have no doubt at all that Jesus could have done just what the Devil challenged him to do. But he did not do it. Why?

Hear Jesus reply to the Devil. *“It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”* Jesus was not about to check out God’s love just for the sake of checking; nor should we do that. Dear friend, we have all heard hundreds of advertisements for soap. Some of them offer us a small sample which we can try out to see if the company can back up their claims. The Devil was trying to plant doubt in the mind of Jesus by suggesting he needed to check out a sample of God’s love. Jesus did not need to do that. He had come from heaven to earth. He knew God would keep every promise. You see, God wants us to depend upon his grace and mercy. But he does not want us to put his grace and mercy to the test just to prove he loves us. He has demonstrated his love and power over and over again. We have every reason to trust him.

Luk 4:13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

We are then told that the Devil departed from him for a season. Pay attention to this statement. Satan had been completely defeated. He should have slunk off into the wilderness, never to come back. That is not the way Satan acts. He is a complete fool. He is convinced there is no person in this world that can withstand his persuasion.

He comes back and tries over and over again. He tempted Jesus again, and he will tempt you and me again, even after we have turned him away time after time. Do not think that just because you have resisted him, he will give up. He will be back!! He will continue to return until he is finally cast into the lake of fire which has been prepared for him and his angels.

Luk 4:14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

Luk 4:15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

Luk 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Luk 4:17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

Luk 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Luk 4:19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luk 4:20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the

synagogue were fastened on him.

Jesus then began to move around over the land of Palestine, preaching and teaching concerning the Kingdom of God. His fame began to spread far and wide. It was his custom to go into the synagogues on the Sabbath day. One day he went to the synagogue in the city of Nazareth where he had spent his boyhood days. He was invited to read from the scriptures from the book of Isaiah. He found the place where it said someone was coming to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to cause the blind to see, and to set the captives free. After he had read the passage he turned to the people and told them that scripture had been fulfilled that very day within their own hearing. He was telling them he was the one about whom Isaiah had written. It was he that was to do all these wonderful things.

Luk 4:21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Luk 4:22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

Luk 4:23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

Luk 4:24 And he said, Verily I say unto you,

No prophet is accepted in his own country.

The people were amazed at what he had said. They had seen this young man grow up. They thought of him as just one of the many they had seen go through adolescence and reach manhood in their small village. They asked the question, "Is not this Joseph's son?" No, this was not Joseph's son. Joseph had helped to feed and care for him while he was growing up, but Joseph knew very well that he was not Jesus father. Jesus was the Son of God. Joseph knew it, Jesus knew it and Mary knew it. It was still necessary for the multitudes of Jesus day and for those of our day to become convinced this was no ordinary man.

Jesus had already done some miracles in Capernaum. He told those who doubted his claims that he realized they would ask him to do the same kind of things in Nazareth that he had done in Capernaum. He also knew it would be more difficult for them to accept him as a prophet just because they had seen him grow up. He told them Elijah and Elisha did not perform their miracles for just anyone. They chose whom they would bless. The heavens had been shut up for three and one half years in the time of Elijah. There had been no rain. There were many who were very hungry. Yet Elijah was sent to one widow in the city of Sidon. There were also many lepers in the time of Elisha, yet Elisha chose a Syrian named Naaman to cleanse of his leprosy. In other words, God's prophets have the wisdom to know when and where to bless men.

Luk 4:25 But I tell you of a truth, many

widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

Luk 4:26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

Luk 4:27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

Luk 4:28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

Luk 4:29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

Luk 4:30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

This infuriated those in the synagogue. Jesus made the claim that he was to do the wonderful things Elijah had prophesied, yet he had made it clear he was not going to do that kind of thing in Nazareth. They took him out to the edge of a hill or cliff and were ready to push him off the cliff. It did not happen. He passed through the mob as if they were not there and went to Capernaum. They had a preconceived notion concerning the individual who would come doing miracles. Jesus did not fit their mold.

Luk 4:31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

Luk 4:32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

Luk 4:33 And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

Luk 4:34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

Luk 4:35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

Luk 4:36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

Luk 4:37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

In Capernaum he again went into the synagogue. There he found a man who was possessed with an unclean spirit. When the unclean spirit realized he was in the presence of Jesus, he caused the man to make a strange statement. The man said, *“Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?”* Here was a lone man calling out for

Jesus to leave “us” alone. This is similar to another case in which a legion of many evil spirits were cast out of one man and entered into a herd of sheep. Some have questioned whether or not the Holy Spirit can truly dwell in the body of a man at the same time that the man’s own spirit does so. These examples prove that it is possible for many spirits to dwell in one individual, all at the same time. Both the Holy Spirit and a human spirit can dwell in one’s body simultaneously.

Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. The spirit obeyed the command of Jesus, but in doing so he caused the man to be thrown down in the midst of the people. Those who observed what happened were amazed. What kind of man was this who could cause unclean spirits to depart from a man and leave him healthy and well?

Luk 4:38 And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon’s house. And Simon’s wife’s mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

Luk 4:39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

Luk 4:40 Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

Jesus went from the synagogue to the house of Simon Peter. Peter’s mother-in-law was suffering from a very high fever. Since Jesus reputation for

being able to heal had spread far and wide, these in Simon's house begged the Lord to heal the feverish woman. When he came to her she was apparently in bed. He stood over her and commanded that the fever go away. It left her immediately. In fact, she was so completely and quickly recovered from her distress that she set about to take care of her visitors. Modern day healers often make claims that are doubtful. Who can tell if a man was healed of an earache? Jesus miracles were of the kind that no man could doubt. He was proving he had the power of God behind him. If he could heal men's bodies, he could also heal men's souls.

Luk 4:41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

Luk 4:42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

Luk 4:43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

Luk 4:44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

After this, a host of people with all sorts of ailments were brought before the Lord. As he laid his hands upon them they were made well. In some cases evil spirits, or devils came out of the sick. As they left the bodies of those in whom they had dwelt,

they cried out, saying, “*Thou art the Christ the Son of God.*” Jesus would not allow them to speak. Why would he keep them from calling him the Christ? Probably because he was not yet quite ready to be called Christ. The people expected the Messiah to throw off the yoke of Rome. Jesus kingdom would still be there when the Roman Empire had been dissolved. But the change had to come at the proper time. That time had not yet come.

The Lord then began to travel from city to city, teaching concerning the Kingdom of God, and supporting the teaching with his miracles.

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Chapter 5

Luk 5:1 And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

Luk 5:2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

Luk 5:3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Luk 5:4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

Luk 5:5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

Luk 5:6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

Luk 5:7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

The fifth chapter of the book of Luke deals with a great catch of fish arranged by Jesus Christ. It also talks about the power of the Lord for forgive sins. It is a very important chapter with many

powerful truths which we need to understand.

By this time Jesus had attracted a great deal of attention. He had performed a number of miracles that proved he possessed powers greater than any other who ever lived. As a result of this, the people were flocking toward him to hear what he had to say. He came to the edge of the Sea of Galilee which is also called the lake of Gennesaret. There were two fishing boats near the shore. The fishermen had left the boats and were busy washing their nets nearby. Jesus entered into one of the boats where he could speak to the mass of people who had gathered on the shore.

One of the two boats belonged to Simon Peter. Christ first spoke to the people. Then he asked Simon to move his boat out into the deep water and let down his nets. Simon at first hesitated to do as Jesus asked him. He objected that they had already fished all through the night and had not been able to catch anything. However, if Jesus insisted, he would honor his request. Much to his surprise, when the fishermen let down the nets they enclosed so many fish the nets were in danger of breaking from the weight of the fish. The fishermen in Simon's boat then called to those of the other boat to come and help haul in the fish. There were so many that the boats were unable to hold them without sinking.

Luk 5:8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

Luk 5:9 For he was astonished, and all that

were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

Luk 5:10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

Luk 5:11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

When Simon Peter saw what had happened, he fell at Jesus feet and cried out for Christ to go away from him for he was a sinful man. James and John were Peter's fellow fisherman and they also marveled at the great number of fish which had been caught. Jesus then informed them that just as they had been able to catch fish when he gave them the proper directions, they would soon become fishers for men. After seeing the power of Jesus Christ, all three of them decided to leave their boats behind and follow the Son of God wherever he might lead. They forsook all and followed him.

My friends, there is nothing in this world as important as following the commands of Jesus. He loves you and will make your life fruitful if you will put all else second to him. He will make you, like he made Peter, James and John, to be a fisher of men. He does not care if you are male or female, or whether you are young or old. He does not care about the color of your skin. He can use you in his service. Make up your mind to center your entire life around his teachings. You will not be sorry.

Luk 5:12 And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

Luk 5:13 And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

Luk 5:14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Jesus then moved on to a city. There he found a man suffering from leprosy. This is a horrible disease in which the flesh corrupts until the fingers and toes fall off. After this, the lower arms or legs may also fall away. This was usually followed by death in Bible times. Although we do have medical treatment in some parts of the world today, there are still places where the lepers are considered doomed to a miserable life and certain death.

The leper had approached Jesus crying out that, if he would, he could make him clean. The Lord put forth his hand and touched him, saying, "*I will. Be thou clean.*" Immediately the man was healed of his leprosy. Jesus told him to go and show himself to the priest and make a sacrifice to God as Moses had commanded. The priests were given directions by which they could determine if the leprosy had been healed. Jesus knew the man would pass the test.

Luk 5:15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

Luk 5:16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

Luk 5:17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

The crowd following the Master grew even larger. After he had healed many of them he withdrew into the wilderness for an opportunity to pray quietly to his Father in heaven. Here is another strong lesson for us. Sometimes it is necessary to rest from our labors and seek to renew our strength in prayer. There will be many who ask for help. Sometimes we will be able to answer their pleas. Sometimes we will not. But whether yes or no, we will become weary and will need God's help. Jesus needed it. We do too.

Now we come to a sad part of our story. When Jesus had finished his prayer and continued on his way there were doctors of the law and Pharisees among those who had gathered to hear him. We would think these would be the ones most interested in learning from him. They were the leaders of the people. They needed every truth they could get. The reason I said this is a sad part of our story is that these leaders became jealous of the the

Saviour rather than rejoicing in the good things he had to offer. These persons knew the law of Moses. They knew of the promises. They should have been prepared for the coming of the Messiah. How sad it is that they failed because of their own pride. They fought the Christ from this time forward.

Luk 5:18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

Luk 5:19 And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

Luk 5:20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Some men brought an invalid who had to be carried on a bed because of a very serious case of palsy. They were disappointed when they came to where Jesus was because they could not get into the building where he was. The crowd was too thick. In order to get to the Lord they took the palsied man to the rooftop of the building and let him down through the tiling of the roof to get the man to where Jesus could cure him. When Jesus saw their faith he said unto the man, "*Man, thy sins be forgiven thee.*"

Luk 5:21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which

speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

Luk 5:22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

Luk 5:23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

Luk 5:24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

Luk 5:25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

Luk 5:26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

This statement brought on the anger of the scribes and Pharisees. They knew very well that ordinary men cannot forgive sins. Men can forgive other men of the trespasses against them, but they cannot forgive men of their transgressions against God. Jesus was saying he was able to forgive the palsied man of his trespasses against God. This was a claim that he was equal to God himself. As they reasoned among themselves concerning what Jesus had said, he spoke to them and asked them what they were thinking in their hearts.

This sounds as though they had not spoken their feelings out loud but had only kept their thoughts

to themselves up to that point. The fact that they had not yet spoken out did not keep Jesus from knowing what was in their hearts. He knew exactly what they were thinking, and he was ready with a response. He asked them which was easier to say, *“Thy sins be forgiven thee.”* or *“Rise up and walk.”* It is apparent that the condition of the man had something to do with his own sins. We are not told just what the connection was, but it seems clear the forgiveness of his sins resulted in him being able to rise up and walk.

But Jesus was not done with the scribes and Pharisees. He still had a lesson to teach them. He said, *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch, and go into thine own house.* Without a moment’s hesitation, the man rose up, took up the bed upon which he had been lying and went to his own house, giving glory to God. Everyone was amazed and gave glory to God, saying, *“We have seen strange things today.”*

There is an interesting question that arises here. The book of Hebrews tells us, *“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins”* (Heb. 9:22). Is this a contradiction in the Bible? Jesus said, the man’s sins were forgiven. The Hebrew letter says the shedding of Christ’s blood had to take place for sins to be forgiven. Jesus had not yet shed his blood when he made this statement. I am sure there is an answer, although I am not sure I have the answer. It may be that Jesus was

simply telling the man that his faith was such that when the blood was shed it would reach backward in time to that moment. God always knows what he is doing, even if I do not.

Luk 5:27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

Luk 5:28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

Luk 5:29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

The Lord then came to a publican named Levi. He said to the publican, "*Follow me.*" By this time the scribes and the Pharisees were watching carefully to see if they could find reason to turn the multitudes against him. We are told in other places that this publican named Levi was also called Matthew. He became the author of the first book of the New Testament. At the time Jesus asked him to follow him, Matthew was sitting and taking taxes from the people for the Roman government. The Jews hated the Roman authorities and particularly the tax collectors who often took more in taxes than the people owed and then used it for their own purposes.

Luk 5:30 But their scribes and Pharisees

murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

Luk 5:31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

Luk 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luk 5:33 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

Luk 5:34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

Luk 5:35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

The scribes and Pharisees, as well as the rest of the Jews must have been shocked when Jesus invited Matthew to follow him. They began to murmur against Christ and his disciples for associating with publicans such as Matthew. Jesus answered them that he had not come to heal those who were well. He had come to heal the sick. If the publicans were in need of making changes in their lives Jesus was happy for them to do that.

Jesus critics then wanted to know why his disciples did not act like the disciples of John the baptist acted. The disciples of John fasted and prayed a lot. Why did Jesus disciples not do the same? Jesus disciples were happy and were eating

and drinking in a joyous mood.

Jesus replied that there was a very good answer to their question. The answer was that he had come as a bridegroom and was preparing for a great wedding feast. It was very well known that weddings were a time of great joy. The guests at a wedding feast did not go around with long faces. They looked forward to the wedding with happiness.

He added that the time would come when he, as the bridegroom, would be taken away from his disciples. When that happened, there would be room for tears and fasting. Meanwhile, his disciples would continue to rejoice and be happy as they walked and talked with the bridegroom.

I would like to add another point here. The church is called the bride of Christ. There are times when members of the church are in sorrow and at the present time they do not have Jesus with them in person. The tears may flow and the sorrow may pile up high. But in general God's people should be a happy people. They are highly blessed in this present state, and they look forward to the time when the bridegroom will return to claim his bride and take her to be with him in heaven for ever and ever.

Luk 5:36 And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.

Luk 5:37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst

the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

Luk 5:38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

Luk 5:39 No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

Jesus then told a parable. He said men do not place a piece of a new garment on an old garment that is torn. The old garment will just tear again. Nor do men put new wine into old bottles. The bottles will burst and all of the wine will be spilled. Men put new wine into new bottles. What was Jesus trying to teach his listeners?

He was telling them it was time for a change. God had worked with his people through the law of Moses for many centuries. The law had served its purpose. It had acted as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. The scribes and the Pharisees needed to see that Christ is the fulfilment of the law and the prophets. When they hung on so tightly to the law of Moses that they were unwilling to accept the new way of life under the Son of God, they were only fighting against the will of God.

God has plans for this world. He develops those plans and allows men to know about them when he chooses and in the way he chooses. When he points out the way to men it is in our own best interest to walk in the way he has pointed. Today that way is found by following the teachings of Jesus.

Chapter 6

Luk 6:1 And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

Luk 6:2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

Luk 6:3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him;

Luk 6:4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

Luk 6:5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

We are ready to study the sixth chapter of the book of Luke. This chapter is very similar to the material found in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of the book of Matthew. That is where the sermon on the mount is presented.

Jesus lived while the law of Moses was still in effect. An important part of that law was the keeping of the sabbath. It was not until the death of Christ that the law was nailed to the cross and the sabbath was replaced by worship on the first day of the week. As this sixth chapter of Luke begins, we find Jesus passing through the corn fields with his disciples. As they move through the

fields they are plucking off the ears of corn and eating them.

This might be a concern to us today since this would mean we had trespassed by entering a grain field which we did not own and stealing the grain. This was not true in Jesus time. It was acceptable to eat the grain along the pathways as long as one did not place it in containers and carry it off with him. As usual, however, the Pharisees were watching closely to see if they could find anything unlawful in the actions or teachings of the Lord. They noticed that he and his disciples were plucking grain on the sabbath. Now they felt they had a charge they could bring against him. They wanted him to explain how it was that he and his disciples were working on the sabbath day.

Jesus knew far more about the law of Moses, and the sabbath, than did the Pharisees. He replied to them that they should have read the place in the Old Testament telling about how David and his men went into the house of God and ate the shewbread which would normally have been eaten only by the priests. They were hungry and God did not condemn them for what they did. If David and his men could eat the shewbread because they were hungry, he and his disciples could pluck enough grain on the sabbath to stop their hunger pains.

Jesus added that the Pharisees had not realized as yet that they were criticizing one who was the Lord of the sabbath. As a part of the very Godhead itself Jesus had the right to determine what could and could not be done on that very special day.

Luk 6:6 And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

Luk 6:7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

Luk 6:8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

Luk 6:9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

Luk 6:10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Luk 6:11 And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

Later, on another sabbath day, Jesus found a man with a withered hand in the synagogue. The scribes and Pharisees were straining their eyes to see if he would heal the man on the sacred day. They did not have long to wait. Christ commanded the man to stand up before them. He told the man to stretch out his hand. When the man did what Jesus commanded, his withered hand became as healthy as the other one. He asked the Pharisees

whether it was right to do good or to do evil on the sabbath. Was it right to save life or to destroy it? This only made his critics more angry than ever, and they set about to plan what they might do to destroy him.

Luk 6:12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

Luk 6:13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

Luk 6:14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

Luk 6:15 Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,

Luk 6:16 And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

Jesus had a very important decision just ahead of him. He was about to choose a group of men from among his disciples whom he would endow with special powers and whom he would assign special responsibilities. Before he chose these men he went out to a mountain to pray. He continued all night in prayer. This says something to us. Most of us should spend more time in talking with God about making important decisions. We need to spend time allowing him to talk with us through reading the Bible. We need to talk with him in prayer. When

reading and prayer are combined we have taken better advantage of the channels of blessing God has provided for us. Our decisions will be more wisely made.

The Lord chose twelve men out of all of his followers. We know those twelve men today as the apostles. Most of the books of the New Testament were written by one or more of these twelve. Most of them were killed as martyrs because they followed Christ. Those of us who are faithful unto death will someday find ourselves in the presence of these good men when we enter the gates of heaven.

Luk 6:17 And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

Luk 6:18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

Luk 6:19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

Luk 6:20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

After choosing his apostles, Jesus came down with them to the plain near the Sea of Galilee. There he healed many who pressed closely around him. He then looked out across them and began to speak to them.

He said some very strange things. He talked about the poor being blessed or happy. He talked about those who were hungry being filled. He talked about those whose eyes were filled with tears laughing in joy. He talked about those who were persecuted and buffeted about, leaping for joy. His point was that he was introducing a new and different kind of kingdom. It would be a kingdom in which those who were downtrodden because of their righteous words and deeds would be lifted up and rewarded by the God of heaven.

Luk 6:21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

Luk 6:22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

Luk 6:23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

Luk 6:24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

Luk 6:25 Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Luk 6:26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Luk 6:27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

Luk 6:28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

Luk 6:29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.

The time would come when the tables would be turned. The ones who were laughing at the expense of others would find themselves weeping. The ones who were full because of their greed would find themselves crying out in need. It would be dangerous having everyone of this world speaking well of you. Those of old had done that with the false prophets. Such praise was not in agreement with the way God saw things. Nor is it now.

Jesus then gave some difficult commands. He said to love our enemies, to bless those who curse us and to pray for those who despitefully use us. These are not easy things to do. The natural thing is to hate those who hate us, to curse those who curse us, and to desire that terrible things might happen to those who treat us shamefully. The Lord even told his disciples that if someone took away a garment that kept them warm, they should offer another garment to the one who took it.

Luk 6:30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

Luk 6:31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

Luk 6:32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

Luk 6:33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

Luk 6:34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

Luk 6:35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

Luk 6:36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

What was Jesus doing? Does this make sense? Yes, it does. He was attacking the core of the problem. By returning good for evil, the Christian may mend the wicked heart of the one who persecutes him. The world will be made better. On the other hand, if one returns evil for evil we then have twice as much evil to contend with.

Christians are expected to act like their Heavenly Father. God sends his rain upon the just and the unjust. He loves the souls of men, even when they are still in their sin. He did not send his Son into a world filled with righteous persons. Jesus was

sent into a world so cruel that it was determined to murder him almost from the time he first began to teach concerning his wonderful Kingdom of Heaven.

Luk 6:37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

Luk 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

One day we shall stand before the Judge of all the earth. At that time, He will know exactly how we have treated those we have dealt with us. If we have been unfair to them, we shall reap in like manner. If we have been generous and kind to others, God will be the same to us.

Luk 6:39 And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

Luk 6:40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

Some of those to whom Jesus was speaking had little spiritual insight. When a man who can not see spiritual consequences attempts to lead another who is foolish enough to follow him, both of them

may well be destroyed.

If one follows Jesus, the Master Teacher, that person will become more and more like his Lord.

Luk 6:41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Luk 6:42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

Jesus added that it was wise not to judge and condemn others. Again, we are to be the children of our Father in heaven. If God spent all of his time in listing our sins and holding them against us, we would be hopelessly lost and would burn eternally in the fires of hell. Let us notice how the heavenly Father deals with sinners and we may find the way he expects us to react toward them.

God does not hesitate to spell out that which is right and that which is wrong. He knows what men should and should not do. He knows how serious the consequences of sin are. But God never rejoices in the destruction of the sinner. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. He goes far out of his way to make it possible for the wicked to recognize the need to repent. Only when it is apparent that nothing can be done for them does God give them up.

He expects us to act in a similar way. If we rejoice in finding fault with others and spend our time gloating over how righteous we are in comparison to them, we will be condemned. Do you remember what God had to say about the Pharisee who prayed and thanked God that he was not like other men? The publican beat upon his breast and cried out for God to be merciful to him since he was a sinner. We find God saying the publican was justified. The Pharisee was not. We will be measured with the same measuring stick we use to measure others. Personally, I do not want to be measured with a short stick when I meet my Lord. Do you??

Next Jesus warned his listeners about following the wrong leadership. He said that if the blind follow the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch. The idea was that the Pharisees might have physical eyes but they were spiritually blind. If the people followed the paths the Pharisees pointed out they could expect disastrous results. Both the Pharisees and those who followed them would be lost in hell.

The Pharisees were very good at finding motes in the eyes of others. The problem was that they had such large beams in their own eyes they could not really see to judge the lives of those they were criticizing. As proof of this, they had determined to remove Jesus Christ from the scene. Here was a man who was perfect before the Heavenly Father. The hatred and pride of the Pharisees loomed up so large in their eyes that they did not see the pure glory of God shining through the life of Jesus and

those who followed him.

Luk 6:43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Luk 6:44 For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

Luk 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

One can most certainly judge a tree by the quantity and the quality of the fruit which it produces. The Lord has a vineyard. He expects the trees in that vineyard to bring forth abundantly. If the heart of a man is corrupt he will produce corrupt speech and actions. If his heart is right, he will bring forth good speech and actions.

Luk 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Luk 6:47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

Luk 6:48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and

could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

Luk 6:49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

Jesus went on to talk about bearing good fruit. If the owner of an orchard walks through his orchard and finds a tree loaded with delicious apples, peaches or other fruit, he knows that tree is a good tree. He will mark that tree and do everything he can to protect it. If he passes through his orchard and finds a tree with many leaves, but with no fruit, he will mark that tree. It will be cut down and cast into the fire. A good tree will be put in its place.

A man cannot have an evil heart and bring forth good fruit. Any fruit the evil heart brings forth will be rotten fruit. As the good heart brings forth love, patience, brotherly kindness and so forth, the evil heart will produce hatred, false pride, jealousy, envy and even murder. Jesus said we may know men by their fruits.

The Lord closed his speech by telling of two men who each built a house. One of the men very carefully prepared and built. He chose a fine location. He dug a foundation which reached down to the solid rock. He built using the finest of materials. Later, when the storms came and the floods arose, this man's house weathered the forces. It stood firm.

The second man failed to make careful preparation

in building. He did not bother to dig down to the rock. He did not take note that the floods would be too strong for his foundation. When the storms came, his house fell.

Jesus made it clear that those who hear his teachings and follow them are like that man who was wise enough to build upon the solid foundation. Their lives will hold up under the storms of life. In contrast, those who ignore the teachings of Christ are foolish people. Their house cannot stand when the storms of life beat upon them.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Unless we build our lives upon this rock they will fail and fall. If we build upon the rock of Jesus Christ we will hear those words, "Well done!"

Chapter 7

Luk 7:1 Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

Luk 7:2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

Luk 7:3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

Luk 7:4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

Luk 7:5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

We will now go into the seventh chapter of Luke. Luke was a physician. Physicians are known for keeping accurate records of details. Luke was no exception. He provides a more detailed record of the life of Christ than do Mark or John. His approach is about the same length as Matthew's account, but it includes more things related to healing and miracles.

Thus we find this seventh chapter beginning with the healing of a centurian's servant. The centurian sent to Jesus because he had heard of the wonderful powers of the Lord to mend the lives of those who were extremely ill. This was the case with his own servant. The man was not just suffering some discomfort. He was at the very point of death. The centurian believed the Lord could help.

I find it interesting that the centurian did not

come personally to ask Jesus for help. What he did was to ask that the elders of the Jews make his request for him. Centurians were men of authority. One wonders what caused the centurion to send others. Was it that he did not feel worthy to come himself? Was it that it was beneath his own dignity to admit that he needed help. Was it that he was concerned about losing one of the men whom he commanded and thus losing some of his power? I think Luke gives us the answer to these questions as he continues with the story.

The elders of the Jews pleaded for Jesus to help the centurion by healing his servant. They told how the centurion had loved the Jews and helped them to build a synagogue. They were persuaded the man deserved whatever Jesus could do for him. We can already see this was a good man.

Luk 7:6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

Luk 7:7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

Luk 7:8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

Luk 7:9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say

unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Luk 7:10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Jesus did as the Jewish elders had asked him. He started for the Centurian's house. But before he arrived, the centurian sent friends to meet Jesus and tell him he was not worthy to have such a one as Jesus enter into his house. All that was needed was for Jesus to give the command and the servant would be made well. This kind of humility is always precious in the sight of God. He does not appreciate false pride. He will reward those who humble themselves, and he will abase those who exalt themselves. The centurian was going about this thing in the best possible way to receive help from Christ.

Jesus told those who were following him that in all the land of israel he had not found a faith as great as that of this centurian. Without even a record that Jesus gave a command for the servant to be healed the people found the servant had been healed by the time they came to the house of the centurian.

Luk 7:11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

Luk 7:12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man

carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

Luk 7:13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

Luk 7:14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

Luk 7:15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

The Lord then came to a city called Nain. As he came near to the gates of the city he met some who were carrying a dead man out to be buried. The man was the only son of his widowed mother. When Jesus saw what was happening he had great compassion on the grieving mother. He first commanded the mother to cease her weeping. Then he reached out and touched the coffin and said, *“Young man, I say unto thee arise.”* Immediately the man who was dead sat up and began to speak. Jesus can raise the dead. Someday he will return. The graves will be opened. The dead will arise; and those who have been faithful will enter into the New Jerusalem to live with him forever.

Luk 7:16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

Luk 7:17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about.

Luk 7:18 And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

Luk 7:19 And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

Luk 7:20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

Luk 7:21 And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

Word of the marvelous miracles Jesus was performing reached the ears of John the baptist. John sent two of his own disciples to ask Jesus a question. *“Are you the Messiah that we have been waiting for, or are we to wait for someone else?”* When the men arrived they found that Jesus had been casting out evil spirits, healing men of plagues and causing the blind to see. He sent John’s disciples back to him and instructed them to report to John the things they had seen. He added that those who were not offended in him would surely be blessed. To be offended in Christ is to quit believing in him as the Messiah and the Son of God. John had much reason to believe in Jesus. But Jesus realized

that John must have been faltering just a bit in his faith, otherwise he would not have sent the disciples to ask the question they did. Jesus wanted to be very sure John's faith did not capsize under the pressure which it would face.

Luk 7:22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.

Luk 7:23 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Then the Saviour turned to his disciples and proceeded to teach them a powerful lesson. Even men as great as John needed to be careful that they did not turn back. John was a man to be respected. He had sacrificed much to prepare the way for Christ. Jesus asked the multitudes what they expected to see when they went out into the wilderness where John was preaching. Did they expect to see a man dressed in the soft and beautiful garments which would be found in the palaces of kings? If so they would be mistaken and disappointed. John did not wear gorgeous apparel. He wore rough garments made of the hide of camels.

Luk 7:24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

Luk 7:25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

Luk 7:26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

Jesus then asked if they expected to see someone who wavered around like a reed which tossed to and fro in the wind. If so they were again mistaken. John did not speak out of both sides of his mouth. It was not aye and nay with him. He was a prophet of God. He spoke the truth and they would hear the same truth whenever they listened to John.

Luk 7:27 This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Luk 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Luk 7:29 And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

Jesus then heaped great praise on John. This man was the messenger who had been assigned to prepare the way for Christ to come preaching the Kingdom of Heaven. There was not a single one of the prophets who stood higher in God's sight than John did. John was making it possible for the

Kingdom to come. When the Kingdom arrived any man who became a citizen of that kingdom would be very special in the eyes of God.

Luk 7:30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Luk 7:31 And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

Luk 7:32 They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

When the multitudes heard what Jesus had to say about John many of them were baptized with John's baptism. This was not true of the lawyers and Pharisees. They turned away and refused to prepare themselves for the coming Kingdom.

Jesus was angry with them. He said they were acting like petty children rather than adults. Little children expected others to do just what they expected and when they expected it. These lawyers and Pharisees wanted everyone to act just as they desired. If they did not do that these jealous men would accuse them of not acting like they should. We have all heard children crying out to their parents that so and so will not play dolls with me, or so and so will not play hide and seek. The lawyers and Pharisees wanted to make the rules. Jesus pointed out their childish attitudes.

Luk 7:33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

Luk 7:34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

Luk 7:35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.

What did Jesus see that was childish in the attitudes of the Pharisees and lawyers? It was that no one could please them. John the baptist had come fasting. They quickly accused John of being possessed by a devil. Only a crazy man would act like that. Then, when Jesus came and associated with those who were in need of his teaching, the critics accused him of being a glutton and having friends who were drunkards and crooked politicians. The closing statement of the Lord to them is a gem. He sarcastically said, “*But wisdom is justified of all her children.*” His point was that the lawyers and Pharisees thought they were the only ones who had good sense. If someone acted as they did they were wise. If one did not act like they did, that person was a fool. They thought they were the only offspring of wisdom.

Luk 7:36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat.

One of the Pharisees then invited Jesus to come

to his house and eat with him. The Bible does not say why the Pharisee invited the Lord. It is not impossible that Jesus was invited strictly for the purpose of finding something concerning which he could be condemned. Whatever the reason for the invitation, Jesus accepted it and sat down to eat in the Pharisee's house.

Luk 7:37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

Luk 7:38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Shortly afterward a sinful woman came to the house and entered. She had apparently heard of the goodness of Christ and was sorry for the way she had been behaving. To demonstrate her change of attitude she brought a box of precious ointment with which to anoint Jesus. We are told she stood at his feet behind him weeping and began to wash his feet with her tears and to wipe them with the hair of her head. She kissed his feet and began to apply the ointment upon them.

Luk 7:39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet,

would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

The Pharisee who had invited Jesus into his home was quick to make an accusation. There were many who were saying Jesus was a prophet of God. If he was truly a prophet he would certainly have known what kind of a woman this was. He would have rebuked her for touching him and would have had nothing to do with her.

Jesus knew what the Pharisee was thinking. The man had not spoken out loud. He had kept his thoughts to himself. Do not think dear friends that Jesus does not know the innermost thoughts of your own heart. He knows and he cares. In the case of this Pharisee Jesus spoke his name and said, “*Simon, I have something to say to you.*” The Pharisee invited him to say whatever he had on his mind.

Luk 7:40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

Luk 7:41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

Luk 7:42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

Luk 7:43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said

unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

Luk 7:44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

Luk 7:45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

Luk 7:46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

Luk 7:47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

Luk 7:48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

Luk 7:49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

Luk 7:50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Jesus then told a story of two debtors. One owed ten times as much as the other. One owed fifty pence. The other owed five hundred. The one to whom they owed the money decided to cancel their debt and clear the books. Jesus then asked the Pharisee which of the two men he thought would be the happiest and love the man the most. Would it be the one who owed the fifty pence, or the one

who owed the five hundred pence?

That was not a particularly hard question to answer. The Pharisee answered that he supposed the one who had been forgiven the most would be the one who would love the most. Jesus complimented him on coming to the right conclusion. Then the Lord pounded the lesson home. The Pharisee was the one who owed the fifty pence. The sinful woman was the one who owed the five hundred pence. Jesus had been willing to forgive both of them of their sins.

Why was it such a great surprise to the Pharisee that the woman was so grateful for his mercy. She had been forgiven far more than the Pharisee. He had not even provided water for the Lord to wash his own feet. The woman had washed them with her tears and dried them with her hair. The men of that day often greeted one another with a kiss on each cheek. The Pharisee had not greeted Jesus that way. Yet this woman had kissed his feet. The Pharisee might have even provided sweet smelling perfume for Jesus hair. He had not. In contrast, the woman had anointed his feet. It was easy to see who loved him the most. The Pharisee's criticism of Jesus for not rebuking the woman was out of order.

Jesus then turned to the woman and said, "*Thy sins be forgiven thee.*" This brought on even more talk. Those who were sitting at the table began to ask, "*Who is this what forgiveth sins also?*" Many today should learn the lesson this woman teaches. She recognized her sinful condition. She was penitent and did her best to make amends.

Altogether too many these days do not know the seriousness of sin, nor do they care about turning away from Satan's fold.

Jesus told the woman, "*Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.*" The faith that saves is a faith which produces works. Dear, friend, Do you have a faith that brings forth fruit. This chapter urges you to have such

Chapter 8

Luk 8:1 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

Luk 8:2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

Luk 8:3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

In the eighth chapter of the book of Luke, Jesus went forth to sow the gospel. He expects us to do the same. Jesus also went forth doing miracles and teaching parables. He expects us to learn the precious lessons that such miracles and parables present. This eighth chapter will tell about one of his parables and about two of his miracles.

By the time we reach this chapter of, we find Jesus activities well under way. Both men and women were among his disciples. He had already chosen his twelve apostles and they were traveling along with him as he moved from town to town preaching the good news of the gospel. Among the women who ministered to him was Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven devils. Two others were Joanna and Susanna. They loved the Lord and wished to see his message spread as widely as possible. It is tragic that some enemies of the Bible have hinted

at an impure relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Jesus was not the type of person who condemns fornication and then practices what he has condemned. His connection with these women, and with others, was always sinless.

Luk 8:4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

Luk 8:5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

On one occasion a large crowd of people had gathered from several different villages. Jesus taught them by way of a parable. He told of a man who went out to sow seed. The seed fell upon different types of soil. Some fell upon the wayside. There it was trodden upon and the birds came and fed upon it. Some fell upon a rock and soon died from lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns and began to grow but was choked out. Last, some fell upon good ground and brought forth one hundred times as much as was sown.

There is no way of knowing how many times this parable has been the focus of a sermon. The apostles wanted to know the meaning of the parable. Jesus explained that he spoke in parables in order that those who wished to understand could do so, and so those who desired to close their eyes, their ears and their hearts to the truth could do that. After Jesus explained the basic lesson of the

parable it became so clear no one could possibly misunderstand it.

The seed which the sower sowed is the truth of the gospel. It is the Word of God. That seed falls upon many different kinds of hearts. The seed that fell by the wayside had fallen into the hearts of men who were too busy to pay attention to God's truth. The Devil then took the seed from their hearts so they would not believe it and be saved.

Luk 8:6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

Luk 8:7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

Luk 8:8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Luk 8:9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

Luk 8:10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Luk 8:11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

Luk 8:12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

Luk 8:13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

The seed which fell upon the rock was that which had fallen into hearts that at first received the word and then were so shallow they did not provide the environment which would allow the word to thrive. The truth would soon become ineffective within them and they would fall away to temptation.

We can almost hear the change in the tone of Jesus voice as he moved from talking about the seed which had fallen upon bad hearts and that which had found its way into hearts that heard the Word, loved it, and brought forth much spiritual fruit.

Luk 8:14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Luk 8:15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

The seed that fell among thorns had fallen into hearts that were filled with care for riches and pleasures of this life. The gospel demanded that they place service in the Kingdom of Heaven ahead of these pleasures. Such persons do not bring forth

any fruit in the Kingdom because the labor required to produce such fruit would keep them from their enjoyments in the world.

Jesus very well knew the gospel was being offered to scribes and Pharisees who would reject it and mock those who preached it. But he also knew much of the seed of the gospel would fall into hearts that were hungering and thirsting after righteousness and that in such hearts it would thrive and bring forth a bountiful harvest. My friend, which type of soil would your own heart represent? Does the Word of God find good soil, deep and rich. Or does it find thorns and rocky ground within you?

Luk 8:16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

Luk 8:17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

Luk 8:18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

At first it looks as if Jesus changed the topic quite sharply right here. He moved from the parable of the sower to a discussion of light causing hidden things to be made manifest.

The change is not that definite. In verse eighteen he declared that those who will not hear are in danger of having that which they already possess

taken away from them. His point is that those whose hearts are so hard the seed of the gospel can not enter and take root, will find they have not only failed to produce more fruit. They will find that their lives will become even less productive.

Luk 8:20 And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

Luk 8:21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

Some came to the Lord and told him his mother and his brethren were waiting to see him. He replied that his mother and his brethren were really those who heard the Word of God and did their best to obey it. Jesus was not insulting his mother and his brothers. He was trying to teach men the gospel is more important than the dearest family relationships we cherish so much.

Luk 8:22 Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

Luk 8:23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

Luk 8:24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he

arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

Luk 8:25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

As Jesus and his disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee in a ship, a sharp wind began to blow. The Bible calls the boat a “ship.” This may cause some to imagine it as being larger than it actually was. Most of the boats on the Sea of Galilee would have been fishing boats. A tempest can toss such a boat around until there is real danger of it capsizing.

Jesus had gone to sleep, and was still sleeping as the storm reached a precarious level. The disciples came and woke him to tell him the entire group could well drown.

A major lesson here is that men often find themselves in conditions where they cannot deal with the problems by themselves. We may not be in a boat at sea, but the situation may be just as serious. Jesus is always nearby. He is capable of taking control and providing the assistance which we need.

As soon as Jesus awoke, he called for the storm be calmed. He command was obeyed. The raging of the wind and the waves stopped. Jesus turned to them and asked them why they had not had more faith. If only all men could realize the storms of life are but for a short time, and will then be

made calm, we would have far less nervous stress and anxiety. Jesus and the Father in heaven can see us through every trial.

Luk 8:26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

Luk 8:27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

Luk 8:28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

Luk 8:29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

Luk 8:30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

Luk 8:31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

Luk 8:32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

Luk 8:33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

Luk 8:34 When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

Luk 8:35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

Luk 8:36 They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

Luk 8:37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

Christ went into the area of the Gaderenes near the Sea of Galilee. There he met a man who had been controlled by devils for a long period of time. The result was that he ran around without clothing and spent much time in the tombs or cemetery areas. This man made a strange statement when he came into contact with Jesus. He said, "*What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.*" He said this because Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. It was not truly the man

speaking. It was the demonic spirit which had taken control of his body.

Jesus then asked the name of the demon. He was told that the name should be “Legion” for there were a number of these unclean spirits all tormenting the man. The spirits then begged Jesus not to command them to go out into the deep. This could have meant the deepness of the Sea of Galilee. It could also have meant the deepness of the darkness found in the absence of all spiritual light. Satan is called the “Prince of darkness.”

There was a herd of swine feeding on the hillside. Jesus caused the demons to leave the man and enter into the swine. They did so and the swine ran violently down the hillside and into the sea where they were drowned.

The word spread quickly. People came from every direction to see what had been done. When they arrived they found the man sitting fully clothed at the feet of Jesus. He was in his right mind. The ones who had seen what had taken place told the newcomers what they had seen. It is difficult to understand what happened next. Large numbers of people from the country of the Gaderenes asked Jesus to leave their territory. We are told they were overwhelmed with fear.

Perhaps we can understand their actions best by thinking about what happens to men and women today when the truth of the Word of God is presented to them. Obedience to the gospel requires a definite change in the pattern of living for many people. They must give up their riches and their pleasures. In some cases they must even

give up their businesses, if those businesses involve actions that are out of harmony with the will of God. I state emphatically that no man can operate either a business selling alcoholic beverages, or a house of prostitution, and claim to be a faithful Christian. Just as the Gaderenes did, such people would be happy for Jesus and his followers to leave their areas.

Luk 8:38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

Luk 8:39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

Luk 8:40 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.

The man who had been released from the control of the evil spirits asked Jesus for permission to go with him. Jesus replied that he must go to his home and let people see what God had accomplished in his life. Sometimes the best way to serve God is not to go off into the mission fields. It may well be that one can do the most good by simply letting the people of one's own community see just what the Christian life is all about.

I am certainly not saying we should ignore the command of Jesus to go unto all the world and

preach the gospel unto every creature. That must be done. I praise those who make the sacrifices necessary to leave their homes and go to foreign fields with the Word of God. However, there are many unsung heroes who have never gone abroad. They have lived the Word of God out in their own backyard. Others have seen their dedication and have been convinced the Christian way leads to happiness in this world and also in the world to come. May God bless both the missionaries who leave their homes and also the ones who live for Jesus Christ at home.

Luk 8:41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

Luk 8:42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

The next event recorded in this eighth chapter of Luke concerns a man named Jairus. Jairus was the ruler of a synagogue. He came and fell at Jesus feet pleading with the Lord that he come to his house where his only daughter lay dying. As he tried to cause Jesus to hear his plea, the crowd pressed in tightly upon Christ and the man was unable to get a response to his request.

Luk 8:43 And a woman having an issue

of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

Luk 8:44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

Luk 8:45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

Luk 8:46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

Luk 8:47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

Even while Jairus was trying to get Jesus attention, a woman who was hemorrhaging came asking the Lord for help. The woman had been suffering from her illness for some twelve years. She had gone to many doctors and had spent everything she had. No one had been able to help her.

She came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his garment. As soon as she did so, her hemorrhaging stopped. Jesus knew what had happened. He asked who it was that had touched him. No one, including the woman, would answer

him. They thought he was ridiculous in asking who had touched him when there were so many packed around him. He repeated his question, and said he knew someone had received healing because virtue had gone out of him. Remember my friends that Jesus was a perfect man. Just as snow would melt in the presence of heat, disease could sometimes be melted away in the presence of his righteousness.

When the woman realized she would soon be identified, even if she failed to admit she was the one, she confessed before all the people that she had been healed. Jesus commanded that she not be concerned or confused. Her faith had resulted in her healing. She should go in peace.

Jesus can do things no doctor is able to do. Very often doctors will tell patients that they have done all they can do. They suggest that the patient and the family and loved ones of the patient bow their heads and pray that God will take over. I know of more than one case in which a patient had been considered to be in desperate condition. God was asked to help and the patient is now alive and going about his or her daily activities. Do not give up my friends when earthly physicians have exhausted their remedies. The Great Physician can heal when no others can.

Luk 8:48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

Luk 8:49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble

not the Master.

Luk 8:50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

Luk 8:51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

Luk 8:52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

Luk 8:53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

Luk 8:54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

Luk 8:55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

Luk 8:56 And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

Had you almost forgotten that when this woman touched Jesus, there was another who had tried to receive his help. The ruler of the synagogue was still waiting. His daughter was still very very sick. Even while Jesus was telling the woman who had been healed to go in peace, some came and told Jairus his daughter had died. He might as well not trouble Jesus. It was too late.

Jesus told the man it was not too late. He then went to the man's house. When he arrived there

he told those who were mourning that the girl was only sleeping. They laughed at Jesus, knowing she was dead. Jesus, however, asked them to leave. He took the girl by the hand and commanded her to arise. She did so. He then told her parents to provide a meal for her. The parents were astonished at what had happened. Jesus told them to tell no man what had been done. You see my friends, the death of the righteous is only sleep in the sight of God. They will be awakened some day to live in heaven!

Dear friends, if you have asked Jesus for help in solving some of your serious problems, and you have not seen any evidence that the help came, do not give up. God does things in His own way. He may reply, "Not just yet. Wait, watch and continue to pray. If you remain faithful, I will help."

Chapter 9

Luk 9:1 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

Luk 9:2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

Luk 9:3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

Luk 9:4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

Luk 9:5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

Luk 9:6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

The ninth chapter of Luke is a chapter which emphasizes the importance of hearing and following the Son of God. It will do you good to meditate with us on these things for just a few minutes.

As this chapter begins Jesus called his twelve apostles together to give them instructions for their missionary travels. They would be responsible for preaching the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven. They must be properly prepared. He gave them power and authority over both diseases and devils. It seems that there were at least two different occasions on which such power was given to them. We are told of this authority and power

being given to them here. We are also told that after Jesus resurrection he told the twelve to wait in Jerusalem until they were endowed with power from on high before they went out to preach after he ascended to heaven.

This power over evil spirits and diseases allowed the apostles to confirm their message as being from God rather than being the product of their own minds. Only God could give men the power to cure lepers, cast out devils and raise the dead. Honest men would be forced to hear their message and honor it. Only the dishonest would turn away.

Jesus then gave them some unexpected instructions. They were take nothing for their journey. They would not need extra food, clothing or money. At other places the Bible explains why this could be done. The laborer is worthy of his hire. Those who devote themselves to the preaching of the Word have the right to be supported by those who hear it. The preacher has no right to live like a king while others sacrifice their very living. But the preacher does have the right to expect support so that he can devote his time to study and preaching.

Verse four tells us they were to enter into the houses of those who would hear and bless those who were hungering and thirsting for righteousness. In contrast, they were to leave those areas where the people would not listen. They were to shake the very dust off their feet and move on to more fertile regions. The apostles obeyed Christ and went through many towns both preaching the gospel and

healing the sick.

Luk 9:7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

Luk 9:8 And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

Luk 9:9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

Luk 9:10 And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

Luk 9:11 And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

Herod the king soon heard of the marvelous things that were taking place. There were some who even suggested that John the baptist had been raised from the dead. This disturbed Herod because it was he who had commanded that John be beheaded. Herod could not believe it was John. He had killed John; but just who was responsible for these miracles? Herod wanted to see Jesus and satisfy his own curiosity.

After the apostles had been out preaching for some time, they returned to the Lord and reported

to him what had been happening. He then took them into a more private place near the village of Bethsaida. The privacy did not last long. As soon as the people heard where he and the apostles had gone they sought him out and he received them. He continued healing them and telling them of the wonderful Kingdom of God.

Luk 9:12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

Luk 9:13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

Luk 9:14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

Luk 9:15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

Luk 9:16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

Luk 9:17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

As the day wore away, the apostles became concerned about the welfare of the crowd. They

suggested that Jesus send them into the towns nearby in order that they might find food to eat. This gave Jesus an opportunity to teach a spiritual lesson the world should never forget. God has bread which will fill not only the stomach, but the soul of man. Jesus simply commanded the apostles to give the people something to eat. The apostles complained that they could hardly feed some five thousand people with only the five loaves and two fishes they had on hand.

Jesus was prepared for their objection. He told them to instruct the crowd to sit down in groups of fifty. Then he took the loaves and fishes and looking up to heaven, he blessed them. He then began to pass out food to the apostles who distributed it to the people. Everyone ate until they were filled. There was extra food which had not been consumed. It was found to be enough to fill twelve baskets. It is possible that each person who was passing out food had a basket, and that the baskets remained full, even as they took the food from it. Only the power of God could bring about such a miracle.

I must take just a moment to express my disgust with the critics of the Bible who will spend as much time as they do in trying to deny the Sonship of Jesus Christ, the Fatherhood of God and the divine authority of the Holy Bible. I read from one author who tried to say Jesus had a large supply of food hidden in a cave. He then had someone pass him the food from the cave and then handed it to the apostles, deceiving the people into thinking a miracle had taken place. Men who die upon a cross for the salvation of others, and who tell the truth when

they know it will lead to their own murder do not try to pass themselves off as that which they are not. The miracle of the loaves and the fishes was real.

Luk 9:18 And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

Luk 9:19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

Luk 9:20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

Luk 9:21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing;

Christ then asked the apostles what men were saying about him. Who did they believe he was? The apostles replied that some thought he was John the baptist, some thought he was Elijah or one of the other prophets of old. Jesus pinned them down. He asked, "*Who do you say that I am?*" Peter was always quick to answer. He spoke out fearlessly and confidently. "*You are the Christ of God.*" This meant Peter believed Jesus was more important than Elijah, John the baptist, or any person who had ever lived. Elijah spoke of a coming Christ. John the baptist spoke of a coming Christ. Peter was saying Jesus was that Christ. Jesus then commanded them not to tell others about this just yet. There were many things which must take place

first. Later Jesus would say when he saw the cross just ahead, “*Mine hour is come.*” At this time it still lay in the future.

Luk 9:22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Luk 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Luk 9:24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

Luk 9:25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

Luk 9:26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels.

Luk 9:27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

The Lord pointed out that he would be slain by the elders, scribes and chief priests of the Jews, and would be raised up again after three days. His apostles would find it necessary to also lose their lives. They would have to take up their own crosses and follow him. Any man who was ashamed of Christ would find Christ ashamed of

him when he came with the angels to receive his own in glory. He indicated the apostles would find the Kingdom of God arriving before some of them died for him.

Not too long after this, Peter denied the Lord three times within a short space of time. Was Jesus looking ahead to Peter's lack of courage when he talked about those who were ashamed of Him and His words?

Luk 9:28 And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

Luk 9:29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.

Luk 9:30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:

Eight days after the miracle of the loaves and the fishes Jesus took Peter, James and John to a mountain to pray. One of the other accounts of the gospel described it as a high mountain. We do not know the name of the mountain, but Mt Hermon fits the description. It has snow on its peak well into the summer months.

As Jesus began to pray his face became white and glistened. He was joined by two others. They were Moses and Elijah. These two also appeared in a glorious manner. In order to fully understand the meaning of what was about to happen, we must realize the place of Moses and Elijah. Moses

was the great lawgiver who went up on Mount Sinai to receive the law and bring it down to the people of Israel. The law was a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. Elijah was the greatest of the prophets. The book of Revelation tells us the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Thus Moses and Elijah had both been great leaders and highly respected men.

Luk 9:31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

Luk 9:32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

Luk 9:33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

Luk 9:34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

Luk 9:35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

Luk 9:36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

As Peter, James and John watched, they heard Moses, Elijah and Christ discussing the coming death of Jesus at Jerusalem. After having seen what happened Peter was much impressed. He suggested that three tabernacles should be built to honor the three. There should be one for Moses, one for Elijah and one for Christ. Even as he was speaking there was a cloud which enclosed them and God spoke to them from within the cloud. God said, "*This is my Beloved Son; hear him.*" The voice ceased. The cloud disappeared, and Jesus was found alone.

The point of this event was that Moses and Elijah were only men who declared the Word of God. Jesus is the very Son of God. Moses and Elijah were servants rather than sons. Jesus Christ stands alone as the High Priest, the Prophet and the King of kings. Those who place the wisdom of men above, or equal to the wisdom of God's Son make a critical mistake.

Luk 9:37 And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

Luk 9:38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child.

Luk 9:39 And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

Luk 9:40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

Luk 9:41 And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

Luk 9:42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

Luk 9:43 And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

Luk 9:44 Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

Luk 9:45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

The next day a man came to Jesus asking help for his son. He had but one son and was very concerned about him. An evil spirit had taken control of him and was causing him to do some horrible things. He would foam at the mouth and cry out. The man had asked the apostles for help and they had not been able to cure the boy.

Jesus declared that he had come into the midst of a faithless and crooked people. How long would he have to put up with such a lack of faith. He then told the man to bring his son to him. While the man was still on the way to Jesus, the spirit

threw his son down on the ground. Jesus then rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and delivered him to his father. This miracle brought on much amazement among the people.

Jesus told his apostles they were to let the lessons they were hearing sink down deep into their ears. Clearly he was talking about their hearts. He would soon be delivered into the hands of men. They did not understand what he was saying, even though they had heard Moses, Elijah and Christ discussing his coming death as they talked upon the mountain. Little did they realize that not only Jesus, but they themselves, would be killed at the hands of hate filled men.

Luk 9:46 Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

Luk 9:47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

Luk 9:48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

Satan has three great weapons. They are the pride of life, the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh. The disciples were like many of us. They wished to be recognized as greater than the rest. Jesus condemned them for such thinking. He used a small child to teach them just how dependent they were and how to truly be great. The one who

becomes a servant to his fellowman is the one who is great.

Luk 9:49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.

Luk 9:50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.

Luk 9:51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

The next event recorded in this chapter is all too common among men. The apostles began to talk about who was to be the greatest among them. Jesus did not appreciate this line of thought at all. He found a small child and set the child beside him. Then he told the apostles he loved those who loved the weak and helpless such as the child. If a man wanted to be great in the Kingdom of God that man must be ready to serve rather than be served. The one who was least among the apostles would be great.

Some religious persons have not learned the lesson Jesus taught here. They desire to hold Peter up as being greater than the rest of the apostolic band. They note that Peter was told Christ would give him the keys to the kingdom and that whatever Peter bound on earth would be bound in heaven. The difficulty with that is that Jesus said the same thing to the rest of the apostles just a little bit later. We might do well to remember that it was

Peter who denied the Lord three times within one night. There were three of the apostles who seem to have been with Christ at some critical times. These were Peter, James and John. However; this does not mean Christ set any one, or all three of them above the rest.

Luk 9:52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

Luk 9:53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

Luk 9:54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

Luk 9:55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

Luk 9:56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

Luk 9:57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whither-soever thou goest.

Luk 9:58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Luk 9:59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go

and bury my father.

Luk 9:60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

Luk 9:61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

Luk 9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Jesus then sent some of the apostles to a village in Samaria to prepare the way for his own coming to that village. When the Samaritans would not receive Christ his apostles asked if fire should be commanded to come down from heaven and burn them up. Jesus replied that their spirit was not right. He had come to save life, not to destroy it.

Someone then came to Jesus and promised to follow the Lord wherever he decided to go. Jesus answered that this might be a greater faith than the man suspected. The foxes of the field have dens. The birds of the air have nests. But Jesus did not own a home where he could lay his head.

When Jesus said to another man, "*Follow me,*" the man replied that he needed first to go and bury his father. Jesus told him to "*Let the dead bury the dead.*" Still another wanted to follow Jesus but first wished to bid goodbye to those in his household. Jesus told him that would be looking back. No man was fit for the Kingdom of God if he longed for the things left behind.

At another time the Lord said, "*Seek ye first the*

Kingdom of Heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Chapter 10

Luk 10:1 After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

Luk 10:2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

Luk 10:3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

This tenth chapter of the book of Luke has two main topics. It talks about Jesus sending out seventy disciples two by two to preach the gospel. It also tells of a Samaritan who demonstrated the kind of love for his fellowman that Jesus expects all Christians to have.

The twelve apostles were not going to be enough to preach the Word of God to every city of Palestine. Just as Moses knew he would have to have men to help him judge Israel in Old Testament times, Jesus knew he would have to add others to the twelve. Therefore he chose seventy of his disciples and gave them a charge to spread the word to every city and every place where he himself would come later. As John the baptist had come preparing the way before Jesus was baptized, these seventy would prepare the way before the Lord came to preach to the people.

The seventy were given careful instructions. First they were told of the importance of their mission.

There was a harvest of souls waiting to be taken. Since there was a shortage of workers who could reap that harvest, every one of the seventy must work diligently to bring it in. They must also pray that the Lord would bring in others to aid them in that great work.

It would not be easy. It would be as dangerous to them as it would be for a lamb to be sent out into an area where there were hungry wolves. The servants of Satan would be ready to destroy them at any opportunity. They would kill Jesus and they would also kill many of his disciples. The seventy must be ready to face the greatest of dangers.

Luk 10:4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

Luk 10:5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

Luk 10:6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

Luk 10:7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

They were not to carry a large abundance of food or clothing for their journey. The laborer would be worthy of his hire. There would be those who heard their message and who would be grateful enough to provide for their needs and send them on their way. Also they were not to dally along the way by having unnecessary conversation with talkative

persons whom they met. They had work to do and did not have time for wasted words.

When they entered into a house they were to pronounce peace upon that house. We are not told how they approached the house in order to receive an invitation to enter. Did they knock on the doors? Did they strike up conversation with those outside the house and watch for an opportunity to be invited inside? We do not know. But if they were to gain entrance they were to call for the peace of God to rest upon that house. If the son of peace was found in that house they were to pray that God's peace would continue to rest upon that house. If they found opposition to God's peace, they were to let their blessing of peace return to them and go to another house. As long as there was a house willing to support them while in that city, they were not to move from one house to another for support. God would see that the house that supported his missionaries would be blessed.

Luk 10:8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

Luk 10:9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

Luk 10:10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

Luk 10:11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against

you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

Luk 10:12 But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

Each time they entered into a city they were to begin preaching. If the people of that city were happy to see them and were ready to hear them and support them, they were to pour out God's blessings upon that city. They were to eat whatever was set before them without complaining. Then they were to heal the sick and make certain the people of that city knew the Kingdom of God had come near to them. Things would go well with that city which treated his disciples well.

At the same time they would find there were some cities that would not receive them with gladness. These cities would mock them and refuse to believe the message of redemption which was preached to them. When they found they had entered into a city of this kind, they were to act in the opposite manner as they had in the cities that received them gladly. They were to go through the streets of the evil cities shaking off the dust from their feet.

Luk 10:13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

Luk 10:14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for

you.

Luk 10:15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

Luk 10:16 He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

God wanted them to understand that in the day of final judgment it would be better for Sodom than for those who rejected the preaching of the seventy. It would be better for Tyre and Sidon, who were also wicked cities and were burned up, than it would be for Chorazin and Bethsaida who failed to hear the gospel message from Christ's disciples.

It would be hard to find a more loathsome place than Sodom. Only slightly behind Sodom were the cities of Tyre and Sidon. These were the most wicked examples which could have been brought up. Why did Jesus state that it would be worse for Chorazin and Bethsaida in the judgment than it would for those three evil places? It was because Chorazin, Bethsaida and other places in Palestine who had seen the miracles of God done before them had ignored the message of the gospel. The more God provides for men the more he expects of them. Chorazin and Bethsaida had received more evidence of God's power. They should have believed in God and listened to the preaching of the Kingdom.

Luk 10:17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are

subject unto us through thy name.

Luk 10:18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Luk 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

After having been out preaching for some time, the seventy returned to the Lord and joyfully cried out that even the devils were subject unto them when they commanded them to come out in the name of Jesus. Jesus replied that he beheld Satan falling from heaven even like the lightning. Satan was being defeated by the wondrous things that were going on. Jesus told the seventy they would also be able to walk on poisonous serpents and deadly scorpions. The enemy did not have the power to hurt them. They would be able to do even more wondrous things in the future than they had already done.

Luk 10:20 Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Jesus did add a word of caution. They were rejoicing that they had power over evil spirits. An even greater cause for rejoicing would be that their names were written in God's books in heaven. There is a strong lesson here for us. Men and women who

find themselves able to accomplish great things for God here on earth should not be filled with false pride. It is a far more important thing that God approves of our actions than that men approve and applaud our names on earth.

Luk 10:21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Luk 10:22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

Luk 10:23 And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

Luk 10:24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Jesus then spoke to his Father in heaven and thanked him that the simple people of the earth were able to serve and preach the gospel. It did not have to be placed in the hands of the great rabbis and philosophers. It could be preached by the humblest of men. He mentioned that no one could

know who he truly was except God, and that no one could truly know who God was but the Son. If men were to know of either the Father or the Son, it would be because it had been revealed to them by the mind of God. The greatest of prophets and kings had desired to find the truths which they had heard and had not heard them. They had to be revealed in God's own time and in God's own way.

Luk 10:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

After these things, a certain lawyer asked Jesus a question. He did not ask for information. He asked because he was trying to trick him or tempt him. The lawyer said, "*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" He planned to embarrass Jesus by matching his own powers of reasoning with those of Jesus. That was not a wise decision.

Luk 10:26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

Luk 10:27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

Luk 10:28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Luk 10:29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

Jesus answered by asking a question in return. *“What is written in the law? How readest thou?”* Already the lawyer was being put on the defensive. He should not have had to ask the question. By proper understanding of the law he should have been able to answer his own question. He did answer the question Jesus asked him. He quoted from

Deut. 6:5. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and will all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.” Jesus commended him for his answer and told him if he would do these things he could have eternal life.

The lawyer should have realized by that time that he was in far over his head. His own reasoning power was puny compared with that of Jesus. He was not willing to admit that. So he asked Jesus another question. *“And who is my neighbor?”* In other words how do I know who I should help?”

Luk 10:30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

Luk 10:31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

Luk 10:32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

Luk 10:33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

Luk 10:34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Luk 10:35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Luk 10:36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

Luk 10:37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Jesus was always the master in presenting lessons through parables. The word parable means to throw down beside. Jesus would throw down a story that illustrated the truth he was trying to get across. The meaning would be so clear those who listened could not mistake it. That is just what he did in this case.

He said, There was a certain man who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. He had the misfortune to fall in the hands of thieves who took even his very clothing and left him half dead. A priest walked by him and moved to the other side of the road to avoid him. Soon a Levite came along and did the same thing. The beaten man did not

mean anything more to them than something which was in their way was they traveled.

Then a Samaritan came along. When he saw the man, he had compassion on him. He did what he could to bind up the man's wounds. He put him on his own beast of burden and took him to an inn where he could be given further attention. Then he told the innkeeper that when he came back through he would pay whatever bill had been accumulated by the wounded man.

Remember dear friends who the priests were, who the Levites were, and who the Samaritans were. The priests were dedicated completely to the work of offering sacrifices and doing the work of the temple. Of all men, they should have been more concerned than any others over one who needed help. The Levites were not all priests, but they were members of the tribe of Levi, from which the priests came. They often served in duties similar to the priests. The Levite should also have had more reason to show compassion on the robbed and beaten man. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews. They were a mixed people. The poor of Israel had been left behind when the healthiest had been taken to captivity in Babylon. They intermarried with the Canaanites around them. When the Jews returned from captivity the Samaritans wanted to help them rebuild the temple. The Jews refused to allow this. We do not know whether the man who was beaten was a Jew or not. If he was we have a Samaritan whom he would no doubt have hated having compassion on him. Jesus lesson is

very clear.

One's neighbor is one who has need of his help. It will not matter whether the person is of his own race or nationality. The thing that will matter is that he needs help and the one passing by is able to provide that help. Jesus was telling the lawyer he could have eternal life if he would put his whole heart, soul, mind and strength into serving God and also his fellow humans who needed his assistance. He asked the lawyer which of the men proved to be a neighbor to the beaten man. The lawyer said he supposed it was the Samaritan. Jesus told the lawyer to go and do likewise.

Luk 10:38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

Luk 10:39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

Luk 10:40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

Luk 10:41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

Luk 10:42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

The tenth chapter of Luke closes with an account

of a visit made by Jesus to the house of Mary and Martha. Jesus loved these two sisters. He visited their home more than once. Mary loved to listen to Jesus wisdom. She would give up all other activities to hear what the Master had to say. Martha was proud of her house. She wanted Jesus and any other visitors to be comfortable and to find the house well kept and attractive.

As Mary sat listening to Jesus, Martha became a bit annoyed that Mary was not helping her in the housework. She asked Jesus if he did not care that she was having to do the work all by herself. Jesus replied that Martha was too much concerned with material things. Mary had chosen the better part when she had decided to listen to him. After all, the housework could be done after Jesus was gone. The very precious moments when the two of them could feast upon the truths Jesus offered were too precious to waste.

This event does not teach us to be negligent in housecleaning or business dealings. What it does teach is that there are times when doing the Lord's work and listening to the Lord's teaching takes first place with respect to our time and energy. After all, we are taught to do all things decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40).

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Chapter 11

Luk 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

This chapter opens with Jesus praying in the presence of his disciples. When he finished his prayer one of the disciples requested that he teach them to pray. We can easily understand why the disciple would have asked for instruction in talking to the Father in heaven. Of course that is what prayer is. The reading and study of the Bible is our way of allowing God to talk to us. Prayer is our way of talking to God. Unless both of these avenues are kept open, we will shortchange ourselves.

Do you enjoy praying along with one who is truly conversing with the Heavenly Father? There is a difference in a “canned” prayer, and one that comes spontaneously from the heart. What a privilege it would have been to hear the Son of God talking with His Father. The disciple who made the request that Jesus teach them how to pray knew he had heard something very special.

Luk 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

Luk 11:3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

Luk 11:4 And forgive us our sins; for we

also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

No one who ever lived would have been able to pray as Jesus did. He had been with his Father in the creation. He had no sin which might act as static and make it more difficult to be heard in heaven. On more than one occasion Jesus prayed for hours at a time. Most of us have never done that. I know a few boys and girls who were in love who would talk on the telephone for hours. But very seldom do men and women find it important to speak to God at length. Jesus prayer so impressed the disciple that he wanted to be able to pray like Jesus had been doing. The disciple is to be commended for his wisdom.

Jesus was glad to do as the disciple asked. As he provided the answer he gave to us what we now call the "Lord's Prayer." He said, When you pray, say, "*Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.*" The point Jesus was making was that when we talk to God we are not talking to a "Big Buddy upstairs." I have heard of persons who addressed God in very disrespectful manners. They do not even pay God the courtesy they would pay to a dignified human. God is all powerful. We are weak. God is all wise. We are foolish. God is sinless. We are stained with sin. The publican who bowed his head and said, "*God, be merciful to me a sinner.*" had the proper spirit of humility.

Jesus then added the words, "*Thy kingdom come.*"

Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.” There are hundreds and thousands of organizations on earth. Some of them are beneficial to man. Others are very harmful to him. There is no organization that ever existed which is more important to the welfare of us humans than the Kingdom of God. God’s Kingdom will be victorious someday over every enemy. We need to pray earnestly for that victory to come. We need to do all we can to bring on that victory. We can do that by being good Christians and by teaching others the importance of becoming children of God. Yes, let us pray, “Thy Kingdom Come. In a very important sense it did come on the day of Pentecost. In another sense, it still awaits its final victory over Satan and his followers.

Jesus then said, “*Give us this day our daily bread.*” Remember friends, you do not have the ability to provide a single crumb of bread or the tiniest drop of water. Without God you would have absolutely nothing. What is more, you would not even exist. Your very being depends upon the power and goodness of God. At every meal you ought to thank him for your daily bread. In between you should thank him for the countless other blessings he showers upon you every day of your life.

Jesus closed his instructions on praying by talking about our need to overcome sin. He said we should ask God to “*Forgive our sins as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.*” You may be a particularly good person. But you are not sinless. Every day each of us ought to cry out for God to forgive us of the sins we commit. Some of them we know about and are

ashamed of. Others are sins of ignorance, and we are not even aware that we have committed them. In both cases, God has said that if we will follow his directions our souls may be washed clean and white in his sight. Then, when we are cleaned up, we need the help of God to ward off the fiery darts of Satan. Only by the power and wisdom of God can we avoid being ensnared by that one who goes about seeking whom he may devour.

Luk 11:5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

Luk 11:6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

Luk 11:7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

Luk 11:8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

Luk 11:9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Luk 11:10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Luk 11:11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish

give him a serpent?

Luk 11:12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

Luk 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Jesus did not stop with the prayer itself. He had more to say to those who had desired instruction on prayer. He wanted to talk to them about the willingness of God to hear their prayers.

He told about a man who came to his friend's house in the late hours of the night asking for food to give to one of his own friends who had come in from a long journey. At first the man who was asked for the food would not rise. He explained that the doors were locked and the family was all in bed. He did not wish to get up. Jesus explained that if the man who was asking for the bread continued to ask, he would receive what he asked for. If for no other reason, just to get him to quit pestering.

Clearly, if a man would give to another man when the requests came over and over, God would hear and respond if men come to him repeatedly with their requests. Jesus said, *“Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you.”* The Lord did not even stop there. He said it would be a strange human father who would give his son a stone when he had asked for bread, or who would give his son a serpent when he had asked for an egg. Christ

closed his instructions by saying, *“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.”*

The student of the Scriptures will note that Jesus did not say the Father would instruct the Holy Spirit to give gifts to men. Jesus said the Father would give the Holy Spirit himself to those who ask. The promise made in Acts 2:38 is in complete agreement with what Jesus declared here. The Holy Spirit is a comforter, a guide to truth and an intercessor who presents our prayers to the Father.

Luk 11:14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

Luk 11:15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

Luk 11:16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

The scene then changed. Jesus was casting a devil out of a dumb man. When we say this was a dumb man, we do not mean he was feeble minded. We mean the man was unable to speak. The devil had caused the man not to be able to talk. Jesus had compassion on the man and healed him. When some of those who watched saw what Jesus had done, they accused him of casting out the demon by the power of the Devil.

Luk 11:17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

Luk 11:18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

Luk 11:19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

Luk 11:20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

Luk 11:21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

Jesus heard what they were saying and even knew what they were thinking. He replied that any kingdom which fought against itself would fall. He was not casting out the devil by the power of Beelzebub, or Satan. If Satan were to fight against himself he would not last long. He then explained where the power came from which he had used to get rid of the demon from the dumb man. He said, *“If I by the Finger of God cast out Devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you.”*

When Jesus was baptized the Holy Spirit came down from heaven in the form of a dove and alighted upon him. We are told that Jesus had the Spirit without measure. The spirit of man is that part of him that allows him to move and work. The Spirit of God is the part of the Godhead that gets God’s work done. It was through that power Jesus had

cast out the devil from the man.

Luk 11:22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

Luk 11:23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

Luk 11:24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

Luk 11:25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

Luk 11:26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Luk 11:27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

Luk 11:28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

The Lord went on to say that Satan is a strong man, but that the power of the Holy Spirit is stronger than that of Satan. Jesus was able to enter into the man who had the devil and overcome Satan. He had then cast out the devil whom Satan

had implanted in his heart. Not only that; Jesus warned that we must constantly be on guard. When an evil spirit was cast out of a man it might well come back later and bring seven other evil spirits with it. If the person had not fortified his soul, all eight of them would enter into him and he would be even worse off than he was before.

Do not take this too lightly friends. You may say to yourself, “I know that evil spirits or demons do not possess men today as they did during the life of Jesus. Why should I worry about such things?” Men may have attitudes today which fall right into the hands of Satan. We have to fight against them all the time. Then when we have overcome one of these sinful attitudes, we may just find that if we are not careful, it will return along with seven others which are even worse.

Luk 11:29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, **This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.**

Luk 11:30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

Luk 11:31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Luk 11:32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and

shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

The people were constantly desiring for Jesus to provide miracles and signs to establish His authority as God's own Son. The Lord pointed out that such signs were not given just to satisfy the whims of sceptical men.

He went on to say that there would be a very wonderful and convincing sign given some day. Just as Jonah was in the depths of the sea and came forth to preach to the people of Ninevah, Jesus would arise from the grave to preach to men. The reader should compare the same account in Matthew and Mark to gain more details.

Christ added that the queen of the south had traveled a long distance just to hear the great wisdom of Solomon. Yet, here these persons did not even realize they were hearing divine wisdom from the mouth of God's own Son.

Luk 11:33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

Luk 11:34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

Luk 11:35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

Luk 11:36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

Those persons who were attempting to trap Christ were trying to dim the light of the Word. Men who were filled with darkness as well as light could never shine out unto the world. They were like someone who lit a candle and placed a cover over it rather than holding it high on a candlestick.

Luk 11:37 And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

Luk 11:38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

A Pharisee then came to Jesus and asked him to dine with him. Jesus accepted. The Lord did not wash his hands before he prepared to eat. The Pharisee was astonished. Why had Jesus not washed before eating? It is not impossible that Jesus deliberately failed to wash so he could teach the lesson which he then presented to the guests.

Luk 11:39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

Luk 11:40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

Luk 11:41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

Luk 11:42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Jesus could see the inner man just as clearly as we see the outward man. It was far worse for a person to have a dirty soul than to have dirty hands. He called those who accused him of not washing his hands fools. He asked them if the one who made the outside of a man did not also make the inside of him. Then he proceeded to tell them they had their priorities all mixed up. They thought things which were unimportant were very important, and they considered things which were critical to be of little importance. They gave tithes of spices and herbs, and then they failed to treat men as they should treat them. Certainly they should have given their tithes. But after doing that they had failed to do something which was every bit as important.

Luk 11:43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

Luk 11:44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk

over them are not aware of them.

Luk 11:45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

Luk 11:46 And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

Luk 11:47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

Luk 11:48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

Luk 11:49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:

Luk 11:50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

He accused the Pharisees of desiring the glory of men. They loved to have the most important seat in the synagogue. They loved to have men greet them with great respect when they appeared on the streets. They were really like graves with dead men. People could be around them constantly and never even know they were in such a dead condition.

When others heard what he had said to the Pharisees, a lawyer said it sounded as if he was scolding them also. Jesus agreed that he had. They

were just as bad as the Pharisees. This was not a lawyer in the sense that he represented people in a courtroom before a judge. He was one who was trained in the law of Moses.

The lawyers were all too prone to read in the law and tell others what they should be doing and should not be doing. Then they refused to do the same things they taught the others to do. He said their fathers had killed the prophets when those prophets offered them the truth. What the lawyers were doing was just as bad.

Luk 11:51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

Luk 11:52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

Luk 11:53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:

Luk 11:54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

He pointed out that from the very early time of Cain and Abel, good and truthful men such as Abel had been destroyed by evil men such as Cain. This kind of action would be punished by God. They need not expect to hinder and persecute God's true

servants, and then think they would not be held responsible. Jesus told the Pharisees and lawyers that they had taken the key of knowledge and had locked the door. They would not learn the truth themselves. Then they placed obstacles in the way so that others could not learn either.

Both the lawyers and the Phaisees were furious. They kept on urging him to speak on various topics in order to find something in his words that would allow them to kill him. This would not stop until they finally saw him nailed to the cross!

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Chapter 12

Luk 12:1 In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Luk 12:2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

Luk 12:3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

This twelfth chapter of the book of Luke contains rich teaching from the parables of Jesus Christ. For example, we will look at the parable of the rich fool and the unfaithful servant. By seeing their mistakes we may avoid those faults in our own lives.

It begins by telling us the crowd which had gathered to hear the teaching of Jesus was so great the people were treading upon one another. It is no wonder that this was happening. The Lord had made the lame walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear and had healed the lepers and even raised the dead. It was well worth an effort to get close to him.

He began to teach those who had gathered by presenting parables to them. A parable is teaching in which a powerful truth is taught by placing it

in the form of a simple story. The story may be from real life or it may be fictitious. But it always provides some great truth in simple words.

By this time in his life Jesus had offended the Pharisees and the lawyers of the Jews. They were hypocritical persons and Jesus had not failed to point out their dishonesty. This time he warned the multitude about the leaven of the Pharisees. These selfish teachers were saying one thing while living another. They privately schemed as to how they could make gain for themselves by deceiving the people. Jesus told the people this plan would not work. What was being done in the shadows would be brought out into the light of day and everyone would know how crooked and shady the Pharisees were.

Luk 12:4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

Luk 12:5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Luk 12:6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

The Pharisees had a great deal of power. It was possible for them to have men put to death for opposing them. Jesus told the people not to be afraid of these greedy men. They might have the

power to kill the body. They did not have the power to kill the soul and cast men into hell. God has far more power than they and he will protect those who love and obey him. And then Jesus added that God knows who is being abused. He knows the very hairs of our head and is aware of every sparrow that falls to the ground. If God knows and cares about the sparrows, he will also know and care about men who were made in his own image.

Luk 12:7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Luk 12:8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:

Luk 12:9 But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

Luk 12:10 And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

Luk 12:11 And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

Luk 12:12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

The Lord then had something to say about the mistreatment of the Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost. He said that those men who confessed him before

men would themselves be confessed by the Father in heaven. Those who denied Christ as the Son of God would be denied by the Father in heaven. Then he made a statement that is quite difficult for us to understand. He said that those who spoke a word against Jesus would be able to have such a sin forgiven. On the contrary, those who spoke out against the Holy Spirit would not have their sin forgiven. What is it that causes the rejection of the Holy Spirit to be so serious that it will not be forgiven?

I would like to suggest the following explanation. If one were to speak against Jesus Christ as the Son of man it would be one thing. If one were to speak against Jesus Christ as the Son of God, that would be much, much more serious. To reject Christ and deny his power as God's Son would be to turn away from divine power itself. Just as the spirit of a man allows that man to live, breathe and work, even so the Spirit of God energizes the Godhead. As a man would be dead without his human spirit, the Godhead would be powerless without the Holy Spirit. God has the power to forgive sins. If one denies God's Holy Spirit and blasphemes it, he has cut himself off from the channel through which his sins might be forgiven.

Jesus told the apostles that when men brought them before the courts in an effort to destroy them, the Holy Spirit would be with them and teach them what they should say. Jesus did not specify just how the Holy Spirit would teach them. It could have been by a recollection of the truths the Lord had

presented to them. It could also have been a direct influence upon the minds and tongues of those who had been hauled before the courts.

Luk 12:13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

Luk 12:14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

Luk 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Luk 12:16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

Luk 12:17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

Luk 12:18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

Luk 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

Luk 12:20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

Luk 12:21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

A man then came to Jesus complaining that he had been cheated out of his inheritance. Jesus pointed out that life is much more than earthly material possessions. He told the parable of the rich man. This rich man had gathered a bountiful harvest. There was so much he did not have room in his barns to hold it all. He decided that there were two things he could do. First, he could eat, drink and be merry for some time. Second, he could build larger barns to store all of the goods. All would have been well except for the fact that God required his life that very night. Then who would have control of all his prized possessions. Jesus told him the man who laid up material goods for this life and failed to lay up treasures in heaven is a very foolish man.

Luk 12:22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

Luk 12:23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

Luk 12:24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

Luk 12:25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

Luk 12:26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

Luk 12:27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Luk 12:28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Luk 12:29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

Luk 12:30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

God's children should be convinced that their Father in heaven will see that their physical and material needs are provided for. Any lack of these things will be temporary. If a faithful person starves or freezes to death, that person may look forward to life with the saints of all the ages in eternity.

Luk 12:31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Luk 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Luk 12:33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

Luk 12:34 For where your treasure is, there

will your heart be also.

The Lord then expanded upon the lesson of the rich man. He said men ought to take no thought for the food they eat or the clothing they wear. Life is more than food. The body is more than the clothing which is put upon it. He added that one could learn a lesson from the ravens and the lilies. The ravens did not sow nor reap and fill barns. Yet God saw to it that they had enough to eat. The lilies did not spend hours and hours thinking about what they were to wear the next day or the next year. Yet God dressed them up in the most beautiful adornment.

Nor should God's children go about with doubt in their mind that they will have sufficient to eat or to wear. God knows what his children have need of. He will not forsake them. The nations of the world might have need to spend much time in filling barns and piling up clothing. God's own people could be confident. The Lord said, "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.*" Listen now to verse thirty-three. "*Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.*" You see, all that is upon this earth passes away. It can be stolen. It can rot or corrode. But the treasure which one lays up in heaven is sure and certain. It will not melt away.

**Luk 12:35 Let your loins be girded about,
and your lights burning;**

Luk 12:36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

Luk 12:37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Luk 12:38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

Luk 12:39 And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

Luk 12:40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

The next words of the Lord had to do with the need to be constantly ready for the end of time. If the Lord of certain servants returns from a trip and finds them ready to meet him, they will be made happy and blessed. If they are not ready, they will be embarrassed because of their foolishness. There are many on earth who would like to serve the Devil until the hour Christ returns to judge. Then they would like to pile the pleasures of heaven on top of the sinful pleasures they wallowed in on earth. That will not happen!

Luk 12:41 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

Luk 12:42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?

Luk 12:43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Luk 12:44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

Luk 12:45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

Luk 12:46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

Luk 12:47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

Peter became concerned over what his Lord had just said. He asked if the parable was pointed at the entire multitude, or if it was intended especially for the apostles. Jesus did not actually answer Peter's question directly. He went on with his line of thought. A steward had been made ruler over

his Lord's household while the lord was gone. Let us suppose that as soon as the Lord had departed, the steward begins to get drunk and to abuse the servants over which he has been placed. If his lord comes back unexpectedly, he will be punished by being cast out of the household. If the steward is faithful while his lord is gone, he will be rewarded for his work.

Luk 12:48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whom-soever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Luk 12:49 I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

Luk 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

Luk 12:51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

Luk 12:52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

Jesus then talked about two stewards who did that which was wrong in the sight of their master. One of the two did that which he knew to be wrong. The other also did wrong, but he was ignorant of the fact that it was wrong. Christ made it clear

that the one who had done that which he knew to be wrong would suffer greater punishment than the one who did not realize he was doing wrong. One would be beaten with few stripes. The other would be beaten with many stripes.

What did this have to do with Jesus and those to whom he was speaking? It had much to do with them. There were prophets of the Old Testament times who would have given much to have sat at the feet of the Son of God and heard him teach his truths. The ones to whom Jesus was speaking had the privilege of seeing and hearing him personally. They would be held responsible for their opportunities and talents. If a man does not have much talent or opportunity, God will not expect as much from that man as he does from one who has been blessed with far more.

How many men and women have squandered away that which God has placed in their hands. Many boys and girls fail to learn their lessons in grade school and high school. They do not qualify to enter college. If they had applied themselves they might have been able to produce much more in the Kingdom of God and in the earthly society. But it was easier to fritter their time and talent and let others work hard. Jesus said, *“Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.”*

The Lord knew very well that there would be some persons who would hear him eagerly. There would be others who would ignore him and walk away. He said these differences would cause great division among men. It would even result in his death. It was like a fire which has been kindled and

does not die until it has consumed that which is in front of it. He had a baptism of fire which was ahead. His life would not be finished until those who hated what he taught had tormented him.

Yes, Jesus had come with a message of peace on earth, good will toward men. But that same message of peace would result in men being divided over it. Fathers would disagree with their own sons. Mothers would take issue with their own daughters. In a house where there were five persons, three of them would take one side. The other two would be opposed to them. Though the message had a goal of peace, it would end in much division.

Let us pursue this thought for a moment. The religious world is divided today beyond description. There are those who have heard the words of Christ and have read the Bible, but who deny Jesus as being the Son of God. We have Mohammadans, Hindus, atheists and agnostics. None of these persons accept Jesus as the Saviour of the world. Then among those who do claim to believe the Bible and confess that Jesus is God's Son, we have terrifying differences. Some believe we should keep the Sabbath of the Old Testament. Others observe the first day of the week. Some teach that one must be baptized for the remission of sins before salvation is possible. Others believe baptism is a work and that no one can be saved by works. There are hundreds of different groups, all claiming to be right while others are wrong. Jesus seems to have known centuries before it happened that this kind of spiritual warfare would take place. He did not want it to come. But he knew that it

would come.

Luk 12:53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Luk 12:54 And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

Luk 12:55 And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

Luk 12:56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

Luk 12:57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

Luk 12:58 When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

Luk 12:59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.

Next the Lord scolded his listeners for not being able to look ahead any farther than they were doing. He said, "When you see a cloud arise out of

the west, straightway you say, A shower is coming. When a south wind comes, you say it is going to be hot.” He wondered how they could be so capable of foretelling the weather and yet be so ignorant of what was ahead in the spiritual world.

What Jesus had to say to those of his day is just as true of men today. We spend so much time trying to tell what the weather will be tomorrow that we fail to realize the judgment is ahead of us. We watch the stock market like a hawk to see if the stocks we own are about to go up or down in value. At the same time we ignore the privilege of worshipping God on the Lord’s day or living for him the other six days of the week.

As the reader can see, practically everything in the chapter has dealt with the greater importance of spiritual things than that of material and earthly things. One day we will come face to face with the Judge of all the earth. At that time all will come to realize where our energy and time should have been placed. The wicked will weep sorely. The

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Chapter 13

Luk 13:1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

Luk 13:2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

Luk 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Luk 13:4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

Luk 13:5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

In this chapter Jesus was encouraging the disciples to live in hope. Suffering would someday end. The Kingdom of God would grow and win it's victory.

There were some who came to Jesus and told him about a terrible disaster that had come upon some of the Christians. Pilate had been responsible for shedding the blood of some of Jesus followers. Not only had he shed their blood; he had fallen upon them while they were in the very act of worship. Those who brought the report to Jesus described it as mixing the blood of the worshippers with their own sacrifices.

Jesus was quick to explain to them that suffering

is not always the result of sinning. Those who had lost their lives were not necessarily sinners. The Lord asked them if they supposed those who died had done so because they had sinned. He answered the question as soon as he had asked it. He said, No, they were not sinners, but many people who do sin will perish because of their sin, unless they repent. Jesus pointed out that eighteen persons had died because a tower had fallen upon them. This did not happen because they were rank sinners. However, any man or woman who is a sinner should consider their ways because they will find themselves in an eternal hell if they continue to live wicked lives.

Luk 13:6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

Luk 13:7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

Luk 13:8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

Luk 13:9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

Jesus then told the parable of the fig tree. A certain man had planted a fig tree in his vineyard. He obviously expected it to produce a crop of figs.

In due season the man came to the vineyard and examined the fig tree. There were no figs on it. Jesus was aiming his parable straight at the Jewish leaders in the city of Jerusalem. He had not chosen the time of three years by accident.

God, the Father in heaven had planted a fig tree. For the three years Jesus taught in and near Jerusalem God had been expecting fruit from those Jews who had the privilege of hearing his Only Begotten Son. When God examined the situation he found that no fruit had been produced. Jerusalem had received the blessings without making proper use of them. As the Lord continued the parable he said someone pleaded that the fig tree be given one more year to bear fruit. Then it would be right to cut it down. The ending of Jesus parable is a hint that God was going to give Jerusalem just a little more time. Then it would be punished for its stubbornness.

Luk 13:10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

Luk 13:11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

Luk 13:12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

Luk 13:13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

A woman who had born up under an infirmity

for eighteen years came to the Lord while he was teaching in the synagogue. She was bowed down and could not straighten herself up. This reminds me of scenes we saw more than once of women working in the fields in the area of Palestine and Turkey. These women had little short hoes. You would see them bent over at the hips and hoeing long rows of crops. One day our touring group noticed an elderly lady who must have looked much like the one who came to Jesus. She was badly bent and walked along with her upper body parallel to the ground. One of the members of our group said it was no wonder she could not straighten up. She had no doubt spent years of her life bent over and hoeing in the fields.

At any rate Jesus called out to the woman, ‘Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.’ As he laid his hands on her she immediately straightened up and glorified God. There are many today who are weighted down with a variety of burdens. Jesus has the ability to make those burdens lighter if we will allow him to take control of our lives. When we have trusted him and he has taken some of the load from us, we should do just as this woman did. We should also give God the praise and the glory.

Luk 13:14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

Luk 13:15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

Luk 13:16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

Luk 13:17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Remember now, Jesus healed this woman while he was in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Each synagogue had a ruler who had authority over the events taking place there. The ruler of the synagogue where Jesus healed this woman from her infirmity did not like it because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day. He said there were seven days in a week. Those who healed should do so on the other six days and not on the Sabbath day.

This reminds me of something which happened during a worship service recently. A medical doctor was present to share in the worship service. He wore a beeper which informed him of any emergencies among his patients. Twice during the worship service he had to leave the assembly to answer his beeper. Was it wrong on his part to forsake the assembly for a time in order to give his attention to a patient? The teaching of the scripture above seems clear. The patient should be attended to.

This, however, would not excuse the doctor for

sitting at home waiting for his beeper to sound, and then using this as an excuse for not assembling with the saints.

Jesus often surprised those around him by doing and teaching things which they thought broke the commandments of God. The fact is that Jesus knew one hundred times more about the will of God than such rulers of synagogues did. Christ called the man a hypocrite. He asked him if someone who had an ox did not lead the ox out to the watering trough to drink on the Sabbath. Of course he did. If then, a man would water his ox on the Sabbath day, was it not acceptable to God to heal a woman who was suffering like this woman had been suffering? Satan had bound the woman for eighteen years. It was right that she be loosed from his bond on the Sabbath, or on any other day.

Luk 13:18 Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

Luk 13:19 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

Luk 13:20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

Such men as the ruler of the synagogue did not understand the nature of the Kingdom of God. Jesus proceeded to clear up their ignorance by likening the Kingdom to other things. First, he said the Kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed.

A man drops a tiny grain of mustard seed on the ground in his garden. That tiny seed sprouts and grows into a great tree in which the birds find a place to perch. It is likely that Jesus was telling his listeners that attitudes such as the ruler of the synagogue had would never lead to the spread and growth of the Kingdom.

Luk 13:21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Christ used another likeness. He said the Kingdom of God is like a small amount of leaven. A woman places the small amount of leaven in a much larger quantity of meal. Later, it is found that the leaven has spread out into every part of the meal. The Kingdom of God would begin with a very small number of disciples. It would grow and multiply until it was found in every part of the earth.

My friends, there are many who disregard the Kingdom of God. They do not intend to become a part of it. Often they heap scorn and ridicule upon it. It will not always be that way. The Kingdom will overcome every enemy. The knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9). Those who scorn it will be sorry they opposed it.

I would like to say just a word about the simplicity of Jesus' teaching. Notice how His parables can be understood by the common man. They are deep

enough to challenge the wisest, and yet they can be understood by a child.

Luk 13:22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

Luk 13:23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

Luk 13:24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Luk 13:25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

Luk 13:26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

Luk 13:27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

Luk 13:28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

Luk 13:29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the

kingdom of God.

As Jesus moved along toward the city of Jerusalem one asked him if there would be only a few saved. Jesus answered that there were two gates. The one through which men enter eternal glory is narrow and many who seek to enter in the last day will find they are not able. The master of the house will someday rise up and shut the door. Then when those who have not shown any interest in holy things will realize they were shut out. They will cry out for the door to be opened. It will be too late. The answer will come back from the master of the house, *“I do not know from where you come. Depart from me. You are workers of iniquity.”*

When men find that today is the day of salvation they will act upon it. But as long as they think life can be treated cheaply and can be wasted away because there is always tomorrow, they will head straight for that closed door Jesus spoke about. Jesus said there will then be much weeping and gnashing of teeth. The sinners will find that men have come from the north, south, east and west to sit down with the righteous heroes of the past such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets. They will find themselves thrust out and unable to enter into the joys of the Lord.

Luk 13:30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

The Lord said there are many who are now first who will be last. And there are many who are last

who will then be first. What a surprise that will be. Among those who will be last will be certain famous scientists, presidents, kings, philosophers, athletes, artists and entertainers. They will have reaped great glory while on earth. But because they had no time to bow before the King of kings and Lord of lords, he will deny them. You cannot deny Christ now and have him confess you later.

Among those who will be first in the Kingdom will be those who have sacrificed time and energy while on earth in order that they might draw close to God. They may have been mocked by men and lived in the poorest of conditions. That will all change. They will walk streets of gold and sing with the angels. Of course much of what is said in the Bible about heaven and hell is figurative language. It is only the best God can do to show his children what is in store for them later. We must strive to stay close to him now in order that we be invited to be close to him in heaven.

Luk 13:31 The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

Some of the Pharisees then came to Jesus and warned him that Herod was planning to kill him. This is interesting because over and over again it was the leaders of the Pharisees who tried to trap Christ into doing or saying something that would allow them to destroy him. There must have been at least some of the Pharisees who did not take that position. We do know the names of two

friendly Pharisees. They were Nicodemus, who came to him by night to hear his wisdom, and Joseph of Arimathea who allowed Jesus to be buried in his own sepulchre.

Luk 13:32 And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

Luk 13:33 Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

Luk 13:34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

I said before that Jesus was headed in the direction of Jerusalem while the things mentioned in this chapter were happening. His friends no doubt warned him so he could turn around in his tracks and stay away from Herod and others who hated him and felt they had the power to kill him. But Jesus did not turn around. He told those who warned him that they should tell Herod he would continue to do his good work until his course was finished. Then after three days he would be perfected. He said it was not to be expected that a prophet would die outside Jerusalem.

What a terrible picture he drew of the city

whose name means “Abode of Peace.” It was such a wicked place that if a prophet of God died it would probably be in that city. Jesus knew he was about to be killed. Nevertheless, he moved straight toward the cross which he knew was waiting for him. As he stated when he was twelve year of age and his parents scolded him, “I must be about my Father’s business.”

There are no more pitiful words in all the pages of the Holy book than those which the Lord spoke concerning Jerusalem. Jesus had left the glory of heaven to come and show men the way home. He had walked those dusty streets and lived without a home to call his own. He had cried out for men to hear his words of truth and leave their sins. It was not just the fishermen on the sea of Galilee to whom he had said, “*Come, Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.*” The same invitation had come to thousands. Rather than hearing him, they had stopped their ears, closed their eyes and hardened their hearts. As a result the temple would be left desolate. The time would come some day when the Jews would rejoice to welcome the person who came to them in the name of the Lord.

Luk 13:35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Notice the last verse of the this chapter very carefully. I believe this verse teaches that the time

will come someday when many Jews will honor Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Just imagine what a change could take place if the Jew were to turn from denial of the Messiah to acceptance of Him as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Must evil men and seducers wax worse and worse right to the day of Christ's return in judgment, or is there a possibility that Isaiah 11:9 prophesies of a better society before His return? If the Jews were to promote Him rather than denying Him, they could make a huge difference.

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Chapter 14

Luk 14:1 And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.

Luk 14:2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

Luk 14:3 And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

Luk 14:4 And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go;

The fourteenth chapter of the book of Luke tells us about a great banquet the Lord is preparing and urges us to take God's invitation to his feast very seriously.

It is introduced with Jesus eating at the house of one of the chief Pharisees. The Lord had a strange relationship with this group of people. There were many things about the Pharisees which Jesus would have supported. For example; they spent much time in the study of the law. They prayed and fasted. They believed in angels and a resurrection. Jesus would have commended them for all of these things.

However, many of the Pharisees had lost the real spirit of true religion. They loved ceremonies more than they did God. They loved the chief seats in the synagogue more than they did the poor and the lowly. They refused to accept Jesus as the promised Saviour of the world. All of these things brought the anger of Christ down upon them.

On occasion Jesus would go to the house of a

Pharisee to eat. This was such a meal. It was the sabbath day and the suspicious Pharisees were watching the Lord like hawks to see if he did or said anything which would allow them to criticize him and deny his teachings as the Word of God.

During the course of the meal, a man appeared before him who had the dropsy. Dropsy was a disease in which water collected in various parts of the body, particularly in the face. This caused a bloated condition and the person who suffered from it looked and felt very miserable.

Most Bible students believe the man with the dropsy was planted there by the Pharisees to tempt Jesus into healing on the sabbath day. Then they would accuse him of breaking the law of Moses and doing work on that very special day. Jesus knew very well what they were thinking. He turned to the lawyers and Pharisees and asked them if it was lawful to heal on the sabbath. His question caused them enough discomfort that they kept quiet and failed to answer him. Jesus then healed the man and sent him on his way.

Luk 14:5 And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?

Luk 14:6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

Luk 14:7 And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them.

Luk 14:8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

Luk 14:9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

Luk 14:10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

Luk 14:11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Just to make sure his point had not been ignored, Jesus asked those who watched him if any of them would leave an ox that had fallen into a pit on the sabbath day without lifting it from the pit. Again they kept silent and had no answer for him.

This provided Jesus a jumping off place for a further lesson on the need to take full advantage of the blessings God has prepared for those who love and obey him. He began to present a parable to them concerning a wedding feast. The Lord was about to combine two parables to teach one great lesson to those pride filled hypocrites.

His picture of the wedding feast was as follows. He set up an imaginary situation in which a man was invited to a wonderful wedding feast. When he

arrived he looked around and then chose the most prominent seat he could find. Jesus said that would be a foolish thing to do. One might be very much embarrassed if the host of the wedding feast came along with a prominent guest and demanded that the one who had taken the important seat leave it and make room for someone else more important.

A much wiser thing to do would be to humbly consider the blessing of having an invitation and take one of the least important seats. Then, when the host came along and suggested the person might wish to take a more important seat, honor would be paid to him by the other guests. Jesus then spoke on one of his most beloved truths. He said, *“For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”*

There could be no doubt at all in the minds of the lawyers and Pharisees that Christ was pointing this lesson right at them. They were doing exactly what Jesus had said was a foolish way of acting. A large part of the reason they were watching him so closely was that they were jealous of the attention Jesus was receiving from the multitudes. If anyone was to receive honor and glory, they wanted it to be themselves.

Luk 14:12 Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

Luk 14:13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

Luk 14:14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Luk 14:15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

Christ went on then to present a second parable which added to the impact of the first one. He said when one prepared a dinner for guests, the invitations should not go out to one's friends, relatives and rich neighbors. It was better to send the invitations to the poor, the diseased and the helpless. If the invitations went out to the rich and the strong, the host would later receive a return invitation from those guests. But when the poor and lowly were invited they would be unable to return the favor and repay what had been done for them. The reason this latter plan was better was that the one who invited the poor and lowly would be rewarded in the judgment.

One of those who was present and had heard the truths Jesus had just spoken decided to add his own word of wisdom. He said, "*Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.*" This statement was probably brought on by Jesus having said there would be a reward in the judgment. The man understood this to mean God would invite such a generous person to eat with him in the Kingdom

after the judgment.

Luk 14:16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

The Lord then launched into another parable related to all he had been teaching at the meal in the house of the Pharisee. This time he pictured a fantastic banquet to which a large number of guests had been invited. The host had clearly spent much time and expense to see that all was of the highest quality and would be pleasing to those whom he had invited.

Luk 14:17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

When everything was ready the host sent one of his servants to tell the guests all things were prepared. They were to come and enjoy the banquet. The servant and his host were met with a great surprise. All of the guests who had received invitations began to make excuses as to why they could not come. There were many other things which were more important to them than attending the banquet.

Luk 14:18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

One of them said he had bought a piece of ground and he needed to go and see it. He begged to be excused while he went to examine his new purchase. This was a lame excuse. No one will buy a piece of property without first looking it over very carefully to see if it is worth the price which is being asked for it. This man did not want to attend the banquet. He used the purchase of the piece of property as a way to avoid attending. The host could see clearly what his motives were.

Luk 14:19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

A second guest explained that he had bought five yoke of oxen. It was necessary that he check them out to see if they would do the work for which he purchased them. This man's excuse was no better than the one who had purchased the piece of property. One does not buy horses or oxen to place in the harness before he has satisfied himself that they will meet his needs.

I recall one time when I was a boy. My father wanted to start a dairy herd. He bought about a dozen cows from a dealer. He tried as hard as he could to make sure the livestock was worth the price. After we had paid the dealer we found that the cows were used to going through fences. They would lean against the fences and stretch their neck out until the fence gave way and then they would get out. Our problem, however, did not come

because we had failed to do all we could before we made the purchase. Men just do not buy livestock without first checking it out every way possible. The man's excuse was transparent. He did not wish to attend the banquet either.

Luk 14:20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

Luk 14:21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

Luk 14:22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

Luk 14:23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

A third guest informed the servant who was calling him to the banquet that he had just married a wife. He certainly could not come. There were other things more important than going to the banquet. This guest made the mistake of thinking his first hours with his new bride would be more pleasant than the banquet to which he had been invited. He did not fully realize just how wonderful the banquet was to be. This man may have been a bit more honest than the first two. Still, he had made the wrong choice because of a lack of knowledge

as to the value of attending the banquet.

When the master of the house who had offered the invitations to the guests who rejected them saw what had happened, he was furious. He told his servant to go out into the streets and byways of the city and invite the poor and the diseased to come and enjoy his banquet. After the servant had done that he told his master that there was still room for more guests. He was then told to search everywhere until he found enough guests to fill his banquet table. Those who had refused his invitation would never taste his gracious meal.

Heaven is the great banquet God is preparing for those who wish to be with him forever. Do not make the mistake of thinking there is anything in this world that is more important than getting ready to feast with the faithful saints in Heavenly Jerusalem. You may remember the parable of the man who found himself in torment. He wanted to go back and warn his friends. He was told that if they did not believe the prophets, they would not believe their friend.

Luk 14:24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Luk 14:25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

Luk 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and

his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Luk 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Luk 14:28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

Luk 14:29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

Luk 14:30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

Luk 14:31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

Luk 14:32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

Luk 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Luke then added another event in the life of his Master that fits well with everything we have been studying in this chapter. It was explained that great multitudes were following Jesus. He then turned to them and said, *“If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, and even his own life; that man cannot be my disciple.”* Jesus is not teaching that love for our families and friends

is unimportant. What he is teaching is that when compared with the love we must have for God, our love for families and friends are much less important. If it comes to a choice between pleasing our family or our friends, and pleasing God, we must please God.

The Lord then added that “*Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me cannot be my disciple.*” There are tremendous responsibilities placed upon the back of Jesus followers. If we are not willing to shoulder those responsibilities, we need not call ourselves Christians. One does not ignore the responsibilities involved in everyday affairs of life. If a man decides to build a tower he first sits down and adds up the cost to see if he has enough money and materials to finish it. The man would look quite silly if he managed to get the tower half built and then discovered he was not able to finish. People would then mock him and heap ridicule upon him.

Jesus added that if a king decided to go to war with another king, he would first take stock to see what the size of the opposing armies would be. If he had only ten thousand men and his foe had twenty thousand men, he would be wise to figure out how he could win the battle with a lesser number of soldiers. If he decided his own army was insufficient to meet the foe he would quickly send messengers to find out what conditions were necessary to make peace.

What is behind this story? It is that half-hearted discipleship is not acceptable to God. When a person becomes a Christian, that person must carefully

look ahead to see if he or she is willing to invest the time and effort required to fight the good fight and finish the course. He would be better off not to begin than to begin and fail to endure unto the end. After all, “He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Luk 14:34 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

Luk 14:35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The chapter closes with Jesus telling us salt which has lost its power is fit for nothing. Christians are to be the salt of the earth. If they fail to flavor the earth with a godly and committed life, they do damage rather than good.

Dear friends, you are invited to follow Jesus to the great banquet God has prepared for those who truly love him and are willing to follow all the way. There is no need to start if you do not intend to finish!

Chapter 15

Luk 15:1 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

Luk 15:2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

Luk 15:3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

This is one of the most fascinating chapters in all of the Bible. We have come to the fifteenth chapter of the book of Luke. This chapter tells us the story of the prodigal son. It is an old familiar part of the Holy book; but it reveals new and deeper truth to us every time we examine it carefully.

This chapter tells us about three things that were lost and then found. The first was a coin. The second was a sheep. The third was a son. Everything in the chapter builds up to the climax when the lost boy comes home to his father.

Let us begin then by setting the scene. Jesus had been preaching to some questionable characters. Some of them were sinners who had been living their lives carelessly and wastefully. Some of them were publicans who took advantage of their positions as tax collectors to cheat the people and get rich by collecting more taxes than they turned in to the government. Some of the Pharisees and the scribes, or copiers of the holy writings, murmured against Jesus. They accused him of having too much to do with evil people. As Jesus told the three stories I have already mentioned, he was answering the murmuring

of these jealous Pharisees and scribes.

Luk 15:4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

Luk 15:5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

Luk 15:6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

Luk 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

He first told about a lost sheep. A man had one hundred sheep. When he found that one of them had strayed away and was lost, he left the other ninety-nine and went to find the one which was missing. When he found that sheep he picked it up, laid it across his shoulders and carried it back to safety. Then he invited his friends and neighbors to come and rejoice with him in that he had found the sheep which was lost. This did not mean he had ceased to love the other ninety-nine. It did mean that he loved every one of his sheep dearly. Jesus point was that the sinners and publicans were like that lost sheep. God loved them. Jesus was finding them and trying to bring them home

to the Father in heaven.

Luk 15:8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

Luk 15:9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

Luk 15:10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

The Lord then placed another story beside the first one. This time he told of a woman who had ten silver coins. Having lost one of them she would light a lamp and sweep through the entire house until she found the coin that had rolled away from the rest. As soon as she found the coin she also would invite her friends and neighbors together to rejoice with her over the finding of that which had been lost. Jesus then informed the Pharisees and scribes who had been accusing him of keeping company with sinners that his purpose was to seek out the lost and bring them back. When they were found and returned there would be joy in heaven itself over those penitent souls.

Then Christ told the story which was built upon the foundation of the other two. The stories of the lost sheep and the lost coin were his way of getting the minds of his hearers ready for the

touching lesson which they must learn if they were to understand why he had associated with the publicans and sinners.

Luk 15:11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

Luk 15:12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

Luk 15:13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

This time he told of a man who had two sons. Both of these sons were precious in his sight and he loved them dearly. However, they had very different attitudes. The older son was a model child. He was obedient to his father and did his best to please him. The younger son was quite the opposite. He cared very little for his father's will and thought only about his own desires and pleasures. Life was but one big party to him.

One day the younger son demanded that his father give him the part of the inheritance which would normally come to him at his father's death. He could not even wait until his father died to get his hands on the inheritance. It might have been a little different if he had been a wise son and was ready to invest the inheritance carefully and watch it serve a useful purpose. That was not the case. He had no such idea in mind.

His father gave in to his pleading and gave the selfish son that which he asked. His son had hardly gotten his hands on the treasure before he decided to leave the country and get out of his father's sight where he could waste the inheritance in riotous living. Jesus did not bother to give us all the sick details of the manner in which the son spent his substance. This would only have made us sick to hear about it.

We need to pause and make a comment here about just how foolish men can be when they have blessings placed in their hands. There are faithful children of God who can stand prosperity. They work and pray in order that God may not have been unwise in allowing them to be stewards of that which truly belongs to God. Then there are those who blindly throw such blessings to the four winds and act as if their own pleasure is all that matters either on earth or in heaven.

Luk 15:14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

Luk 15:15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

Luk 15:16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

Luk 15:17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish

with hunger!

It did not take the younger son long to squander everything. About the time that he spent the last of what he had, a terrible famine hit the land. If he had been careful he would have had a way to exist during the troubled times. But he had not thought ahead. Now he had no food, and he had no money to buy food. He was about to starve to death. What was he to do? After thinking it through for a while he came up with an answer. He would ask for support from a citizen of the land in return for his services.

This did not turn out well. He found himself feeding the pigs. This might not seem as undesirable to us as it would have to a Jew in New Testament times. Hogs were not eaten by faithful Jews. They were classed as unclean animals. They were noisy. They were smelly. It became so serious that the younger son even found himself considering eating the food the hogs left behind. Those of us who were raised on the farm have no trouble seeing in our mind's eye just what this food would look like. If there was any other choice it had to be taken.

Luk 15:18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

Luk 15:19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

Luk 15:20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off,

his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

The boy hit upon a plan. He would go back to his father's house. When he arrived there he would not ask to be received as a son. He had already used up his inheritance. He had no right to take his place beside his brother who had been faithful to the father while he was wasting everything. Rather than asking to go back as a son, this younger boy would beg to be taken in as one of the servants. Even his father's servants had more than they needed to eat. In the meantime he was so hungry he was about to die.

There was a problem. Just what would happen when he came back to his father and told him he had absolutely nothing left of the inheritance which his father had worked hard to provide for him? His father might not even want to consider taking him back as a servant in his house. Still, it was worth a try. He would head for home.

What a surprise was in store for him! His father saw him coming while he was still some distance away. I suggest that the son was probably not a very pretty sight. After all, he had been wading around in the mud of the hogpen. The father could well have held his nose and turned his back. He did not! He ran to meet his son. He did not even wait to hear his son beg to be taken back as a servant. He threw his arms around the boy's neck and welcomed him back with all his heart.

Luk 15:21 And the son said unto him,

Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Luk 15:22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

Luk 15:23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

Luk 15:24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

The son was very sorry for his actions. He told his father that he realized he had sinned against both God and his earthly father. He was not worthy of being taken back as a son. The father no doubt heard and welcomed his confession. But the important thing now was that his son had come home. He commanded that a fat calf be killed and a banquet prepared in honor of the occasion. They must eat and be merry.

Not everyone was this happy. As the older son approached the house and heard the celebrating which was going on he wondered what was taking place. He had been out working in the field and had not known his brother was back. When he asked about it he was told his brother was back and his father had commanded that a fine meal be prepared in thanksgiving for the fact that the son was safe and sound.

Luk 15:25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

Luk 15:26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

Luk 15:27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

Luk 15:28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

Luk 15:29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

Luk 15:30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

The older brother was angry. Just how foolish could his father be? Here was his younger foolish brother who had wasted that which had been placed in his hands. He would have expected his father to disown his brother and turn him away. Instead, the father had acted in just the opposite manner! The older son's anger was so great that he would not go in and join in the celebration. Even when his father came out and pleaded with him to come in, he refused. He pointed out that he had served

his father faithfully for many years. At no time had he been rebellious and self-willed. Yet, in all that time his father had never killed a fat calf and had a party in his honor. Yet, when his younger brother, who had played around with harlots and spent much of what his father had accumulated through a lifetime returned home, the father seemed delighted to see him. That was not right!

Luk 15:31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

Luk 15:32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

The father's answer tells us a lot about our Father in heaven. He said, *"My son, you have been with me all the time. Everything that I have is yours to enjoy. It was quite right that we should kill a fatted calf and rejoice to see your brother once more. As far as we were concerned, he was dead. Now he has returned to us and is alive again."*

I find it interesting that the father told the brother who had been faithful that all that he had was his. Does this mean the foolish younger brother did not receive any further inheritance. It sounds as if he had already used his and would receive no more. We must be careful that we do not draw too many parallels between the return of the foolish son and the return of a wandering sinner to the fold of God.

God loves the soul of even the vilest sinner. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. No man ever gets so far from God that God does want that man to return. Now the book of First John tells us there are some who get so far away from God that they will not return. When that is the case there is no need to pray for them. They are sinning the sin unto death. There is nothing either man or God can do to turn such persons. They have determined to direct their own steps and God is only an intruder who spoils their plans.

The prodigal son had not reached that condition. He was still capable of turning away from his foolish ways. And when he did that God rejoiced along with the angels in heaven that he had changed his directions.

We need to take just a moment to consider the attitude of the Pharisees and scribes. They seem to have almost been happy that the publicans and sinners were on their way to destruction. They saw themselves are being far better than they truly were. The gap between the sinners and publicans they had condemned and themselves was not as great as they thought it was. The book of Romans tells us all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. If God decided that every man who deliberately turned away from him and walked in the ways of Satan could never come back, we would find no one in heaven.

Jesus came into this world to seek and to save that which is lost. If no sinner could ever return

from the fields of sin, there would have been no reason for Christ to leave heaven and die upon the cross. Let us rejoice when wicked men return to the fold of the Great Shepherd.

I would like to make one last point in connection with the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost boy. The lost coin was valuable but it was completely lifeless. It was not even able to know it was lost. The lost sheep perhaps knew it was lost, but needed help to find it's way home.

The lost boy was different. He knew what he had left behind. He knew the difference between obedience and respect for his father and the foolish rebellious way he had chosen. He had been made in the image of God. The Father in heaven always welcomes back those who wish to return. It is only when men are determined to the end not to return from the pigpen that God turns from them and gives them up.

What a wonderful chapter this is! God cherishes your soul and wishes for you to share the heavenly city with Him in eternity. He will always welcome you back if you are willing to be washed and made

Chapter 16

Luk 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

Luk 16:2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Luk 16:3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

Luk 16:4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

There are two main events recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Luke. One has to do with a man who figured out a questionable way to prepare for the future. The other concerns Lazarus and the rich man. Both of these accounts deal with attitudes toward money. God's people must be very careful not to let money get in the way of faithful service to their Maker. There are truths in this chapter that will allow us to become more dedicated servants in the Kingdom of heaven.

Let us look first at the story of the unjust steward. It is interesting that in verse eight of this chapter he is called an unjust steward and that in the same sentence it is said that his lord commended him for being wise. There is an explanation for this. We

will get to it in a moment.

The scene is set in verse one when we are told there was a certain rich man who had a steward who had been accused of wasting the goods of his master. His master called for him and demanded that he give an account of that which had been placed under his supervision. If he could not give a proper account of the goods which had been allotted to him he would lose his position as a steward.

This put the steward in a very uncomfortable position. He had to find a way out of the problem, and it had to be done quickly. What was he to do? He was not able to do manual labor. He was ashamed to go out on the street and beg for a living. Was there any solution to his difficulties. He decided there was.

Luk 16:5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

Luk 16:6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

Luk 16:7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

Here is what he did. He called all of those who owed debts to his master. Then he asked each of them how much they owed. The first one said he owed one hundred measures of oil. The steward told

him to take his bill and quickly change the debt to fifty measures. A second man said he owed one hundred measures of wheat. The steward told him to change the figure to eighty measures.

The steward knew very well that this was a dishonest plan. That did not hinder him from putting it into action. He believed that if he did a favor to those who owed his master debts, they would take care of him when his master dismissed him for not being a good steward.

Now we are in for a surprise. Rather than dismissing the dishonest steward, his master commended him for being a wise man. We must ask ourselves what this has to do with Christians serving God. I have never found this an easy lesson to teach. However, I believe we can get the lesson God intended that we should get from it. I believe the heart of the matter is this. Christians are to plan for the future. They are to use the blessings which have been placed in their hands to serve both Jesus Christ and the Father in heaven. They are to be ready when they are called to account.

Now if a rascal such as this steward could find a way to prepare for the day of reckoning surely Christians can and should make their preparations for the final meeting with God. Christians should be even more eager to please God than this unjust steward was to get his matters in order. Just as the unjust steward made friends whom he expected to help him later, the Christian should be making godly friends who can help him in this life and testify to his righteous behavior in the day of judgment. Also, if a man proves to be wise in managing that

which belongs to God, that man may be placed in a higher position of responsibility when this life is over.

Luk 16:8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

Luk 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

Luk 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Luk 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

Luk 16:12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

I believe much of the difficulty in this account is explained by looking carefully at verse eight. There were are told, "*And the Lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*"

The children of light are God's own children. Too often his own children fail to look ahead to the time when they must stand before God in the judgment. If they were as wise as the unjust steward, they would be doing much more to see that they were

ready to give account for their words and deeds during this life.

Luk 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Luk 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

Luk 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

Luk 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

Luk 16:17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

Read verse thirteen, why did Jesus follow up the story of the unjust steward with this statement? I believe it has to do with the difference between the way ungodly men look at life and the way God's servants look at it.

To the ungodly man life is all centered in the here and the now. He makes no effort to serve God. His master is the mammon of this life. His attitude is that he must look for ways to accumulate as much as possible in whatever way he finds possible. In

contrast, the man of God uses the possessions of this world to prepare himself for greater responsibility in the world to come. One either serves God, or he serves worldly appetites and possessions. He can not be wise in coveting that which belongs to this world, and at the same time be wise in dedicating his life to the service of God.

The Pharisees did not miss the lesson. They knew he was talking about the danger of covetousness. They mocked him for saying one must make a choice between serving God and mammon. They were confident that they could be wise servants of both God and mammon.

Luk 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

Almost as if it was an afterthought Jesus made a statement concerning marriage and divorce. He said that "*Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.*" It may be that the reason this came to Jesus mind at this point is that the man who proves unfaithful to his wife and tries to spread his affection around to other women is like the man who desires to have the blessings of God and also taste of the pleasures of the world.

At any rate we find that God does not take putting away one's mate lightly. He had condemned adultery from the time of the ten commandments.

He had not ceased to condemn it during Jesus days on earth. He will condemn it until the end of time. There are but two conditions which release one from the marriage vow. One is if the mate has died. The other is if the mate has turned their affections to another man or woman.

Luk 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

Luk 16:20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

Luk 16:21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

Luk 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

Luk 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Now we turn to the story of Lazarus and the rich man. There was a rich man who lived in luxury every day of his life. He wore the finest of clothing. He ate the finest of food. Everything he desired was within his reach.

Lazarus was just the opposite. Each day he was laid at the gate of the rich man's house. He was

covered with sores. He was hungry and begged for just a few crumbs such as fell off the table after the rich man had eaten. His condition was so serious the dogs came and licked the open sores on his body.

Then the tables were turned. The beggar died and the angels came and carried him to the bosom of Abraham. He was to enjoy untold blessings in eternity. The rich man also died. His destiny was just the opposite of that of Lazarus. He found himself in the torment of hell, with no hope of release.

Such will be the case with untold millions of people some day. Those who have had their heart set on mammon during this life and who have spent all their time and energy in accumulating material possessions and worldly fame will find themselves without any of those things. And it will be true eternally. Eternity has no end my friends. I would not want to be in a place where the only thing which lies ahead is misery. While Lazarus was suffering in this life, he could at least look forward to death. The rich man had no such hope. His torment would never come to an end. His punishment was so great that he cried out for Abraham to send Lazarus so that he could just dip the tip of his finger in water and touch it to the rich man's tongue. This was not to be.

Abraham and Lazarus were clearly reaping the harvest which is sown by those who live faithful lives for the short time we spend here on this earth. If we are wise in our stewardship of earthly time and goods, God will see that we are allowed to enter into joy beyond description. After all of the

pain and sorrow Lazarus endured for a few years, he had been invited to enter into the joys of his Lord forever.

Luk 16:24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Luk 16:25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Luk 16:26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

When the rich man cried out for Abraham to send Lazarus with just a drop of water on the end of his finger to touch the rich man's tongue, Abraham explained that it could not be done. The rich man had chosen the pleasures of sin for a season. Lazarus had chosen service to God. The choices must stand.

We are reminded of the decision of Moses in Egypt. Moses had a choice to make. Would he live in the palace of Pharaoh and enjoy all of the luxuries available there? Or would he take his place beside the people of Israel and suffer through the

travels in the wilderness? The Bible tells us that Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. It always pays richly to choose God's side rather than that of Satan. The benefits last past this life and on into life everlasting.

Luk 16:27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

Luk 16:28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

The rich man had not ended his pleading. When he finally realized there was nothing he could do to change his own destiny, he remembered that he had five brothers who were still alive and on earth. He did not want them to end up in the condition in which he found himself.

Here we find another vital point. The rich man did not think much about others while he was alive. Lazarus could have laid at his gate for a thousand years and he would have only considered the beggar to be an obstacle over which he must step to get where he was going. I have grave doubts if the rich man had a great deal of concern for his own brothers back in the time of his life on earth. How different it was now. He recognized Lazarus as one who could help him. He recognized the serious danger facing his brethren. He had become a much wiser man.

It was too late. There was a great gulf fixed between heaven and hell so that Lazarus could not pass over to where the rich man was, and the rich man could not pass over to where Lazarus was.

Luk 16:29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

Luk 16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

Luk 16:31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

It was explained to the rich man that it would be utterly useless for Lazarus to be sent back into the world to plead with the rich man's brothers to turn to God. They had sufficient evidence provided to them. They had the law of Moses and they had the prophets of God. If they would not hear either Moses or the prophets concerning the need to follow Christ, they would not listen to Lazarus if he returned to them from beyond the grave.

Dear friends, you and I also have sufficient evidence to persuade us to serve God rather than mammon. We not only have the testimony of Moses and the prophets. We have the record of the life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It will be of no avail to us to cry out in the torment of hell that we desire just a drop of water for the tip of our

tongue. The thing to do is make the proper decision here and now. Today is the day of salvation. Today is the accepted time. Choose life and not death.

Chapter 17

Luk 17:1 Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

Luk 17:2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

Luk 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

Luk 17:4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

Jesus begins this seventeenth chapter by talking about the Christian's reaction toward those who hinder him in his effort to serve the Lord. God is extremely jealous for the safety of his children. I think we can begin to understand his feelings when we think about the way we feel when we realize someone has placed our own fleshly children in some sort of danger. A mother or father will often risk their own life to protect the safety of their offspring. God is just as protective of his children as we are of ours, no doubt even more so.

The offenses which Jesus talked about are things that are done to the children of God which would turn them away from him. We are not concerned here as much with insults hurled at Christians as we are about words or deeds that separate Christians from the heavenly Father. The man or

woman who destroys the soul of a Christian will face the wrath of their Father.

It is true that Christians sometimes hurt their brothers and sisters in Christ. When that happens the one who has been hurt is advised to rebuke the one who injured him and then forgive the trespass. Should he forgive repeatedly, or is one time sufficient. Jesus said if the trespass occurs seven times in a single day, the Christian should still be willing to forgive.

Luk 17:5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

Luk 17:6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

Luk 17:7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

Luk 17:8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

Luk 17:9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

Luk 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have

done that which was our duty to do.

The apostles who had heard what Jesus had to say realized it would take tremendous faith to forgive one who trespassed against them seven times in a day. Therefore they said to him, “*Lord, increase our faith.*” Jesus replied that if they realized how much power was available to them they would have no difficulty in building up their faith. If they had the faith of a grain of mustard seed they would be able to command that a sycamine tree be plucked up by the roots and cast into the sea, and the command would be honored.

Jesus was talking to his apostles in the day of miracles. Does this mean we cannot have the same faith they had? Not at all. Our faith may have quite different results, but it is still just as powerful. Which is more impressive, the uprooting of a large tree, or the salvation of a lost soul? When we see a human being brought to spiritual life and released from the captivity of Satan, we can understand that it is well worth our time and effort to obey the commandments of God.

Is this obedience to God beyond the call of duty? Jesus claimed that it was not. He said that human lords expect their servants to obey their commands. We should then expect that God would require obedient service from those who are under him. Even after we have done that which we have been commanded to do, we are still unprofitable servants. I might add that God has done far more for us than we will ever do for him. What is more,

he promises to continue his blessings upon all of those who honor his will.

Luk 17:11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

Luk 17:12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

Luk 17:13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

Luk 17:14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

Luk 17:15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

Luk 17:16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

Luk 17:17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

As Jesus and his apostles traveled toward Jerusalem they entered into a village where they met ten men who were lepers. Lepers were a threat to the health of all who came into contact with them. Since healthy men and women would have nothing to do with them, they would sometimes band together and keep one another company. Here we have a group who had apparently done that.

The ten lepers did not approach Jesus. They called out to him from a distance and begged him to have mercy on them and heal them of their leprosy. Jesus heard their plea and helped them. He told them to go and show themselves to the priest who could declare them clean. This was the procedure under the law of Moses. The priest had the authority to pronounce a leper clean. When this was done the former leper could take his place in society once more. Jesus had done his part. Now he asked the lepers to have the priest verify that they were no longer dangerous to others.

All ten of them were cleansed from their horrible disease. One of the ten was so grateful for his cleansing that he turned back to Christ, fell upon his face, and glorified God. This grateful leper was a Samaritan. Since Samaritans and Jews normally hated one another, this was a remarkable thing. The other nine did not see fit to tell the Lord thank you.

Jesus then asked about the other nine. Where were they? How strange it was that only this stranger had returned to give thanks. He then told the Samaritan to rise and go his way. His faith had made him whole.

Luk 17:18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

Luk 17:19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

Luk 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should

come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

The Pharisees then demanded to know when the kingdom of God would appear. If Jesus had the power to cleanse the lepers and make the blind to see, and if He claimed to be the Son of God and the promised Messiah, He should be able to give a schedule for the coming of the Kingdom. There was a fallacy in the thinking of the Pharisees. It was that they believed the kingdom of God would be similar to the kingdoms of this world. They looked back to such scriptures as the ones found in Daniel where it was clear that the Babylonian kingdom, the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians, the kingdom of the Greeks and that of Rome would be replaced some day by the kingdom of God which would be greater than all of these and would last forever. They looked forward hungrily to the establishment of this everlasting kingdom with its King of kings and Lord of lords. But they had missed the nature of the Kingdom of God completely.

Luk 17:21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

Luk 17:22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

Luk 17:23 And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.

Luk 17:24 For as the lightning, that

lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

Luk 17:25 But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

Jesus informed them that the kingdom of God would not come with observation. If they expected to see it as men had been able to see those other kingdoms they were in for a surprise. It would not be possible to say "*Lo, the kingdom of God is over there, or Lo, the kingdom of God is over here.*" The kingdom of God was to be found only in the hearts of it's citizens. It was to be an invisible kingdom.

Then the Lord added that the days would come in which they would desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and they would not be able to see it. Anyone who told them they would be able to see the Great King during his reign over his kingdom would be misleading them. If any man said "*See here, or See there.*", they would be foolish to follow him. When the Son of man came as the King over his kingdom it would be more like the sheet lightning which lights up the entire sky at one time. They would not be able to see him on his throne in any one particular place.

Jesus told them that the time had not yet come. There were a number of things which would have to happen first. The coming king must suffer from many things. He must be rejected by his generation. Only after that took place could he come in power. We are amazed at how accurately Jesus predicted

his own future. The fifty-third psalm had foretold the same things Jesus was repeating to them. The Messiah would be cut off with no fleshly descendants. He would be beaten and spit upon. Those who killed him would think they had done God a service. They would have no idea they were preparing the way for the King to sit upon his throne in heaven.

Luk 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

Luk 17:27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

Luk 17:28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

Jesus compared what was happening during his days on earth to what had happened back in the days of Noah. At that time the people were rejecting the preaching of Noah just as those of his day were rejecting him. They were being married. They were eating and drinking. They were selling and buying. They were planting their fields and building new buildings. This went on until the very day that Noah entered into the ark and the flood destroyed all except those eight souls who were in the ark.

Luk 17:29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Luk 17:30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

Luk 17:31 In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

Luk 17:32 Remember Lot's wife.

The same had been true in the case of Sodom. The wickedness which went on in that city was horrible. Yet the people who practiced it had no idea how suddenly it would all come to an end. To their great surprise God rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

The surprise would be just as great in the days of the coming of the kingdom of God. There would be those who were on the housetop and their possessions were in the house beneath them. They would not even have time to get their possessions out of the house. There would be workers in the fields who would not even have time to leave the fields to get their possessions from the houses. I Corinthians 15:51-52 also speaks of the sudden appearance of Christ when he returns in judgment.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Men must be ready at all times to meet the God who made them.

Luk 17:33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

Luk 17:34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

Luk 17:35 Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Luk 17:36 Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Luk 17:37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

In this chapter we find an interesting sidelight on the kingdom of God. It is almost as if Jesus was saying to the apostles that the judgment would occur at the time the kingdom of God came into being. Those who are familiar with their Bibles will know that the Kingdom of God was established on the day of Pentecost when three thousand were baptized and added to the church. The judgment has still not come. It is now nearly two thousand years since Jesus was enthroned as King. Therefore, this chapter cannot mean that the judgment was to come at the same time that Jesus took his place upon his throne in heaven.

The difficulty here is much like that found in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew when Jesus talked about the destruction of Jerusalem. When one reads that chapter it seems as if the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world were to take place at the same time. We know that did not happen. When we find passages such as these it is well for us to take a good long look at them. There are truths which lie beneath the surface of the text. The destruction of Jerusalem was a type of the end of the world. The suffering then was terrible and it was sudden. By looking at the details of the destruction of Jerusalem one could learn something of what it would be like to be present at the end of the world.

The same thing is true in this seventeenth chapter of Luke. The Pharisees were very curious as to the nature of the Kingdom of God. They understood very little about it. Their hearts were filled with greed and they looked forward to a time when they might heap up power and prestige among men. Jesus found it necessary to present a very different picture of life in his Kingdom. It was not a geographic place where the great men of the kingdom could live in material splendor. The Kingdom of heaven would first come about through much suffering on the part of it's King. Then, when the Kingdom had run its course on earth and was returned to the Father in heaven, there would be some surprising things.

Those who were convinced that life consisted in great power and much possessions would be severely shocked. Just as those wicked people in the days of

Noah had their hearts bent on accumulating fortunes and power were destroyed, the wicked people in the day of judgment would learn the same lesson. Life is more than fine clothing and mountainous bank accounts. When Jesus comes back at the time the kingdom of God reaches it's climax on earth, those who have placed their confidence in such things will be even more disappointed than the citizens of Sodom.

The Pharisees needed to quit watching for marvelous signs in the heavens and recognize the wondrous truths which Jesus was teaching them even as they asked their question. We also must avoid spending too much time trying to figure out **when** Christ will come back in judgment and **see that we are ready every hour of every day.**

Chapter 18

Luk 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

Luk 18:2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

Luk 18:3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

Luk 18:4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

Luk 18:5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

Luk 18:6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

Luk 18:7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

Luke was a physician, he was also an inspired writer who has provided us with spiritual medicine far more potent than that which he could have prescribed as a physical doctor. We want to see what he had to say about placing the Kingdom of God before all else.

This chapter starts with a parable of Jesus. The point of the parable is that men ought always to pray and not to faint. Christian people are never to give up on the Christian life. Even though it may

seem that God has forgotten or ignored us, we know that is not true. Our prayers will be answered and our needs will be cared for if we will continue to move forward in the footsteps of the Son of God.

Jesus illustration of the importance of persevering in the way of truth was to tell his disciples of a judge who was persuaded to help a poor widow who had come to him for relief from someone who was making life hard for her.

This judge held an important position. He was not afraid of God or man. It might have been expected that when the poor widow pleaded with him for assistance he would have ignored her. At first that is just what he did. But after she continued to plead with him, he decided to honor her request simply to get rid of her. Jesus then made a comparison between the God who loves his own and the unjust judge who cared neither for God nor man. If an unjust judge would answer a poor widow's request just to be relieved from her annoying cries, how much more we might expect the God of love and justice to hear and respond to his beloved children.

Luk 18:8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Luk 18:9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

Then the Lord asked a strange question. He said, *“Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh*

will he find faith upon the earth.” What did he mean by that statement? Was he saying he did not expect there to be faithful servants of God when he returned in judgment, or was he simply urging men to do their best not to let faith fade away. I think he was telling his disciples they must do their very best to see that faith did not die, either in their lives, or in the lives of those whom they were to teach or influence.

Luk 18:10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

Luk 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Luk 18:12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Luk 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Luk 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Jesus knew, however, that there was a great danger of becoming too confident in one’s condition. Therefore he told the parable of the Pharisee and

the Publican. There were two men who went up into the temple to pray. One was a self righteous Pharisee and the other was a hated publican or tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself. He appeared to be praying to God. In reality he was not getting through to God. He might as well have been speaking to his own self. He thanked God that he was better than other men. He was not an adulterer. He was not unjust nor an extortioner. He fasted regularly and gave a tenth of all of his income. Clearly he believed there were few persons around who were as religious as he was.

The publican did not have much to say. He would not even lift his eyes up toward the heavens. He beat upon his breast and called out to God for mercy. He recognized he was a sinner. He asked God to forgive him.

Jesus made it clear that the prayer of the publican was heard, and that the prayer of the Pharisee was an abomination to God. The Lord declared that those who exalt themselves will be brought down before the God of heaven. Those who humble themselves will be raised up and given honor. My friends, let us be cautious about presenting ourselves to others as prize specimens of spiritual perfection. According to Paul in the book of Romans, every man has sinned and come short of the glory of God. Without leaning upon the mercy of God we would all deserve everlasting separation from all that is holy. Thankfully, God is merciful and gracious. He will hear our prayers for forgiveness and will lift us up again and again as we call out for his help

and strength. Nevertheless, we must recognize our sins and be sorry for them.

Luk 18:15 And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

Luk 18:16 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Luk 18:17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

Someone then brought some small children to Jesus and wanted him to touch them. When his disciples saw what was happening they scolded those who had brought the youngsters. This seemed to them to be a disturbance to the Lord. Jesus did not see it that way. He called the children to gather around him and then proceeded to teach his listeners a much needed lesson. He told his disciples to allow the children to come to him. He added that the Kingdom of God is made up of persons who are as humble as little children. Those who are so impressed with their own power and intelligence will not hear the teaching of Jesus. They are too busy trying to impress other men.

Luk 18:18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Luk 18:19 And Jesus said unto him, Why

callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

Luk 18:20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

Luk 18:21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

Luk 18:22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

A certain ruler then approached the Lord. His question was an excellent one. If the man had been entirely sincere in asking it, and had been willing to follow the advice Jesus could give him, he might have received the eternal life he was asking for. We will find that he faced an obstacle which he was not willing to overcome.

Jesus first told him he ought not to call him good. There was only one who was good. That was God. This has always been a difficult passage for me. I have studied the Bible for many thousands of hours. Was Jesus truly saying he was not living a perfect life? I think not! We are told by Peter in 1 Peter 2:22 that Jesus did no sin, nor was any guile found in his mouth. In other words Jesus did not do anything wrong, nor did he say anything wrong. This means the present verse must not mean that Jesus had ever committed sin. What

then can be Jesus point in telling the rich young ruler he should not call him good?

I will suggest what I think may be the answer. You as a reader are invited to study further on the matter. I believe Jesus may have been saying to the rich ruler that he had spoken to him as he would to a human who was not divine. He had called him “Good Master.” If the young man saw Jesus as only a good teacher he had failed to see Jesus for what he really was; that is, the Son of God. He was called Immanuel, meaning God with us. The ruler should be coming to Jesus as God rather than coming to him as a fine, but human, teacher.

Jesus then reminded the man that he was aware of the commandments given in the law of Moses. He was not to kill nor steal. He was not to commit adultery. He was not to lie, and he was to honor his father and mother. The ruler must have been very happy to hear these words. He had been very careful to keep such commandments from the time of his youth. He quickly replied to Jesus that he had kept every one of these commands.

Luk 18:23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

Luk 18:24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

Jesus, however, had not mentioned one very important command. That was the one which said,

“Thou shalt not covet.” Christ then came down hard on that one commandment. He told the ruler that there was one thing lacking in his life. He needed to sell all of his possessions and give the money to the poor. Then he could come and follow Jesus and he would have riches in heaven forever. The ruler hung his head in sorrow. He was very rich and found it extremely difficult to even think about giving away that which he had gathered together here on earth.

Luk 18:25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Luk 18:26 And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved?

Jesus took note of the ruler’s difficult problem. He said it was harder for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. We all know of persons like this ruler. They would like to follow Christ, but there are other things they desire so much they are unwilling to part with them and follow Him.

Luk 18:27 And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

Those who were listening were astonished. They decided the conditions for entering into heaven were so difficult that perhaps no one could go there. They said, *“Who then can be saved?”* The answer

was that some things which seem impossible to men may well be quite possible for God. A camel might not be able to pass through the eye of a needle. Yet with God's help, men may enter into the gates of heaven.

Luk 18:28 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

Luk 18:29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

Luk 18:30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Peter was always the impulsive one among the apostles. He noticed the difference between the attitude of the apostles and that of the rich ruler. The apostles had given up everything to follow Christ and become fishers of men. Would they have a great reward because of their willingness to follow the Saviour?

Jesus explained that no man ever gives up his own possessions to serve God without receiving much more in return than he gave away. Life would become much richer here on earth. The rewards would be even **more** glorious when life under the sun turns into eternal life inside the gates of the New Jerusalem. The rich ruler had asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus had given his listeners the answer.

Luk 18:31 Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

Luk 18:32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

A very sad note then began to be heard in the voice of the Saviour. He explained to the apostles that they were on their way to Jerusalem. After they arrived in Jerusalem a number of terrible things would happen. These things had been foretold by the prophets long beforehand. They had forecast that Jesus as the Son of man would be delivered to the Gentiles to be mocked and even spit upon. They would even go so far as to whip him and put him to death.

Luk 18:33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

Luk 18:34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

That was not to be the end. On the third day after his murder, he would be raised up from the dead. The apostles failed to understand the things Jesus was saying to them. It was difficult for them to understand how one who could calm stormy seas

and raise some from the dead could not defend Himself against any attack. It would be but a short time before they would come face to face with the truth of what he was saying. They would all flee while he hung on the cross, except for John who was there with Jesus' mother, Mary.

Luk 18:35 And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

Luk 18:36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

Luk 18:37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

Luk 18:38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Luk 18:39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Luk 18:40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,

As they came even closer to Jerusalem, they saw a blind man who sat by the side of the roadway begging. As the blind man heard the multitude who were following along with Jesus, he wanted to know what was happening. He was told that Jesus of Nazareth was about to pass by him. The blind man was wise. He recognized Jesus as being the promised Son of David. He no doubt also knew that Jesus had been performing many wonderful

miracles, among them the healing of the blind. As Jesus passed him the blind man cried out and said, “*Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.*” Those who were with Jesus rebuked the man and told him to be quiet. This did not work. The man cried out even louder than before. He repeated the same words. “*Thou son of David, have mercy on me.*”

Luk 18:41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

Luk 18:42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

Luk 18:43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God

Jesus stopped and commanded that the man be brought to him. When this was done, he asked the blind man, “*What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?*” The blind man replied that he wished to have his sight. I would like to pursue this thought farther. Sight is a precious blessing. The vast majority of humans go about our lives seeing much of that which is taking place around us. We see our husbands and wives. We see our own children. We see the beauty of nature. The world lies before us in splendor. The blind see none of this.

Yet many of us who are sighted physically walk in spiritual darkness. They do not see the wonders of the Kingdom of God. We could see all of these

things if we were willing to follow in the footsteps of the Lord. He is the light of the spiritual world. Those who do not follow him will never see the vast number of important things which can only be seen through the Word of God. They will continue to walk in spiritual darkness.

Jesus turned to the blind man and said to him, *“Receive thy sight. Thy faith hath made thee whole.”* We should be following the example of the blind man. We should be calling out for Jesus to give us our spiritual sight. When this is done we should follow Christ and glorify God for his wonderful grace.

Open your eyes today my friends. See things you have never seen before. This world can take

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Chapter 19

Luk 19:1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

Luk 19:2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

Luk 19:3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

Luk 19:4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

This nineteenth chapter of Luke describes some of the events that took place as Jesus was moving toward the city of Jerusalem for the last time. He would not leave it again before his crucifixion. He knew the danger which awaited him in the city, but he did not flinch nor turn back. He very well knew that this was to be the end of his journey here, even before he left heaven to come to this earthly land of sin, sorrow and death. It would be necessary for him to give his life for ours. He did not waver in his determination to do that.

Luk 19:5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.

Luk 19:6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

Luk 19:7 And when they saw it, they all

murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

As Jesus and his band of followers passed through the city of Jericho there was a rich tax collector called Zacchaeus who wished to see the Lord. He was a small man and could not see over those who were taller than himself. Therefore, he ran ahead and climbed into a sycamore tree so he could see Christ.

Jesus was impressed when he saw Zacchaeus in the tree. He called for him to come down from the tree. He would like to stay for a while at Zacchaeus home. Zacchaeus was overjoyed, and gladly encouraged the Lord to be his guest. The disciples were not happy about it. They murmured that Jesus had gone to be the guest of a man who was a sinner. They said this because those who collected taxes for Rome were very often cruel and dishonest. They would receive more taxes than they had a right to collect and would then keep the extra for themselves.

Luk 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

Luk 19:9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

Luk 19:10 For the Son of man is come to

seek and to save that which was lost.

Luk 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

Zaccheus did not fit the mold of the majority of the tax collectors. He told Jesus he gave half of his goods to the poor. If he found that he had taken anything from any man, he was ready to restore four times what he had taken. Jesus praised Zacchaeus. He told him salvation had come to his house. He was a true son of Abraham. It was just such men as Zacchaeus whom the Lord had come to seek out and save from sin.

Luk 19:12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

Luk 19:13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

Luk 19:14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

Jesus then told a parable dealing with the proper attitude toward possessions which have come into our hands. It seems that perhaps his conversation with Zacchaeus caused him to relate this parable. He said there were ten servants whom a man had

given ten pounds to invest while he was gone on a journey. The servants were told to occupy themselves carefully while the master was away.

The servants decided not to obey the will of their master. They sent a message to him that they would not have him reign over them. However, while he was gone he received the kingdom. They were to be responsible whether or not they wished to be.

Luk 19:15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Luk 19:16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

Luk 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

When the master returned he called the servants together to find out how well they had invested the money. The first servant said he had used the money he had received to increase it by ten times. The master praised him and called him a good and faithful servant. He was told that because he had been faithful over a few things he would be given authority over ten cities.

Luk 19:18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

Luk 19:19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

A second servant reported that he had multiplied that which he had received by five times. This servant was also praised and told that he would be made ruler over five cities.

Luk 19:20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

Luk 19:21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

Luk 19:22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

Luk 19:23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

Luk 19:24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

Luk 19:25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

Then a third servant came and reported that he had not lost that which had been intrusted to him. He had carefully laid it up in a secret place so the

master could have it back when he returned. He explained that he was fearful because his master was a stern man and even expected his servants to provide a harvest when nothing had been sown. It is worth notice that he did not do as he was told to do. The master had instructed each man to occupy himself wisely. This man had done nothing.

The master then scolded this last servant and told him he would be judged by the words that had come from his own mouth. He knew what his master expected. Why then had he not made an investment so the money he had been given would have been collecting interest for the time the master was gone. The master then commanded that the money which had been given to the third servant be taken from him and given to the servant who had multiplied his money ten fold.

Luk 19:26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Luk 19:27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

When the master was told that this man already had his original money plus that which he had gained during the master's absence, it was replied that *"Unto every one that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not, it shall be taken away from him."*

Let us make application of the truth taught in

this parable. We today have been provided with many many blessings from the hand of our Father in heaven. It is expected that we will use those blessings to strengthen both ourselves and others in service to Jesus. We cannot afford to waste that which has been placed under our supervision. Nor can we even expect to be pleasing to God if we merely hold even. God must see an increase in his kingdom as a result of our activities.

But we must take the parable even farther. What happens to the Christian who does faithfully use his blessings, and what happens to the one who fails to use them? The teaching of the parable is clear. If a Christian makes proper use of that over which he has been given authority, God will offer him or her even greater opportunities. If the Christian fails to use such blessings wisely, God will take opportunities away from him and offer them to those who do make proper use of them. We must be sure that we have not disappointed our Master. We want to be known as good and faithful servants who are to be given ever greater responsibilities.

I would like to share with you some words of wisdom that a university professor once related. He said he had wondered about this parable in the past. One day, while he was grading test papers, he came across the paper of a very excellent student. Suddenly he realized that he expected that student to have the right answers. Because the student had given accurate answers in the past, if there was any doubt, that student would be given the benefit of the doubt. Another student who had a

bad record in the past might not receive that same treatment and would have his paper scrutinized more carefully.

Luk 19:28 And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

Luk 19:29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

By this time Jesus and his followers had moved from Jericho across the Jordan River and were very close to the city of Jerusalem. They came then to Bethany which was just across the Mount Olives, and a little over a mile from the city. Jesus sent for two of his disciples and told them to go into the village. When they arrived there they would find a colt tied. No man would have ever ridden upon this colt. They were to untie the colt and bring him to Jesus. It was possible that they would be asked why they were taking the colt. If that did happen, they were to tell anyone who asked that the Lord had need of the animal.

Luk 19:30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither.

Luk 19:31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

Luk 19:32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

Luk 19:33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

Luk 19:34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

It happened just as Jesus suggested it might. They went into the village of Bethany and found the colt. As they proceeded to untie it the owners of the animal saw them and asked them why they were taking the animal. They answered just as Jesus had commanded. They were taking the colt because the Lord had need of him. There is no mention of any resistance on the part of the owners. Apparently they knew something about the life and teachings of Jesus, and were completely willing to allow the Lord to make use of the animal.

We have another major lesson here. The Lord has commanded that we lay by in store on the first day of the week, even as we have been prospered. Do we willingly offer that which we have for the service of God, or do we grudgingly give it, or even refuse to give it at all? The Lord has need of that which he called for us to give. If we offer it willingly, we may be certain we will receive far more than we have given.

Luk 19:35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

Luk 19:36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

Luk 19:37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

Luk 19:38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

The disciples then brought the animal to Jesus. They threw their garments on the back of the colt and set Jesus upon it. As the Christ moved forward toward Jerusalem they even took some of their clothing and spread it in his path rejoicing and praising God for all the mighty works which they had seen at the hands of Jesus of Nazareth. They cried out, *“Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven and glory in the highest.”*

We need to notice that this whole event was far from being an accident. It had been prophesied centuries beforehand that the Messiah would come riding upon the foal of an ass. Hear the words of the prophet Zechariah.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. (Zech. 9:9)”

What a strange sight this was! Here was Jesus

Christ, the Son of the living God, riding into the great city of Jerusalem to die and receive his throne as King of kings and Lord of lords. Yet he rides upon a young donkey. Kings did not ride upon donkeys. They rode upon the finest horses in the land. Why was Jesus riding upon a donkey rather than upon a white stallion? I believe firmly that it was because our Lord was not to reign over a kingdom which would conquer the world by horses and chariots. The Kingdom of God would claim its victory through the spirit of love, teaching, sacrifice and service. The donkey was a beast of burden, not a symbol of physical violence and war.

Luk 19:39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

Luk 19:40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

As the disciples were crying out their praises to God there were Pharisees who saw the whole scene as being out of place. They asked that Jesus rebuke his servants. Jesus was quick to reject their request. He said that if the disciples were to be quieted, even the stones would cry out the praises of God.

There have been many throughout history who would like to see the church of Jesus Christ quieted. They have seen Christianity as an embarrassment

to polite society. They willingly praise the great athletes of the day, the famous politicians and the outstanding scientists. But they see a lack of dignity in the simple life of God's servants. The truth is that Christianity provides the light of the world and the salt of the earth. If the objectors think they can improve on civilization by hushing the praises of Jesus Christ and his Father in heaven, they will find that every time they succeed in blocking the influence of Christ at one point, it will break out in another. Either on earth or in heaven, all men will someday be compelled, either willingly or unwillingly, to confess the power of Christ and the glory of the Father.

Luk 19:41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Luk 19:42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

As the Lord came into the city of Jerusalem he wept over it. There was good reason for his weeping. Matthew expresses these reasons even more clearly than Luke. Matthew gives the very words of Jesus as he wept over the city. The Lord said:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

(Mat.23:37,39)”

Luk 19:43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

Luk 19:44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Luk 19:45 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

Luk 19:46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Luk 19:47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

Luk 19:48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

Luke tells how Jesus forecast the destruction of the famous city. If Jerusalem had accepted the truths Jesus offered to them, it's citizens could have enjoyed prosperity far beyond their dreams. But as a result of the fact that they had closed their eyes, stopped their ears and hardened their hearts, they would find their city leveled to the ground. Great armies would surround the city and break down

it's walls. They would not leave one stone upon another. The destruction would be complete.

A man who cherished his life on earth would not have made the decision Jesus then made. The Lord headed straight toward the storm of fury which was to take him to the cross. He went to the temple and cast out those who were changing the temple area from a house of prayer to a den of thieves. He taught daily in the temple and exposed the corruption of the priests and of the people.

Very soon the chief priests and the scribes were seeking out a way by which they might destroy him. It would take a while because the people wanted

Chapter 20

Luk 20:1 And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders,

Luk 20:2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?

Luk 20:3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

Luk 20:4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

Luk 20:5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?

Luk 20:6 But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

Luk 20:7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was.

Luk 20:8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

This twentieth chapter tells us about the efforts of the enemies of Christ to trap him into saying something which could be used to accuse him of a crime serious enough to bring on a death penalty. Many men, from that day to this have wished Jesus would disappear. His teachings and his influence make their sinful lives evident. They would rather

be left alone as they enjoy the pleasures of sin for the short season they have on this earth.

As we move into this chapter of the book of Luke we find that Jesus had entered into the city of Jerusalem for the very last time before his death. As the Son of God he very well knew what was going to happen to him. He was to be put to death. That had not stopped him from walking straight into the face of his opponents.

Among those who hated him most were the scribes and the Priests. They had places of great honor and were living in luxury. They did not appreciate the criticism of the Lord who warned them that they should be servants rather than masters. Jesus did not hesitate to go right to the temple where these persons spent the majority of their time. He challenged their evil hypocrisy and let them know they needed to change their ways.

We can guess what they decided to do. They determined to challenge his right to tell them what they should and should not be doing. They spoke to him saying,

“By what authority doest thou these things? Who gave you the authority you claim to have?”

These questions did not faze the Lord. He simply asked them a question in return. If they were so good at questions, he had one for them. Was the baptism of John authorized by God, or was it authorized by men? Jesus very well knew that the mass of the people believed John the Baptist was a prophet of God. They would not like it if the scribes

and priests said John was not authorized by God to teach the things he taught. They would hesitate to answer that John had only earthly authority from men. But suppose they answered that John had authority from God in heaven. John had pointed to Jesus as the great prophet from God whom the world had been awaiting. If they answered that John had the authority of God they knew Jesus would ask them why they had not believed what John said about his own authority. They answered that they could not tell by whose authority John taught. Jesus then said he would not tell them by what authority he was acting.

Luk 20:9 Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

Luk 20:10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.

Luk 20:11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

Luk 20:12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

The Lord then began to make his point even clearer. He told a parable about a man who had placed his vineyard in the hands of caretakers while he went off to a far country for a long time. Later

he sent a servant back to the vineyard to collect some profit from the operation. The caretakers beat the servant and sent him away empty. Then another servant was sent. The same thing happened again. The servant was beaten and sent away empty. A third servant was treated in the same way.

Luk 20:13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him.

Luk 20:14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

Luk 20:15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

Luk 20:16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

Jesus listeners understood full well that the murder of the vineyard owner's son was a terrible thing. Jesus would use that horror story to forecast that which was to happen to him and also that which would happen to the Jews who were ready to reject and kill him.

Luk 20:17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone

which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

Luk 20:18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Luk 20:19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

Luk 20:20 And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

Luk 20:21 And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly:

We have no trouble seeing Jesus point in presenting this parable. The scribes and priests had ignored the prophets and their teachings. When God had then sent his own Son to the world, they were making plans to destroy him in order that they could take over the kingdom of God.

Jesus gave them a stern warning. He informed them that they were rejecting the stone which God had laid as the chief cornerstone of his building. They were trying to fall upon the rock of ages and grind it into powder in order that they might build upon their own foundation. That would not work.

Anyone who fell upon Jesus Christ and tried to destroy him would only find that they had failed to destroy him and that they were about to be ground into powder themselves.

The priests and scribes were furious. They knew he had spoken the parable against them. They also knew they must be careful because Jesus had healed many people and was loved by many of the Jews. They decided to send spies out who would carefully listen to every word Jesus spoke and try to find him guilty of disobedience to the Roman government who ruled Palestine at the time. They would let Rome kill him and this would not only eliminate Jesus, it would also place the guilt on some one else.

Luk 20:22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?

Luk 20:23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

Luk 20:24 Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's.

Luk 20:25 And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.

Luk 20:26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

The spies were well prepared. They knew just what to ask Christ. They said, *“Is it lawful to pay*

taxes to Caesar or not?" The reason for their question was that they knew Jesus considered himself to be the king of the Kingdom of God. Surely he would have to reply that his own kingdom was the only one to which taxes ought to be paid. If he said that, they could accuse him of treason against Rome. That would mean a death sentence and they would be rid of him.

Jesus surprised them. He asked them to show him a Roman coin. Then he asked them whose picture and whose name was on the coin. The answer was clear. It was Caesar's name and Caesar's picture that were upon the coin. Jesus then told them they were to give to Caesar that which belonged to Caesar, but they were to give to God that which belonged to God. Caesar's government had the right to require men to pay taxes. But Caesar did not have the right to make spiritual laws. There were two different kinds of government. There was civil government and there was spiritual government. Men had a responsibility to be subject to each of them as long as civil government did not defy spiritual government.

Luk 20:27 Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,

Luk 20:28 Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

Luk 20:29 There were therefore seven

brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children.

Luk 20:30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.

Luk 20:31 And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died.

Luk 20:32 Last of all the woman died also.

Luk 20:33 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

This quieted the scribes and priests for a while. But they were not ready to give up. They had another question. This time it came from the Saducees. The Saducees did not believe in a resurrection. They thought they could present a puzzle which Christ could not answer. They said, Let us suppose that a woman was married to a man and that man died. She then married another man and he died. This was repeated until the woman had married seven different men. Now what would happen in the resurrection. Which of the seven men who had been married to her could claim her as his wife?

The Saducees thought they had put the Lord in a very real bind. Jesus had said much about a future resurrection. They considered such teaching to be ridiculous. No doubt they had many other questions about the resurrection that they could have presented to Christ. However, they considered this one to be unanswerable. In their estimation

there was no way he could work his way out of such a problem. One of the seven men would have no more right to claim the woman as his wife than did any of the other six.

God tells us in the old testament that his ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts. His ways and his thoughts are as far above our ways and thoughts as the heaven is higher than the earth. Jesus answer to the question of the Pharisees shows just how true that statement is. It did not even occur to the Pharisees that after the resurrection there would be a completely different relationship between those who were resurrected.

Luk 20:34 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

Luk 20:35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

Luk 20:36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

Luk 20:37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Luk 20:38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him.

The Saducees were in way over their head. Jesus had emptied himself of his glory in heaven

and had taken upon himself the form of a man in order that he might come and demonstrate to mankind just what God expected of his children here on earth. He knew perfectly just what it would be like in the resurrection. The Saducees did not know. They were of the opinion that those who were resurrected would have the same needs and desires they had before the resurrection. They were wrong. Those who were resurrected would have no need of marriage and reproduction. By that time God's family would be complete and there would be no need for the production of more souls.

The angels are neither male nor female. They do not marry. The resurrected souls will not need wives nor husbands. Jesus capped off his teaching by telling the Saducees they were quite wrong in thinking the dead never live again. He pointed to the case of Moses at the burning bush. God had told Moses that he is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are living. God is the God of the living and not the God of the dead.

Luk 20:39 Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said.

Luk 20:40 And after that they durst not ask him any question at all.

Luk 20:41 And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son?

Luk 20:42 And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

Luk 20:43 Till I make thine enemies thy

footstool.

Luk 20:44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?

The answers of Christ to the questions of the scribes, priests and Saducees was so clear and forceful that these wicked men did not dare to ask him any further questions. They simply said, *“Master, thou hast well spoken.”*

Jesus did not leave it there. He decided to pursue the matter farther. Since he had answered all of their questions, he had a question for them. *“How say they that Christ is David’s son?”* He reminded them that David himself had said in the book of Psalms, *“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore called him Lord, how is he then his son?”*

The scribes, the priests and the Saducees believed the teachings of David that one of his descendants would reign over the Kingdom of God. However they were mistaken in thinking that Kingdom would be an earthly kingdom with a ruler sitting upon an earthly throne and ruling over all nations of the world. They thought they were well on the way to world dominion. They stood high in the opinions of men. It seemed logical to them that when this descendant of David came they would be sitting on his right and left hand.

Now Jesus was ready to pound his point home. How was it that David could call his own descendant his Lord? How could he be both David’s descendant and also his Lord? This could only be true if God

had entered the world through David's reproductive powers. Jesus was truly claiming to be God and also to be the descendant of David. He existed before David was born. He would also exist after his own death. The Saducees were wrong. Death is not the end of human existence. It is possible to live again, after the resurrection. After the death of Jesus Christ, he would be raised to sit at the right hand of the Father in heaven. He would sit there until every foe of righteousness was conquered.

Luk 20:45 Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,

Luk 20:46 Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

Luk 20:47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

Jesus then turned to those who were listening to the argument between himself and the Saducees and scribes. He warned the hearers that the scribes were not interested in their eternal happiness. They were far more interested in walking around in flowing robes and being noticed in the market places where men gathered. They loved the praise of men and the high seats in the synagogue more than they did the souls of men.

The end of these pretenders was not to be very pretty. They had feasted at the expense of poor

widows. They cared for nothing except to have people pay them great honor as they made long but useless prayers in the synagogue. The result of all this would be the loss of their hope of eternal life and the hearing of those horrible words, *“Depart from me. I never knew you.”*

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Chapter 21

Luk 21:1 And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

Luk 21:2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

Luk 21:3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:

Luk 21:4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

It is interesting that Luke 21, Mark 12 and Matthew 24 all discuss the same teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. In each case the Lord and his apostles had been in the area of the temple in Jerusalem. The apostles had been impressed with the seemingly indestructible nature of that building. It seemed to them as if it must continue to exist as long as the world stood. Jesus used their belief to teach them the importance of living in harmony with the will of the Father in heaven. Christ was the Master Teacher of all time. Any well trained school teacher knows the most effective teaching is done by starting with something the students already have in mind and moving from that point to the truths the teacher wishes to get across.

Luk 21:5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

Luk 21:6 As for these things which ye behold,

the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Luk 21:7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

The first four verses of the chapter simply lead into the rest. There at the temple the disciples had seen certain rich men casting their contributions into the treasury of the temple. At the same time they noticed a poor widow who had cast in only two mites. When compared with the large gifts of the rich men, the widow's two mites appeared to be almost nothing. Jesus did not see it that way. He told his apostles that the widow had given more than all of the rich men put together. They could afford to give what they had given without suffering any need. But the gift of the widow had been a very real sacrifice on her part. God would take note and would be pleased with her.

At that point some of the disciples spoke about the goodly stones of which the temple was made, and the valuable gifts which had been offered by the people. We are told that some of the stones about which they spoke were as much as ten to twelve feet long and weighed hundreds of pounds. It would have been easy to conclude that they would be there until the end of time.

Jesus declared that such would not be the case. The time would come when not a single one of those

great stones would be left lying on top of another. In other words, the temple would be leveled to the ground.

The disciples quickly decided Jesus must be talking about the end of the world. They wanted him to tell them how men could know when the temple would be destroyed and when the end of the world would come. Notice that they had asked two different questions. They actually thought they were asking just one, but Jesus knew the destruction of the temple and the end of time were two different events. He proceeded to answer both questions.

Luk 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

Luk 21:9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

Luk 21:10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

Luk 21:11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

Luk 21:12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers

for my name's sake.

Luk 21:13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

Luk 21:14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

Luk 21:15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

First he told them there would be many who would come claiming to be the Messiah, or Saviour of the world. They would claim that the end of the world was near. Jesus told the disciples to be careful of such false teachers. They were not to follow just any man who came on the scene claiming to be the Christ.

Before the end of the world arrived there would be many events which would lead men to think the end was near. There would be one war after another. Nations would declare war on other nations. Thousands would be killed. But that did not mean the end of the world had come. Terrible wars would come and go before the end arrived.

Not only would there be many wars between the nations. Jesus informed them there would be natural calamities. Gigantic earthquakes would shake the earth over and over. Diseases would spread across the land resulting in the deaths of large portions of the population. It would be natural for men and women to become fearful and think that all things were about to come to an end. Nevertheless, these

were not signs of the end. They were only events which would take place over and over again. If men were looking for a sign these earthquakes and diseases were not that sign.

The Lord warned his listeners that there were more personal things which would come to pass that his disciples would not be pleased with. His followers would be persecuted to death itself. Those in power would arrest them and put them into prison simply because they were Christians. They need not think such fearful things were a sign of the end of time. God would make use of these events to show to the world just how important it is to hear and obey his word. Every Christian who was arrested and put into prison would serve as a witness to the world that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

We must remember now that Jesus was talking in particular to his apostles. He told them they need not worry about what they were to say to those who arrested and imprisoned them. He would see that they were provided with wisdom and the ability to speak out. Their wisdom and the force of their testimony would be so powerful that those who persecuted them would be unable to answer their teaching.

Luk 21:16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

Luk 21:17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

Luk 21:18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

Luk 21:19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

Among the terrible experiences his disciples would have would be betrayal by their own friends and loved ones. My friends, I think my faith would have been severely tested at that point. Could I have continued to follow the Lord when I knew I was walking straight into the face of beatings, imprisonment and death itself? Could you have done so? The majority of the apostles did just that. They actually gave their lives as they preached the Word of the Lord to others. Judas, the traitor was the exception. Not many of us like to be hated by our fellowmen. Yet that is just what Jesus said would happen to many who stood up for him.

Then the Lord made a strange statement which seems to contradict what he had just said. He told the disciples that not a hair of their head would perish. Yet he had just said that some of them would be put to death. How could both of these statements be true? I think the answer is found in the difference between physical death and eternal life. On another occasion Jesus declared that we are not to fear them that can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. On the other hand we are to fear the God of heaven who can cast both body and soul into hell.

It is a well known fact that the apostles died

as martyrs. They were murdered because of their refusal to deny their Lord and Saviour. In that sense, the hair of their head may have perished. But when we consider their eternal destiny, it is quite a different matter. Their bodies will be raised from the grave and will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. They will become immortal and incorruptible. They will be with God, with Christ, and with the faithful saints of all the ages. No one can take that promise from them, or from we who serve the Lord faithfully today. Jesus added that his listeners should possess their souls in patience.

Luk 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

Luk 21:21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

Luk 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

It is likely that Jesus changed topics at this point. He had said that men would think the end of the world had come when they saw great disturbances such as wars, disease and earthquakes. Those things would come and go. Now he turned to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. It would be one of those terrible times when the temple was leveled to the ground. The time would

come when they would see Gentile armies gathered around the great city of God. When they saw these things coming to pass they would need to flee the city and go to the nearby mountains. God was not happy with the Jewish people. He would bring days of vengeance upon them. When he allowed these things to happen the Jerusalem temple itself would be destroyed.

Luk 21:23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

The distress would be almost unimaginable. Women who were nursing babes would suffer greatly. Many would be killed by the sword. Others would be led away captive as the Gentiles took over the beloved city. The Jewish people should have feared God and obeyed his Word. They should have received the Son of God with open arms and heard his teachings gladly. Instead, they would mock him and place him upon the cross of Calvary.

Luk 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Luk 21:25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

Luk 21:26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

Luk 21:27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Luk 21:28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Since the Jews were about to reject Christ, he spoke of the coming “*times of the Gentiles.*” It is interesting that in the very last chapter of the book of Acts we find the following words. Paul was quoting the words of Isaiah the prophet. Isaiah had said,

Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

After quoting these words from Isaiah Paul said,

Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will

hear it.

When the Jews refused to fear God and keep the commandments given by his Son, God turned to the Gentiles. We today live in the times of the Gentiles. Will the Jews someday turn to Christ in large numbers. I do not know. I can only pray that they will see their horrible mistake and will confess the name of Christ before God and men.

I would like to call the attention of the reader to two passages of scripture. The first is Luke 13:35. The second is Romans 11:

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Luke 13:35).

It is possible that this verse is talking about a day in which the majority of the Jews will cease to deny Christ as the Messiah, and will rejoice to accept Him as the Saviour of all who will follow Him.

Now notice Romans 11:11-15.

Rom 11:11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

Rom 11:12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

Rom 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Rom 11:14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

Rom 11:15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

In the understanding of these two passages, much depends upon whether they refer to individual Jews or to the Jews as a whole. All of the Jews were not cast off; only those who refused to believe in Christ. This was called the fall of the Jew and the fall of the Jew allowed the times of the Gentiles to begin.

It is possible that the times of the Gentiles will come to a close when the Jews are provoked to jealousy and decide in large numbers to become Christians. This would usher in a time of all men, both Jew and Gentile. It would not mean that all Jews would accept Christ any more than the fall of the Jews did not mean that all Jews turned away.

Some believe the life from death which would result from the receiving of the Jew has to do with the spiritual life which would come to the Jew when each one is converted. However, the passage may well refer to major movements rather than individuals. If so, the life from death would be a change in spiritual conditions world wide. The

reader should consider what it would be like on earth if both the Jew and the Gentile were to be converted in large numbers. Many Christians of the 1800s believed such a condition lay ahead.

We must remember, however, that in any case the condition of society here on earth will come to an end when Jesus returns. The eternal condition of the faithful is far more important than a limited time on this globe. Both the Jew and the Gentile must prepare for life unending in the presence of God.

Luk 21:29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

Luk 21:30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

Luk 21:31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

Luk 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

Luk 21:33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Luk 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Luk 21:35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

It is my belief that Jesus then turned back to the question the disciples had asked him about the signs of the end. After telling them the temple would be destroyed and there would be a time of the Gentiles, the Lord began to talk about the end of the world. He pointed out that when the fig tree bloomed they could know summer was at hand. They would not see sign after sign. The refreshing of the trees meant summer was there!

It would be like that when the end of time came. There would be signs in the heavens and on the earth. However, when the signs came the end would be upon them. There would be no time to get ready. The sun would become dark. The moon would do the same. The stars would fall from their places. Men's hearts would fail them because of the fear. In the midst of all these fearsome events, the Son of man would appear in a cloud with power and great glory. When that happened they would know that their redemption had drawn near.

Luk 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Luk 21:37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

Luk 21:38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

The next statement of the Lord is a bit puzzling. He said,

“When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.”

What generation was Jesus talking about when he said that generation would not pass away until the Kingdom of God had come? We do know this much. Within the days of those who were listening to Jesus the first gospel sermon was preached on the day of Pentecost. The church came into existence. The Jewish system was replaced by a new day in which both Jew and Gentile were invited to become subjects of Jesus Christ who is now sitting upon his throne in heaven.

What shall men do today? The words of the Lord still ring true. He said,

“Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and care of this life, and so that day

Chapter 22

Luk 22:1 Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

Luk 22:2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

Luk 22:3 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

Luk 22:4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

Luk 22:5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.

Luk 22:6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

As we enter into our study of the twenty-second chapter of Luke we find the life of Jesus drawing rapidly to a close. In this chapter we find him instituting the Lord's supper which his followers take every Lord's day until the present. We also find him betrayed by one of his supposed friends, the apostle named Judas. Both of these events are very meaningful. They are also very touching. They penetrate to the innermost depts of our hearts.

It was time for the Jews to partake of the feast of unleavened bread. This was a feast which had been kept by these people since the days of Moses. It kept alive the memory of the escape from Egyptian bondage. Every time a Jew attended the feast of the Passover he was to recall that joyous

day when the slavery to Pharoah was left behind. Today Christians ought to think similar thoughts as the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine are shared. These emblems represent the body and the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, which was shed in order that Christ's followers today might be made free from the slavery of sin.

The leaders of the Jews hated Christ with a passion. They had been searching for a way to kill him for some time. They were afraid to kill Jesus openly because so many of the people had come to love him. They finally found a way to accomplish their wishes. We are told that Satan entered into the heart of Judas. This most infamous man of all time then went to the chief priests and the captains of the Jews and received money from them to aid in his murder. Judas promised to find a way to deliver him to them while he was away from the multitudes of the people.

Luk 22:7 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

Luk 22:8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

Luk 22:9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

Luk 22:10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

Luk 22:11 And ye shall say unto the goodman

of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

Luk 22:12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

Luk 22:13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Luk 22:14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

In the meantime the feast of unleavened bread had arrived. The Lord sent Peter and John ahead to make preparations for the entire band of apostles to partake of it. They found a man who had an upper room which he was willing to allow them to use for keep the feast.

Luk 22:15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

Luk 22:16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Luk 22:17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

Luk 22:18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

Luk 22:19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them,

saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Luk 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Luk 22:21 But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

At the proper time Jesus sat down at a table with the twelve and told them how much he had wanted to share this moment with them before he had to suffer. They must have wondered just what he meant by this suffering. They would soon find out. Jesus told them he would not eat with them again until the Kingdom of God had come. Only when the Passover had been replaced by the Lord's Supper in the Kingdom, or the church, would he be eating with them again.

At that point Jesus took up the cup of grape juice. He gave thanks and then told them to divide it among themselves. He then took some of the unleavened bread and gave thanks for it. After giving thanks he broke it and passed it to the apostles. He told them the bread represented his own body which was to be given for them. He added that the fruit of the vine which they had shared represented the New Testament in his blood, which was to be shed for them.

Luk 22:22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

Luk 22:23 And they began to enquire among

themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

The Lord then said something which should have stricken terror into the heart of Judas. Judas already knew what he was going to do to earn the thirty pieces of silver he was to be paid by the enemies of Christ. As the traitor sat there in the midst of this taking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, Jesus said the hand of the one who would betray him was present with them at that very table. They began to question one another and to ask which of them it was that would do such a dastardly deed. Only Judas and Jesus knew the answer to their question.

Luk 22:24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

Luk 22:25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

Luk 22:26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

Luk 22:27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Luk 22:28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

Luk 22:29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

Luk 22:30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luk 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

Luk 22:32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Then something happened which shows us just how frail men are. While they sat there at the table talking about which of them would betray Jesus, the conversation turned to which of them was the greatest. Jesus took that opportunity to teach them one more of his fantastic lessons about what God expects from his people. Jesus told them the Gentiles fought over who would have the power to exert authority over them. But it was not to be that way in his coming kingdom. The greatest in his Kingdom would be those who served their fellow man; not those who lorded it over them. He pointed out that he had come as a servant. His lordship was the type which was honored because he had offered himself completely for those he loved. That service was to be shown in just a few hours by going to the cross as a sacrifice for their sins.

Jesus told the twelve they had been appointed to eat and drink at his table in his kingdom. They would be given the honor of sitting on thrones judging the tribes of the new spiritual Israel. This came

true as Christians throughout the entire Christian age have read from the inspired words delivered to us by those men who sat there with him.

Jesus then pointed out Simon Peter and told him Satan wished to sift him and test his faith. Jesus told Peter he had prayed that Peter would remain faithful and would then take the lead in strengthening his brethren. I would point out to you that after Peter denied his Lord, he did a complete about face and preached the first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost, at which time three thousand persons believed on Christ and were baptized for the remission of their sins. It is clear that Jesus could see the end from the beginning. He was able to predict both the betrayal of Judas and the victory for Peter's faith.

It is also important that Jesus spoke of Peter not yet being converted at the time he was speaking. This man had left his very living on the fishing boat to follow the Lord wherever it became necessary. I wonder how many of us who believe ourselves to be dedicated Christians that Jesus might describe as not yet converted.

Luk 22:33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

Luk 22:34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Peter could not believe his ears. He replied to Christ that he was ready to go to prison, or even

to death for his Master. Jesus told Peter that Peter would deny him three times before the cock crew to mark the coming of dawn.

Luk 22:35 And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

Luk 22:36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

Luk 22:37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

Luk 22:38 And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

Christ began to tell the apostles what would be necessary in order to meet the events of the future. He asked them if they had lacked anything when they gave up both their money and their shoes to follow him. They said no. He then said for them to get themselves a purse and money, also they were to buy a sword. This would be important because the prophecy of Isaiah that he would be counted as a criminal would be fulfilled soon. The apostles wondered how many swords would be needed. They had two at the time. Jesus answered that two would be sufficient.

The sword Jesus told them to buy would not be for the purpose of driving away his enemies. In the hand of Peter it would later show just how little the power of the Kingdom of God would depend on physical force. Jesus knew that just one sword would be enough to make that point.

Luk 22:39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

Luk 22:40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

Luk 22:41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

Luk 22:42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

Luk 22:43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

Luk 22:44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Luk 22:45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

Luk 22:46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

The Master then led his apostles out of the upper

room and across the Kidron valley to the Mount of Olives just east of the city of Jerusalem. Once he was there he kneeled down to pray. He prayed in great agony that the coming horrors might not come upon him. Nevertheless, if it was the will of his Father that he must suffer, he was ready to obey. When he rose from his prayer he found the apostles had fallen asleep from their sorrow. He told them to rise up and pray. They must overcome the temptations ahead.

While he was still speaking to the apostles, Judas drew near with a multitude of soldiers. His plan was to identify which one of the persons the soldiers were to arrest by planting a kiss upon his cheek. Jesus knew exactly what Judas planned. He asked him if it was really true that he was about to betray him with a kiss. Jesus is still betrayed today by those who pretend to love him. They cry out Lord, Lord, but they do not do the things which he has commanded.

Luk 22:47 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

Luk 22:48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

Luk 22:49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

Luk 22:50 And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

Luk 22:51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

It was still not light. The cock had not yet crowed. Peter saw someone leading the mob toward Jesus. He took a sword and very nearly killed a servant of the high priest. He came close enough that he cut off the man's right ear. Jesus told Peter not to resist. He reached out and touched the man's head and healed his ear. He then turned to those who had come to take him and said to them, "*Why did you come after me with swords and staves as if I was a common thief.*" The real answer was that they were cowards and were afraid to take him in front of the people while he was in the temple healing the sick and teaching gentleness and loving kindness. They had to do this vile thing in the darkness. It was the hour of Satan, the prince of darkness. Jesus hour would come later when he was resurrected from the dead and lifted up to take his place at the right hand of God on the throne of heaven.

Luk 22:52 Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

Luk 22:53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

Luk 22:54 Then took they him, and led him,

and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

They arrested Jesus and took him to the house of the high priest. Peter followed a ways after him. I believe Peter was completely bewildered. When he drew the sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant I am convinced he thought Christ would use that one sword in some miraculous fashion to drive off the entire mob that had come for him. Christ had not done that. It looked to Peter as if everything was collapsing. He became afraid and fell into the hands of Satan for a short time.

Luk 22:55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

Luk 22:56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

Luk 22:57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

Luk 22:58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

Luk 22:59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen.

Luk 22:60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

A young maid saw Peter warming his hands at a fire. She asked him if he was not one of those who had been with Jesus. Peter quickly replied that he was not. An hour later someone else asked him if he was not one of Christ's followers. He denied it. This happened three times within a short period of time. Then, while he was still in the process of denying Christ for the third time, Peter heard the cock crow. Then Peter remembered how Jesus had predicted he would do just what he had done. He separated himself from the rest of the people and wept bitterly, not wishing to be seen in his shame.

Luk 22:61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Luk 22:62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Again I ask you my friends, how many of us have committed sin which we knew was a betrayal of our Lord, and then wept over it privately thinking no one would ever know. Peter was about as mistaken as a man could ever be. Luke, who was the writer of this present chapter, was caused to record both Peter's crime against his Lord, and also his shedding of bitter tears.

Luk 22:63 And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.

Luk 22:64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?

Luk 22:65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

Luk 22:66 And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,

Luk 22:67 Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:

Luk 22:68 And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go.

Luk 22:69 Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

Luk 22:70 Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

Luk 22:71 And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

Those who had taken Christ were having a bit of a party at his expense. One of the men began to mock him and reached out and slapped him. Then they placed a blindfold on his face, slapped him again, and challenged him to prophesy which one of them it was that had slapped him. Dear friends, you cannot mock the Son of God without him knowing just who did it and what it was they did. It does

not matter that it is done in the darkness where it appears that he will not see. You cannot hide from the all seeing eye of God. If you mock Jesus there are but two routes you may take. You may carry the guilt of that sin to the grave and suffer in hell. Or you can repent and pray that he will forgive you.

There were many other blasphemous things which they said to the Lord. We will never know all of the details of their shameful speech. What is recorded is enough to let us know how wicked these men were.

After daylight came, the elders and chief priests of the Jews brought Jesus before the Jewish council. They asked him if he was the Christ, or the Messiah God had promised. Jesus replied that it would not make any difference if he said he was. They would not believe him or let him go. He declared that the time would come that they would see him sitting on the right hand of God. They asked if he claimed to be the Son of God. He said they had made a proper statement. He was the Son of God.

Then they rejoiced that they had evidence to kill him. He had claimed to be divine. In their minds that was blasphemy against Jehovah. They could now murder him without any resistance from those who loved him.

Chapter 23

Luk 23:1 And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

Luk 23:2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

Luk 23:3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.

Luk 23:4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

The twenty-third chapter of the book of Luke is not one of the more pleasant chapters in the entire Bible. In chapter twenty-two Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested by the leaders of the Jews. In this present chapter he is brought to trial, sentenced to death and crucified. Has there been a sadder day in the history of mankind? I doubt it. If this had been the end of the story of Jesus Christ, it would certainly have been the saddest day. We can endure our consideration of what takes place in this chapter when we allow ourselves to look beyond the crucifixion to the resurrection and ascension of the Lord to the right hand of the Father's throne in heaven. Only by doing that can we bear to follow the hideous shame of Christ's trial and death.

As soon as the Jewish leaders had successfully arrested Jesus, they led him to Pilate, the governor at that time. They did not accuse him of blasphemy. They accused him of teaching the people to rebel

against the civil authorities. They said he had forbidden the citizens to pay taxes to Caesar, the emperor in Rome. They accused Jesus of claiming to be a king and opposing the rule of the Romans. It was true that Jesus claimed to be a king. But at no time did he claim to be a king in the sense they were claiming. He had told the people to give unto Caesar that which was Caesar's. Taxes belonged to Caesar. Jesus was King of kings and Lord of lords. That which he desired was spiritual service and godly lives.

Luk 23:5 And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

Luk 23:6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean.

Luk 23:7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

Pilate asked Jesus if he was the King of the Jews. Jesus replied that Pilate had it right. He said, "Thou sayest it." It is interesting that Pilate did not condemn him for saying what he did. Instead, Pilate said, "*I find no fault in this man.*" That did not go down well with Christ's accusers. They objected that Jesus had stirred up the people all the way from Galilee to Jerusalem. When Pilate heard the word Galilee he saw a way to avoid any

further difficulty for himself. He would have Herod see to the matter. Herod had the supervision of the region of Galilee. And Herod was in Jerusalem at that very time.

Luk 23:8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

Luk 23:9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

Luk 23:10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

Luk 23:11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

Luk 23:12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

So Jesus was taken before Herod. Herod was glad to see Jesus because he had been hearing for some time about the miracles which Jesus had been doing. Herod hoped that perhaps he might see one of these miracles. He proceeded to ask Jesus a number of questions. Jesus did not bother to give Herod an answer. He stood silently before him. Isaiah had prophesied that this would happen. He described it as like a lamb being taken to the slaughter. Isaiah predicted that the Lord would

not open his mouth in his defense. Again the chief priests and scribes of the Jews spoke up in anger. As a result, the military men surrounding Herod began to make fun at the expense of the Lord. They put a gorgeous robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. Pilate and Herod had been enemies before this. Luke tells us that as a result of Jesus trial they became friends.

Luk 23:13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,

Luk 23:14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

Luk 23:15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

Luk 23:16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

Luk 23:17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

Luk 23:18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:

Luk 23:19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

Luk 23:20 Pilate therefore, willing to release

Jesus, spake again to them.

Luk 23:21 But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

Pilate then called the accusers of Jesus together and told them he had examined Christ and had found he was not guilty of the crimes of which he had been accused. He then pointed out that neither had Herod found any crime worthy of death. Pilate said he was ready to give Christ some lighter punishment and release him. He told the Jews he had the right to release one prisoner anyway and that he would release Jesus. The Jews would have none of this. They cried out for him to release Barabbas who was a condemned murderer and who was at that present time in prison. Pilate repeated that he would release Jesus. This time the mob cried out, "*Crucify him! Crucify him!*"

Luk 23:22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

Luk 23:23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

Luk 23:24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

Luk 23:25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Luk 23:26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

The mob finally won their way. Pilate released a man who was undeniably guilty of murder and delivered the Lord into the hands of those who hated him. They would crucify him. This was typical of Jesus replacement for sinners throughout time. He, the innocent Lamb of God, was killed in place of millions of sinners who deserve to die.

As they made their way to the place of the crucifixion, Jesus fell under the weight of the cross. They saw a man named Simon. They placed the cross on the back of Simon and forced him to carry it when Christ was too weak to bear it any farther. It is from this incident that we have our present day hymn asking if Jesus must bear his cross alone. The answer is that we must share a part of his burden. He must not bear the cross alone and all the world go free.

Luk 23:27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

Luk 23:28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

Luk 23:29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

Luk 23:30 Then shall they begin to say to

the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

Luk 23:31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

Following along after Jesus there was a great number of people. Among these were women who wept over what was taking place. I have preached now for many many years. I have preached in a number of congregations and I have observed many others. Everywhere I have been, and everywhere I have looked, I have seen women with tremendous faith. Some of them have suffered much as they followed the Lord. They know about his sorrow. They look forward to being with him in glory. God did not see fit to place women in a role of leadership in the church. He assigned leadership to men. That does not prevent such godly women from walking in the light as he is in the light. I commend those women who followed after the Lord as he bore his cross toward Calvary. I also commend women who have a similar faith today. God recognized them then and we should recognize them now.

Jesus knew they were there. He turned toward them and told them not to weep for him. The weeping should be for themselves and for their children. The time was not far ahead when women would wish they had never born children. People would be crying out for the mountains and the hills to fall upon them and hide them from the terrors which would come. The Lord said that if such things as were happening then were taking place, they could

expect more horror later. His exact words were, *“If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry.”* The idea is that when evil is not stopped it has a tendency to mature and grow more vicious as time passes.

Luk 23:32 And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

Luk 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

There were two criminals who were to be crucified with the Lord. They were walking along with him. Luke does not mention it but these two thieves had some conversation as they hung there on either side of Christ. One began to mock him. The other scolded the first for doing so. He reminded the one who was mocking Jesus that the Lord had done no sin. They were being justly punished for their crimes. Jesus was innocent and did not deserve to be treated as a menace to society.

But they did crucify the Son of God between those two thieves. We can almost see the scribes and chief priests gloating there at the foot of the cross. Now they felt they would no longer have to deal with this man who threatened them so much. They saw themselves as having protected their power and authority. They could go on with their hypocritical lives and bask in their glory.

Luk 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Luk 23:35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

Jesus looked down upon them from his place on the cross and said,

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

Let's think about that statement for just a minute. Here were some people killing the Son of God and doing it with mocking and great glee. How could Jesus cry out for his Father in heaven to forgive them. If they could be forgiven for the sin they were committing is there any man or woman on earth who has committed a sin so great that God would send them to hell as punishment? Are the universalists right when they tell us all men will finally be with God in heaven? Are those right who claim that there is a place after death where men suffer for a while until they have paid for their sin and then they are considered clean and suitable to enter into the presence of Jesus Christ and his Father in heaven? Is ignorance an excuse for any sin, no matter how hideous it may be? Surely these are not correct positions.

I believe what Jesus was asking his Father to

do was to make it possible for those who killed him to be forgiven if they would repent of those sins. At the time they did not realize the seriousness of what they were doing. When the time came that they did realize it, and they were ready to serve God and not fight against him, Jesus wanted them to be forgiven.

This is just what Jesus has asked us to do today. He commanded that we forgive those who trespass against us and say all manner of evil against us falsely. Our attitude is to be the same as his was.

They took his clothing from him and cast lots for it. Let us hope that they left him enough that he was not completely naked and exposed to the eyes of everyone. They invited him to save himself if he was truly the Son of God. He had saved so many others. Now was the time to save himself. Jesus could have done that. He could have called ten thousand angels to his side. I remind you that one angel caused the death of 185,000 Assyrians in a single night. What could ten thousand angels have done to those who were making fun of the Christ?

Luk 23:36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

Luk 23:37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

They came to him with vinegar to drink rather than offering him a drink of refreshing water to take away a tiny bit of the pain.

~~**Luk 23:38 And a superscription also was**~~

written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

They placed a writing above his head. It was written in three different languages. It was written in Latin for the benefit of the Roman soldiers. It was written in Greek and Hebrew for the benefit of those who knew the scriptures. It said, **“THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”** It was correct. It did not say, He claimed to be the king of the Jews. It said he was the king. Not only was Jesus the king of the Jews. He is the king of all men. One day we will all appear before him in the final judgment. Then the tables will be turned. Those who denied him will be denied by him.

Luk 23:39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

Luk 23:40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

Luk 23:41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

Luk 23:42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

Luk 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Just before he died, the thief who defended him

asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. The thief probably did not completely realize just what he was asking. He could hardly have understood the nature of the spiritual kingdom over which Jesus reigns today. Nevertheless, his penitent attitude caused Jesus to tell him, *“Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”* Paul once said it was better to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. Just what does happen to us after death and before the judgment? It seems that after the spirit departs from the body, time begins to take on less importance. I am willing to let God handle such matters. The Judge of all the earth will do right. It does seem that the penitent thief had done what he needed to do at that time to be right in the sight of God.

Luk 23:44 And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

Luk 23:45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

Luk 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Luk 23:47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

Luk 23:48 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things

which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.

Luk 23:49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

It was high noon. Jesus cried out, "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*" Then he gave up the ghost. His spirit returned to God who gave it. The sun quit shining. There was darkness over the earth for three hours. The veil in the temple between the holy place and the most holy place was torn from top to bottom. The centurion who was in command of the soldiers made the great confession. He said, "*Certainly this was a righteous man.*"

Luk 23:50 And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just:

Luk 23:51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.

Luk 23:52 This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

Luk 23:53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

Jesus once said that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a

to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Joseph of Arimathea was one rich man who loved Christ more than his own riches. Joseph went to Pilate and begged that the body be given to him. He wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in a sepulchre where no man had ever been buried.

Luk 23:54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

Luk 23:55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

Luk 23:56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

The women who had been following him as he moved toward the cross had stood afar off while Jesus was being taken from the cross. When they saw that Jesus had been laid in the tomb and they saw where he had been laid, they prepared to honor him as best they could. They obtained spices and ointment and caused his body to have a sweet odor.

The women then rested on the Sabbath as God had commanded.

Chapter 24

Luk 24:1 Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

Luk 24:2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

Luk 24:3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

As we concluded the twenty-third chapter of Luke, we found that the women who loved the Lord had brought spices and ointment to honor him. They could not embalm him. They could make the body a bit more presentable. They were doing what they could. That is what the Lord expects from each of us.

Jesus had died at noon on Friday. As the women came to the grave, it was Sunday early in the morning. They had rested on the Sabbath day as the law of Moses commanded.

Luk 24:4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

Much to their surprise, they found that the stone which had been placed before the opening of the tomb had been rolled away. When they entered into the tomb they discovered the body of Christ was missing. This left them wondering just what had

happened. Had someone stolen the body? Was Jesus not really dead, but only badly wounded? Both of these things have been suggested by non-believers through the centuries from then until now. Even as they stood there in deep thought, two men stood beside them in shining garments. It is clear that the two only had the appearance of men. They were actually angels of God.

Luk 24:5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

Luk 24:6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

Luk 24:7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

Luk 24:8 And they remembered his words,

The women were fearful and bowed down before the angels. It was not long before they discovered the answer to the mysteries they were seeing. The angels announced that they ought not to be seeking the living among the dead. Jesus was alive and not dead. The angels reminded the women of the words of Jesus in which he had predicted that he would be delivered into the hands of sinful men and would be killed by them. He had also added that on the third day he would rise again. Then the women remembered the Lord had said these

things. Jesus had truly been dead, but he was just as truly alive again!

Luk 24:9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

Luk 24:10 It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

Luk 24:11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

They immediately left the sepulchre and told the eleven apostles, and the others who mourned Christ, what they had seen. We are now told the names of the women. They were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some others. Those whom they told had difficulty believing them. Their words seemed too amazing to be true.

Luk 24:12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

In spite of their doubt Peter decided to go to the tomb. When he arrived, he stooped down and peered inside. The impulsive Peter had outrun his companions. What he saw caused him to give more credit to the report of the women. The linen

graveclothes were laid aside as if they were no longer needed. This may have been a turning point in the mind of Peter. He had denied his Lord three times within a short period of time just before the crucifixion. He had apparently lost faith when he saw Christ allow the soldiers to come and take him captive. After all Peter had been told to put up his sword and make no resistance. Now he could begin to understand the reason for Christ's behavior. The Lord had known all the time that he would not remain in the grave. He knew he would be raised from the dead. That had happened!

Luk 24:13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.

Luk 24:14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

Peter was not the last one who was to be astonished. Two of the disciples were walking along toward the village of Emmaus which was just a short distance from Jerusalem. As they talked together about the things which had happened to Jesus the Lord himself drew near and walked along with them. For some reason they were not able to recognize him.

Luk 24:15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

Luk 24:16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

Luk 24:17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

Luk 24:18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

Luk 24:19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

Luk 24:20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

Luk 24:21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

Luk 24:22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;

Luk 24:23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

Luk 24:24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they

saw not.

Luk 24:25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

Luk 24:26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

Luk 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

We are told that the eyes of the two men were holden so they could not recognize Jesus. Later their eyes would be opened and they would know it was Jesus with whom they had been walking and talking.

He asked them what strange things they were talking about. One of them, whose name was Cleopas, asked him if he was a complete stranger to the area. Everyone in Jerusalem had heard about the things they were discussing.

Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet and had done many miracles and taught mightily from the truths of God, had been taken by the chief priests and the rulers of the nation. They had condemned him to death and had carried out the sentence by crucifying him. The disciples had hoped that this Jesus would be the one who would redeem Israel. Their hopes had been dashed when Christ was murdered on the cross. It had been three days since his death and burial.

But there had been a great surprise. They related to Christ how some of the women had gone to the

grave and found the body missing. They had spread a report that angels had appeared and told them the Lord was still alive. That had not been the end of it. Some of the disciples had gone to the grave to check out the story of the women. They had found it just as the women reported. The body was not there. What did all of this mean? Did they dare to hope the impossible had happened. Had Jesus really risen from the dead? Was he alive again? If so where was he?

Jesus spoke very bluntly to them. He said they were fools and slow of heart to believe all the prophets had spoken. How was it that they did not realize Christ must suffer the things the prophets had predicted and must enter into his time of glory? Then Jesus began with Moses and reminded them of the predictions made by all of the prophets concerning him.

Luk 24:28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

Luk 24:29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

As they came near to Emmaus, Jesus acted as if he was about to go on further. They called upon him to remain with them overnight.

The day was almost finished and they desired that he spend the night with them. They still did not know to whom they were speaking. He agreed to spend some time with them.

Luk 24:30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

Luk 24:31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

Luk 24:32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

As they sat together at an evening meal, Jesus took some bread. He blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. Then they realized who it was that had taught them so wisely from Moses and the prophets. It was the Lord himself. Surely they must have hoped that he would stay with them longer. He did not stay. As soon as he had made himself known to them, he vanished out of their sight. There were many others who must see him and also become witnesses that he who had been dead was now alive.

A question was asked by the group. They said, *“Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”*

These were not the last to have their hearts burn when Jesus talked with them. Multiplied thousands have had similar experiences since that time. Jesus has not spoken to men in person during all these years. But he has spoken through the inspired

apostles in the pages of the New Testament. Many have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ preached. As the truth of the gospel was presented to them many have had responsive hearts. This has resulted in the salvation of those who allowed the Word of God to soften and enter their hearts. They have begun on the road to heaven. Others have allowed their hearts to harden and prevent the truth from entering. They are traveling the pathway to eternal suffering. My friends, when the Lord speaks to you through the words of the New Testament, and your heart burns, open the door and let him in. Believe in his resurrection and his authority. Follow him to heaven.

Luk 24:33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

Luk 24:34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

Luk 24:35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

The two men then returned to Jerusalem. They found the apostles gathered there, along with many others. They reported their experiences to the apostles and told them they were certain the Lord had risen from the dead.

The witnesses were beginning to pile up. First there were the angels who spoke to the women in

the tomb. Then Peter found the graveclothes laying neatly folded as if there was no further need for them. Now these two men claimed to have seen and talked with Christ face to face. It was becoming more and more convincing, even to those who had not seen him.

Luk 24:36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

Luk 24:37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

Luk 24:38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

Luk 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

Luk 24:40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.

The list of witnesses was not yet complete. While the two men were telling the apostles what they had seen, Jesus appeared in the midst of them and said, "*Peace be unto you.*" The Bible uses three ways of telling us just how surprised the apostles were. It says they were affrighted. It says they were terrified. It says they supposed they must be seeing a spirit.

Jesus continued to speak to them. He asked them

why they were troubled? and why did thoughts arise within their hearts? If they thought he was only a spirit there was a way they could investigate it. He invited them to behold his hands and his feet. Then they could know it was truly Jesus. The hands and the feet of Jesus would have still shown the punctures from the nails which held him to the cross. No, Jesus was not just a spirit. His spirit had departed from his body at the time of his death on the cross; but now the spirit had entered again into that body and given it life.

Luk 24:41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

Luk 24:42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

Luk 24:43 And he took it, and did eat before them.

They were still having trouble believing. Jesus asked them if they had anything to eat. They gave him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. He ate the fish and the honeycomb before them. This was enough to convince them it was not a spirit. Spirits do not eat and drink. His body had been resurrected. They could no longer deny the good news.

Luk 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of

Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Luk 24:45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

Luk 24:46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

Luk 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luk 24:48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

Luk 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Just as he had done before in talking with the two men on the road to Emmaus, Jesus went back to the prophets to prove that what was taking place was not unexpected.

In fact, there were three lines of evidence from the Old Testament. All three of them pointed to him as the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. The first of the three was the law of Moses. There were many types of Christ included in the law. Among them was the sacrificing of lambs. Every morning and every evening the priests were commanded to take the life of a lamb for the sins of the people. God knew his Son would be offered on the cross. Also Abraham was told to sacrifice his

son Isaac to prove his faith in the God of heaven. This was a type of the sacrifice God himself made as his Son died. The law pointed to the death and resurrection of Christ.

The second line is found in the prophets. All of the Old Testament prophets looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah, in particular is called the Messianic prophet. If you doubt that the prophets predicted the death of Jesus you need to carefully and prayerfully read the fifty-third chapter of the book of Isaiah. In that chapter Jesus is typified as a lamb that is led to the slaughter. As the lamb is dumb before the shearer, Jesus would neither defend himself nor fight against his murderers.

The third line of evidence in the Old Testament comes from the Psalms. In the eighth psalm David spoke of the kings of the earth rising up in rebellion against the Son of God. The time would come when the tables would be turned and the kings of the earth would find it necessary to kiss the Son lest he be angry with them. If not before the time of the final judgment, then certainly at that time, the mightiest and most powerful men of all time will beg for mercy at the hands of the one who died and rose again.

Now it was necessary that another prediction should be fulfilled. The gospel must be taught to all the world. Repentance and remission of sins must be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. The apostles had the privilege of witnessing the death of Christ. They had also seen him after he was resurrected. They were to tell whoever would listen, in that day and forevermore, that the Son

of God died and had risen again. However, they were not to begin this task until they received special power from on high. God made a promise that they would not be left to themselves. They were to wait in Jerusalem until they were certain this help had come.

Luk 24:50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

Luk 24:51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

Luk 24:52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

Luk 24:53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Jesus then led the disciples out to the Mount of Olives where he blessed them and was carried up to heaven and disappeared in the clouds. They worshipped him and returned to the temple praising and blessing God.

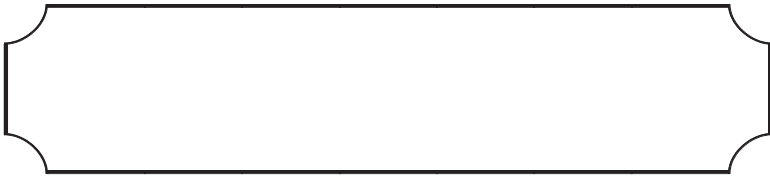
It will be helpful to the student of the Bible to move directly from this last chapter of the book of Luke to the first chapter of the book of Acts. Luke was almost certainly the writer of Acts. In that first chapter we find the apostles waiting just as Christ had commanded them and ready to receive the power he had promised. That power was given to them through the Holy Spirit, after which Peter preached the sermon on the day of Pentecost when he used the keys Christ had given him to open the

door of the Kingdom of Heaven. The apostles then moved out into the world to preach the gospel to every creature.

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**The Book Of
JOHN**

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The Author of the Book:

The author of this account of the gospel of Christ was the apostle John. There are some who are sceptical, but most are agreed with this statement.

That the writer was a Jew is evident from the quotes made from the Old Testament. His opening statement is also very similar to Genesis 1:1. He makes application of Old Testament prophecies and feasts.

He claims to have been an eyewitness of Christ. He was the disciple who leaned on Jesus breast, as recorded in John 13:23-25.

The Date of Writing:

There is agreement that this book was written later than the accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Those who assembled the books of the New Testament in the order we have them believed it was the last of the four. The destruction of Jerusalem had taken place some time before the author wrote this work. I am supposing that the book was written about 95 A.D.

Nature and Purpose of the Book:

The stated purpose of the book is to cause belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Joh 20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

Joh 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

In accomplishing this purpose, the author loved to use various figures of speech to present the Son of God. He was the Bread, the Light, the Truth, the Vine, the Shepherd, etc.

While Luke filled his account with parables. There are few if any parables in John's account. The miracles which are included are, except for two, only found in this account.

A Brief Outline of the Book:

- I. The Glory of the Son of God.
- II. The incarnation and reception of Christ.
- III. The witness of Jesus Works and Words.
- IV. The upper room events.
- V. The events of the last week.

Chapter 1

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Let us begin now with the first chapter of John's account of the gospel. Did you notice that I did not say John's gospel. There are not four gospels. There is only one gospel. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John simply give us different views of the same gospel.

There are three books of the Bible that have similar beginnings. This book of John is one of them. The other two are Genesis and 1 John. Jesus Christ, as the Word, is eternal. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Long before he became the Son of God by being born of the Holy Spirit through Mary, Jesus existed as the Word. When the prophecy was made in Isaiah, it was said that his name was to be Immanuel, or God with us. At one point Jesus said, *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.* Jesus Christ was God with us. Just as you and I are human. Jesus Christ was God, just as the Father and the Holy Spirit are both God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

John proceeded to tell us that all things were

made by Jesus Christ, and that not anything was made without him. The book of Genesis tells us, “*And God said, Let there be light.*” When God spoke light into existence, Jesus Christ was there.

Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Joh 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

A sad note creeps into John’s record. Although Jesus came into the world as light and life. The world did not recognize the great gift God had given to men. Rather than accepting the Son of God and obeying his teachings, men became jealous of him and nailed him to a cross on the hill of Calvary.

In verse three, John spoke of another John. The writer of this account of the gospel is John the apostle. John the apostle now introduces us to John the baptist. John the apostle says he was a man sent from God to bear witness of the light. John was not the light of the world. He was only the forerunner of the Christ. He came to introduce him.

John the apostle pointed out two great classes of men. There were those who loved the darkness. There were those who loved the light. Those who loved the darkness would not receive the Christ as the Word of God. Those who loved the light found that light, in Christ. And to them he gave the power to become children of God.

Joh 1:6 There was a man sent from God,

whose name was John.

We have two persons named John involved here. John the apostle is the author of this account of the gospel. At this point John the apostle is ready to discuss John the baptist, who came to the region of the Jordan River to bear witness of Jesus Christ, the Saviour.

Joh 1:7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

John the apostle tells us that John the baptist came as a witness of the Light of the world. Without Christ men live in darkness. They are incapable of seeing through that darkness, and thus stumble and fall over and over again. Without the spiritual light which Jesus provides, all men would find someday that they had walked straight into hell. Hell may be a place where the fire is not quenched. But, it is also a place of absolute spiritual darkness. Those who go there will be eternally separated from the one who is light, and in whom is no darkness.

Joh 1:8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

John the baptist was not the light. He was only the man God gave the privilege of introducing, or bearing witness of the Light.

I would like to add a sideline here dealing with the the fact that John the baptist is called a witness

of Jesus Christ. If the reader will turn to the book of Revelation he will find that John the apostle, the same John who wrote this account, spoke of two witnesses. There are several explanations as to the identity of the two witnesses to which John referred.

One possibility is that the two witnesses are the Old Testament and the New Testament. One can not argue that this is a false statement. The law given on Mount Sinai contains a large number of types that foreshadow the antitypes demonstrated in the life and teachings of Christ. The New Testament presents Christ as the Only Begotten Son of God. It most certainly gives witness to the supernatural knowledge and power possessed by the Son of man. Let us not overlook the truths which can be learned by examining these relationships.

A second possibility is that the two witnesses were individuals. Moses was the major representative of the law, and Elijah stood high in the list of prophets. At one time Jesus took Peter, James and John to the top of the Mount of Transfiguration. Christ was transformed before their eyes. His face and His clothing became radiant and glorious. Then both Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ. Peter suggested that three tabernacles be built, one for each of the three persons. The voice of God then spoke to them saying, *This is my Beloved Son. Hear ye Him!* The three apostles fell on their faces and when they looked again, both Elijah and Moses had vanished and Christ was telling them not to be afraid. In a most vivid lesson, the apostles were taught that both Moses and Elijah were presented to the world to prepare men for the coming of the

Word of God who is the Light of the World.

We are informed that John the baptist came in the spirit of Elijah. We are also told that a Prophet would come who would be “like unto Moses.” This could mean that the two witnesses were Elijah and Christ. By the way, both of these were caught up into heaven.

A third possibility is that all of these truths can be used to reinforce one another. The law and the prophets witnessed concerning the coming Christ. The Old Testament told of Christ’s coming. The New Testament reveals the fact that He did come. John the baptist came in the “spirit of Elijah.” Jesus came as the prophet “like unto Moses.”

The reader is urged to investigate this line of thought in the privacy of his or her own studies. There is much more here than meets the eye at first glance.

Joh 1:9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Even though Jesus came into the world and His teaching and His life have offered the True Light that Light can only penetrate open minds and hearts. It is there for every man, but the majority refuse to open the shutters.

There are many who have portrayed themselves as great lights. There are many who have been deceived and have followed these candles. Only when men recognize the “Sun of Righteousness” and follow Him will they find their way home and be invited to enter into the joys of heaven.

Joh 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

It is a most shocking fact that all things were made by Him, and yet the very men who were a part of His creative power stopped their ears and hardened their hearts when He tried to lift them out of sin and the second death.

Joh 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Jesus was a Jew. He came through the lineage of Abraham. He was a descendant of King David. The Jews were taught for centuries that a Great Prophet would come from their midst. When He did come, the leaders of the Jews became envious and rejected Him. They went so far as to cause His murder at Calvary. What a tragic mistake!

Joh 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

He knew this fate awaited Him even before He appeared on earth. This did not turn Him back. Those who would receive his Word were offered the power to become the children of the Great Heavenly Father. God has a family on earth. It is a spiritual family, made up of those who have received the seed which has been planted in their hearts. They

hear and obey the voice of the only Begotten Son. They live, love and teach righteousness.

Joh 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John points out that this is not the kind of birth men undergo physically as they enter this world. It is not a birth which depends upon a man and a woman deciding to bear a child. It is not a matter of fleshly parents and grandparents. It is a birth which takes place because men decide to obey the will of the Father in heaven.

Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Joh 1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

Jesus Christ was the Word of God become flesh. The Word of God actually was born to Mary and took upon himself the form of a man. Through him, we are able to see the glory of God. It is a glory full of grace and of truth. When the temple and the tabernacle of God were completed, God showed his approval by allowing his glory to fill both of them. In a sense, Jesus Christ is the temple of God. Every man who is baptized into Christ becomes a

part of God's temple. When that happens, the glory of God shines through that man or woman. As the light of the world, Jesus sheds God's glory. As the light of the world, we also shed God's glory, if we have been united with Christ.

Joh 1:16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

Joh 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Jesus was full of grace because it was through him God would offer far more to men than they deserved. No man deserves heaven. All have sinned. Yet Jesus offers salvation and redemption from sin. Jesus is also the truth. Later in this same book, he will say, "*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.*"

Joh 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Joh 1:19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

Joh 1:20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

Joh 1:21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

Joh 1:22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them

that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

Joh 1:23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

Joh 1:24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

Joh 1:25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

Joh 1:26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

Verse eighteen says, No man has seen God at any time. The Only Begotten of the Father, he hath declared him. Our fleshly eyes are incapable of seeing God. God is a Spirit. The closest we can come is to see the Son. Hebrews informs us that Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. To see God, the best we can do is to look closely at his Only Begotten Son. By looking at Jesus, we may see what God intended for us to be when we were brought into the world in his image.

Joh 1:27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

Joh 1:28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

When John the baptist began to preach concerning Jesus, the people sent to ask him if

he was the Messiah who had been promised. He replied that he was not. He was only one who was preparing the way for the Messiah. John the baptist said he was not worthy to loosen the latches of the shoes of the Christ.

He indicated one of the great differences between Christ and himself. He was baptizing men in water. When the Messiah came, he would baptize men in fire and in the Holy Spirit. The wicked would be baptized with the fires of hell. The righteous would be baptized into Christ where the Spirit of God dwells.

Joh 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Joh 1:30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

Joh 1:31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

Joh 1:32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

Joh 1:33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

Joh 1:34 And I saw, and bare record that

this is the Son of God.

As John was speaking one day, Jesus came toward him. John pointed Christ out as the *Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world*. John said he had been informed that the one upon whom the Spirit of God descended and remained was the Messiah. He then said he had seen this occur and therefore he knew Jesus was the one about whom the prophets had spoken.

John had been baptizing for some time before Jesus arrived. Among those whom he had baptized were two who were later to become apostles. As Jesus approached them, John said, Behold, the Lamb of God. The two disciples immediately began to follow Jesus.

Joh 1:35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

Joh 1:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

Joh 1:37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

Joh 1:38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

Joh 1:39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

As Jesus saw them following him, he turned and said to them, "*What seek ye?*" They replied with a question of their own. Master, Where dwellest thou? It was clear that they wished to follow him wherever he decided to go. His answer to them was very simple. He said, "*Come and see.*" They would soon learn that the Son of man was not like the foxes of the field and the birds of the air. They had holes in the ground and nests in the trees. He had no place to lay his head. If they were to follow him, they would have to sacrifice much.

Joh 1:40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

Joh 1:41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

Joh 1:42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

Joh 1:43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

Joh 1:44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

One of the two was Andrew. Andrew was the brother of Simon Peter who became one of the three who were closest to the Lord. Andrew went immediately to find his brother Simon Peter and tell

him about finding the Messiah. When he brought him to Jesus, the Lord changed his name. He had been called Simon. Now he was to be known as Cephas. The name Cephas meant, a stone. The name Peter also means a stone. Yes, Peter would be like a stone. But, even now we cannot think about the durability of a stone without also thinking about the shameful denial when Peter cursed and said he had never known the Lord.

There is something very important in these verses which we must not overlook. Not much is said later about Andrew. Much of the later records tell of Peter's importance among the band of the apostles. Yet, Andrew brought Peter to the Lord. Andrew was apparently satisfied to sit in the background and take pleasure in the prominence of his better known brother. We would do well to follow the example of Andrew. God can do wonders with humble men.

I have heard wonderful reports of what happened in supposedly unsuccessful gospel meetings. The preacher would be broken hearted that only a handful of responses occurred. Then thirty years later, we find that among that handful of responses was a person who went on to bring thousands into the fold of Christ. Let us offer what we have. God will take our cup of cold water and turn it into a river of life.

We ought to notice also that both Peter and John the apostle had met Jesus and decided to follow him at this very early time. Some have wondered how it was that Jesus came upon Peter and John at their work as fishermen and found them ready

to leave their nets and follow him. It was not quite the way it looked. They had already been convinced Jesus was the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, and that he was the Messiah whom the prophets had foretold. It was not at all surprising that they were ready to go with him when he called.

Joh 1:45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Jesus then went from the area of the Jordan River to Galilee in the north of Palestine. There he found Philip and asked Philip follow him. Philip was from the same city on the shore of the Sea of Galilee as Peter and Andrew. Philip went to find his friend Nathaniel. He told Nathaniel they had found the one about whom Moses and the prophets had written. He was from Nazareth and was the son of Joseph.

Joh 1:46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Joh 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

Joh 1:48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Nathaniel was amazed that the Messiah would come out of a city with the reputation which Nazareth had. But Philip insisted that he come and see the Lord. It is possible for a good man to come out of a poor environment. God gave us the power to choose the good over the evil.

Jesus was pleased when he saw Nathaniel coming to him. He said, "*Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.*" Jesus could read the hearts of men, even before he saw their actions. He knew this was a man of very high character. Nathaniel was shocked. How did Jesus know so much about him. Jesus told Nathaniel that he knew him even before Philip had called him from under the fig tree.

Joh 1:49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

Joh 1:50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee

under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

Joh 1:51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

Nathaniel knew this was no ordinary man. This was the Son of God. This was the promised King of Israel.

What a simple thing it was to Jesus to know Nathaniel before he met him in person. He told Nathaniel that if he believed because of such a simple thing as he had seen and heard, he was in for great surprises. Jesus would do far more wonderful things than that which Nathaniel had just experienced.

Some day Nathaniel would see the very heavens opened. He would see angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. Did Nathaniel see these sights during his natural lifetime? It is possible that Jesus was referring to the time of his ascension into heaven from the Mount of Olives. An angel asked the apostles why they stood gazing into heaven. Jesus would back in like manner to that with which he left. I believe, however that Jesus was talking about the time when he would return in judgment with ten thousands of his angels.

Let us be ready when he comes.

Chapter 2

Our study this time will be the second chapter of John's account of the gospel of Christ. It records the first miracle of Jesus. These were glorious days in the history of man. Jesus Christ proved his divine Sonship by demonstrating power over the natural world, the demonic world and the angelic world. There were many who were compelled to admit that this was more than a mere man. This was the Son of the Living God.

In our study of chapter one of this book, we found Jesus choosing several of his disciples. He had come to the place where John the baptist was immersing people in the Jordan River. There he was introduced by John the baptist as the one who would baptize in fire and in the Holy Spirit. John also described him as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip and Nathaniel were all called to follow him as he went about to seek and save the lost.

Joh 2:1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

Joh 2:2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

After choosing these first disciples, Jesus went to the village of Cana in the province of Galilee. This was near Bethsaida, the home of several of the apostles. This was not too far from Nazareth where Jesus was brought up. A wedding was being

celebrated at Cana. We do not know the names of the bride or groom. We do know it was a very important time in the life of Jesus. It was at this wedding feast that he performed his first miracle.

Joh 2:3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

Jesus mother was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding feast. I think we can draw an important conclusion from the fact that Jesus attended this feast. A wedding feast is a time of rejoicing. Jesus and his disciples did not go around with sad faces and gloomy minds. They must have been in a happy mood and enjoying the company of others who were also happy. Christians today do not have to be dismal in spirit. We should be the happiest people on earth.

Another conclusion which may be drawn from Jesus presence at the wedding feast is that marriage is approved of God. There are some who believe Paul taught that it is better for men and women not to marry. But Paul was speaking of a particular time when the burden on Christians was so great that a family would have been very difficult to care for. The Bible teaches that marriage is honorable and the marriage bed is pure and undefiled. Man was told in the beginning to multiply and replenish the earth. God's way of making that possible is through marriage.

It was soon discovered that there was not enough wine for the guests at the feast. Jesus mother came

to him and told him about the shortage. This, I think, tells us that Jesus mother knew he had extraordinary powers. There are many things the Bible does not tell us. Jesus may have already done things which his mother realized could only have been done with the help of God. It is possible that she only realized there was a shortage and was appealing to her son to do something about it. But I think she knew he could do something about it.

Joh 2:4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

Jesus reply to his mother was, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is *not yet come.*” What hour was he talking about? There were a number of times when Jesus indicated that the time was not yet ripe for certain things to happen. He seems to have known just how fast things must develop in order for his purpose on earth to be fulfilled. When his mother came to him expecting him to use his divine power, he may have felt she was trying to move his work along faster than was wise.

Joh 2:5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

Nevertheless, his mother was not stopped by his statement. She could have taken it as a rebuke. He had not called her mother. He had used the word

“woman” as if she were no more important to him than any other woman at the feast. Rather than being offended by what her son had said, she turned to the servants and directed them to do whatever Jesus told them to do. She had perfect confidence that Jesus would attend to the problem.

Joh 2:6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

There were six large waterpots, made of stone, standing nearby. Each of them was large enough to hold two or three firkins of water. When tourists are taken to the village of Cana today, they are able to see waterpots almost exactly like those that were there at the time of the wedding feast. A firkin was about seven gallons. The six waterpots would then have been able to hold a little over forty gallons of water.

Joh 2:7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

Jesus told the servants to fill all six of the waterpots all the way to the brim with water. They must have respected either Mary, or Jesus, or perhaps both of them. They did not hesitate to do as Jesus directed them.

Joh 2:8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

As soon as they had filled all six of the waterpots, Jesus told them to draw out from them and bear what they drew out to the governor of the feast. They did as he asked.

Joh 2:9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

When the governor of the feast had tasted what had been brought to him from the waterpots, he knew it was no longer water. It was wine. He wondered where the wine had come from. He, no doubt, knew there were none close enough to have provided them a supply so quickly. Although he did not know the source of the wine. The servants who had brought it to him did know.

Joh 2:10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

Joh 2:11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

The governor of the wedding feast quickly called for the bridegroom who had made provisions for the wedding. He wanted to know why things had turned out the way they had. The wine which had

been provided before had not been of the same quality as this which they now had before them. That was not the normal way in which a bridegroom would care for his guests at a wedding. The normal procedure would be to bring out the very best of everything he possessed. Then if the best ran low, that which was of poorer quality would be served. The answer was, of course, that the better quality wine had been made by Jesus as he turned water into wine.

This should not be thought impossible. God turns water into grape juice every year when the grapes take water from the air and from the soil and blend it with other ingredients to make the juicy clusters of grapes. Jesus simply did it by a different route.

Was this an alcoholic drink that Jesus made. I do not think this can be proved. The Greek word which is translated into our English word “wine” is sometimes applied to the juice while it is still in the grape and on the vine. This miracle is not justification for social drinking. Christians ought to stay away from intoxicating beverages.

Joh 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

After this miracle was completed, Jesus went down to Capernaum. Capernaum was a small town on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Peter’s mother-

in-law lived at Capernaum. Jesus visited this town many times during the course of his ministry. There are two places the Lord seemed to return to often. One was Capernaum. The other was Bethany, where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived.

Joh 2:13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

After staying at Capernaum for several days, Jesus traveled on to the city of Jerusalem. There was more work to do. The Passover feast was near and Jesus wished to be in Jerusalem for that event.

Joh 2:14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

Joh 2:15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

Joh 2:16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

As soon as he arrived in Jerusalem, the Lord went to the temple. There he found much selling and buying going on. Merchants were selling oxen, sheep and doves. We might pass over these words without thinking too much about what was being sold. That would not be wise. The Jews who came to the temple were expected to offer sacrifices. These

were the types of animals which were offered. Many of the people who came to the feast came from quite large distances. It was easier to bring money with them and buy the animals at Jerusalem than it was to bring them for miles.

Have you ever heard of the word “scalper?” When tickets run low at very important entertainment events in our day, scalpers will buy up a supply of tickets and then sell them for many times what they originally sold for. There is reason to believe these merchants at the temple were doing the same thing with the animals they were selling for the people to offer as sacrifices.

In addition to what I have just mentioned. They could have done their selling and buying out in the city, and not in the very courts of the temple. Jesus found these sellers trading within the temple itself. He then took a scourge made of small cords and drove the animals out of the temple area. He followed that by turning the tables of the merchants upside down. He accused them of making God’s house a house of merchandise rather than a house of worship.

Let us be very careful my friends. The church of Jesus Christ is God’s temple today. If we are found guilty of making it a place of profiteering rather than a place where we commune with God, we may also face the anger of both the Father and the Son.

Joh 2:17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath

eaten me up.

Joh 2:18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

Joh 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

After Jesus had driven the money changers out of the temple, his disciples remembered the scripture in Psalm 69:9 what speaks of the zeal of God's house eating someone up.

The Jews were extremely unhappy about Christ doing what he had done. After all, they had been in charge of the activities of the temple area. This was an unbelievable thing Jesus had done. He had just taken over! They were ready to investigate Jesus right to act as he had. Therefore, they asked him to show them a sign in order that they might know he had authority from God to interfere with the activities going on in the temple.

Jesus was quick and confident in his answer to them. He had such power over the use of the temple that if it were to have been destroyed, he could raise it up again in three days

Joh 2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

Joh 2:21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

Joh 2:22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed

the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Joh 2:23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

Joh 2:24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

Joh 2:25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

A quick look at the last three verses of this second chapter of John may leave the reader wondering about the connection between these and previous verses. The connection is there, even if it may not be easily discerned.

It helps to remember that these happenings occurred very early in Jesus' ministry. Some of those who observed His wondrous deeds and His great wisdom were beginning to spread the word to others. Sometimes these comments were in His support. Other times they were made because of jealousy or fear.

We are told the He did not commit Himself to the people because He knew what was in man. Jesus knew that if He began at this point to present Himself as the Son of God and Saviour of this world, the reactions of both his friends and His enemies would move faster than He desired. His friends would tell of His great glory and power. Then His enemies would attack Him before He had

presented all of the truth which He had come to reveal.

Any school teacher knows basic material must be learned before going on to that which is more complicated. Jesus was the Master Teacher. He needed time to present the milk of the gospel before moving on to the strong meat. It would require a little over three years before He could say, "*It is finished!*"

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Chapter 3

Joh 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

Joh 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Joh 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Joh 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Joh 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Every serious student of the Bible is familiar with the visit Nicodemus made to the Lord Jesus Christ to discuss spiritual matters with him. That does not keep us from looking at it one more time. There is not a single chapter in the Bible which cannot be made more precious by studying it over

and over. The old old story can be told endlessly and still be fresh and rewarding.

It was not easy to be a friend to Jesus during his days upon this earth. John the baptist was beheaded. Stephen was stoned to death. Peter was fearful that if he admitted he was a friend to the Lord, he also might be crucified with him. The pressure was very great within the rulers of the Jews. Most of those men of influence and prestige were enraged at the Christ for claiming to be the Son of God. Any man among them who was found to be friendly with the cause of Jesus would have been cut off from among them and might even have endangered his life.

And so, Nicodemus, who was a ruler of the Jews, waited until it was dark before he came to the Lord to talk with him. There are other possible explanations as to why Nicodemus came by night. However, I think the case is very clear. Nicodemus was fearful that he might be seen by his companions if he had approached Christ while it was yet daylight.

Nicodemus knew of the many wonderful things which Jesus was doing and teaching. Being a highly spiritual man, he desired with all his heart to find out as much as he could from this new teacher who claimed to be God's own Son. I know something of Nicodemus' feelings. There are some men whom I would like to have met and had the opportunity to talk with. When I was a boy, I was very interested in science. Albert Einstein was still alive. I thought it would be a real privilege to meet and talk with

him. Hank Greenberg hit fifty-eight home runs for the Detroit Tigers. I would have enjoyed having a few minutes alone with Greenberg.

As my life has centered more in the activities of the church, I am sorry that I did not get to meet T.B. Larimore. I am afraid that Burton Coffman will pass on before I have the opportunity to meet him in person. People would travel many miles to hear the gentle spirited scholar, Larimore. He was loved by a multitude. Burton Coffman has written commentary on the entire Bible. It is thorough and it is usually accurate. I would like to have a little time with him.

But, far more glorious would be to sit with Jesus Christ himself and discuss spiritual things with him. That was the blessing which Nicodemus was seeking out when he waited until dark so that he could hear the words of truth which fell from the lips of the Saviour.

Nicodemus addressed Jesus as Rabbi. A Rabbi was a Jewish teacher of the law. Here was a confession on Nicodemus part, even before the conversation began that he recognized the Lord as a qualified teacher. He then made it extremely clear by telling Jesus he knew he must be a teacher come from God. No man could do the miracles Jesus was doing unless God was with him. Since Jesus was a very special teacher from God, Nicodemus wanted to hear what Jesus had to say about spiritual things.

Jesus replied that in order to see, or appreciate the kingdom of God, it was necessary to be born

again. Nicodemus would have to undergo another birth if he expected to come to an understanding of the things he was seeking.

Nicodemus was puzzled. He had failed to move with Jesus into the realm of the spiritual. When Jesus said a man must be born again, Nicodemus felt it would be impossible for any person to reenter his mother's womb and be reborn. Much of the entire book of John is similar to this particular place. John sought constantly to lift his readers from the fleshly realm to that of the spirit. This is an early example of his efforts.

When Nicodemus objected that a man could certainly not be reborn physically, Jesus told him it would be necessary to be born of water and of the Spirit before he could enter into the Kingdom of God. Jesus was leading Nicodemus very steadily to the things about which the man had expressed interest. To understand spiritual things it was necessary to rise above the fleshly and catch a vision of that which is spiritual. No man could appreciate the answers to Nicodemus questions without being born of water and the Spirit.

To be born of water is not the natural birth. The amniotic fluid which surrounds the baby in its mother's womb is not water. It is a special liquid for a special purpose. The birth of water and of the Spirit consists of burying the body in water and being united with the body of Jesus Christ in the church, for that is where the Spirit of God is to be received.

Joh 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth,

and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Jesus told Nicodemus not to be shocked that this birth of the Spirit was different from the natural birth. It is an invisible change. One can see the person born of the water of baptism. He cannot see the change which occurs in the spirit of man. That change is like the wind which comes and goes, but cannot be seen.

Nicodemus was amazed. How could such things be?

Joh 3:9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

Joh 3:10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Joh 3:11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

Joh 3:12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

Jesus reproached John. Was he a great ruler and master teacher of the Jews and still had difficulty understanding the nature of the second birth? How could Jesus go on to discuss other spiritual matters if Nicodemus could not even understand the simplest beginnings of that which is spiritual?

The Lord made it clear that He knew exactly

what He was talking about. The “we” used here could apply to those who believed on Jesus, or it could be a way of speaking about Himself. Whichever it was, Jesus stood ready to speak to him of heavenly things if Nicodemus was ready to hear them.

Joh 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

The only man who had ever been in heaven and then came down from heaven to tell of what he had seen as a part of the Divine Godhead was Christ. He called Himself the Son of man because He had allowed Himself to be born of a woman. He could speak with absolute authority. Nicodemus had come to the right one to hear about spiritual truth.

Joh 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

Joh 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Jesus actually predicted His own death. When Moses placed the serpent on a pole where men who looked upon it could be healed of their leprosy, he had produced a type of the death of the Messiah

in order that those who believe on Him might be healed of sin and gain eternal life.

God had such concern for men that He gave His own Son to serve as a sacrifice that sinners might be made clean.

Joh 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Joh 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

The Father did not send the Son for the purpose of showing men how sinful they are and pronouncing the sentence of everlasting death to them. Jesus came that men might follow Him and escape that condemnation.

Joh 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Joh 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

Joh 3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

It is not the fault of God that men are condemned.

The condemnation comes about because men love the darkness of the world more than they love the light. Since they have heaped guilt upon their own heads, they choose not to look into the mirror of God and be exposed.

A small child will do something it knows the parents do not approve. Then the child will sometimes hide someplace where it does not think the parents will find it. Many grown men and women are just as foolish. The child cannot successfully hide his misbehavior from parents who are much wiser than he is. Nor can grown men or women refuse to come to the light of Christ where their sin may be exposed.

The lover of righteousness searches for truth in order that the good which he has done may be evident. If that sort of person finds sin in himself through the light of God's Word, he will do his best to purify his soul.

Nicodemus needed to leave the darkness of this world and enter into the light of Christ. Evil men would not do that. Good men would abhor the darkness and leave it behind to walk in the light of the truth which Jesus was able to shed upon mankind.

This marks the end of Jesus conversation with Nicodemus. Through that conversation men and women of the centuries have learned of the vast difference between the material and the spiritual realm.

Joh 3:22 After these things came Jesus

and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

Joh 3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

Joh 3:24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

Joh 3:25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

Joh 3:26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

The conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus was finished. The scene changed from Galilee to Judea. There Jesus continued his teaching which resulted in more baptisms. It is explained in chapter four that Jesus did not baptize personally. His disciples baptized the converts which he made.

Since John was baptizing in the same general area, some came to John and informed him that many were coming to Jesus to be baptized by him. In fact, Jesus might even be baptizing more persons than John.

Joh 3:27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

Joh 3:28 Ye yourselves bear me witness,

that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

Joh 3:29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

If they expected John to become jealous, they were disappointed. John asked if they had not heard him say that the one about which he was bearing witness was greater than himself. He explained that he was only the friend of the Bridegroom. He was not the Bridegroom. It was not the usual case for a best man to grieve when the bridegroom received much attention. The best friend was there to see that he did receive just such attention. Rather than being jealous of Christ, John was full of joy.

Joh 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Joh 3:31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

John explained that the attention he was getting would fade. At the same time, the attention Jesus was drawing would continue to grow. He added that he had not come from heaven. John's wisdom had to be taught to him by the one who had come from heaven.

Joh 3:32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

John was greatly concerned that men were not accepting the wondrous truth which Jesus was revealing. Jesus had experienced that which He was teaching. John's responsibility was to cause others to turn to the Son of God.

Joh 3:33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

Joh 3:34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

Those who believe the testimony of Christ have placed their seal of approval upon the Word of God. They have accepted Jesus claim that the Father sent Him and provided Him the Spirit without measure. This means Jesus had access to all of the wisdom and power of the Godhead. All the wise men in history could put the entirety of their wisdom in one encyclopedia. This would be insignificant when compared with the truth which Christ was making available.

Christians are said to receive the "earnest of the Spirit." An earnest is a small sample of what is to come. Jesus had it all. No man can make such a claim.

Joh 3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and

hath given all things into his hand.

Joh 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Jesus was given the Spirit without measure because the Father loves both his Son and the world. He has done all that is possible to turn men from their sins to life eternal. Any man who would seek out that everlasting life must believe in the Son of God. Whosoever does not believe in him will not see life with God. What he will see is the wrath of God abiding upon him. Note that this last verse does not simply say he will feel the wrath of God. It says the wrath of God will **abide upon him**. That, my friends, is everlasting torment.

Chapter 4

Joh 4:1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

Joh 4:2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

Joh 4:3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

Joh 4:4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

Joh 4:5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Joh 4:6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

We are ready then to begin our study of the fourth chapter of John's account of the gospel of Christ.

The report had come to Jesus that John was baptizing many persons in the region of Judea. We are told that he departed from that area and made his way to the north to the province of Galilee. In order to reach Galilee, the most natural route was to go through the province of Samaria, which lies between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north of Canaan. As he moved along, he came to the village of Sychar. There, he stopped to rest at a well called Jacob's well. It was about noon and a woman of Samaria came to the well to draw water.

Joh 4:7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

Joh 4:8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

Joh 4:9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus asked the woman if she would draw him a drink of water from the well. The woman was very surprised. Here was a man asking a strange woman for a drink of water. In addition to that, the man was a Jew, and the Jews did not deal with the Samaritans.

Joh 4:10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Joh 4:11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Joh 4:12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Joh 4:13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall

thirst again:

Joh 4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

When she told Jesus of her surprise, he replied that if she knew about the gift of God, and knew who he, Jesus, was, she would be asking him for a drink of living water.

Again the woman was surprised. How could this man who had no bucket draw any water from a deep well such as the one beside them? Jesus did much the same for this woman that he had done for Nicodemus. He was making an effort to lift her thoughts from the physical to the spiritual. He informed her that if she were to drink of the water which he was able to offer, she would never thirst again. He added that anyone who drank from the water he could give would find that a well of water would spring forth from within that person. It would bring everlasting life.

Joh 4:15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

Joh 4:16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

Joh 4:17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

Joh 4:18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband:

in that saidst thou truly.

When the woman asked him to give her a drink of the living water so she would never have to come to the well to draw water again, Jesus told her to go and get her husband and bring him. He knew very well that she was living with a man who was not her husband, and that she had lived with one man after another. She said, "*I have no husband.*" Jesus told her she spoke the truth. She had had five husbands and the man she lived with was not her husband.

Joh 4:19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Joh 4:20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Joh 4:21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Joh 4:22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

Joh 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

Joh 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Since she could see Christ was a prophet, she decided to ask him about a controversy which existed between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Jews claimed men must worship at Jerusalem. The Samaritans denied that and said men must worship at a mountain in Samaria. Which of them was right?

Jesus answered that the time was coming when the location where men worshipped would not be the most important thing. It would be the nature and the spirit of the worship which would be important. God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.

What did Jesus mean by saying that men must worship God in spirit and in truth? I think the answer is not difficult to understand. Men may worship according to their own patterns of worship. Many will ignore the commandments and examples of the Holy Scriptures in order to worship in ways which please them. God has given very clear directions for worship. He tells us the day of the week to worship. That day is the first day of the week. He has presented five acts of worship which we are to do. He expects us to sing, to pray, to hear preaching, to give of our means, and to partake of the Lord's Supper. When we do these things we are worshipping in truth. However, it is possible to enter into each of these acts of worship, and do so without real sincerity and commitment. True worship follows the pattern God has laid out. It is also done with heartfelt enthusiasm and love for our Maker and Sustainer.

Jesus wanted this woman of Sychar to quit placing so much emphasis on the argument which raged between the Jews and the Samaritans, and to clean up her life in order that she might worship God in spirit and in truth.

Joh 4:25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

Joh 4:26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

The woman was convinced Jesus was a powerful prophet. It began to enter her mind that God had predicted the coming of a prophet like unto Moses. She had heard her elders say a Messiah was coming who would guide them to all truth. Jesus must have truly shocked her when he said, "*I that speak unto you am he.*"

Joh 4:27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

At this point, his disciples arrived on the scene. They were shocked to find the Lord speaking with a Samaritan woman. But, none of them dared to asked him what he thought he was accomplishing by having a conversation with the woman.

Joh 4:28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to

the men,

Joh 4:29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

Joh 4:30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

The woman then left her waterpot behind and hurried into the village to spread the word that she had spoken with a marvelous man who had been able to tell her things about her own life which he could only have known if he had special powers. Could it be this man was truly the Messiah whom he claimed to be? The people to whom she spoke became curious and came out of the city to hear and see Jesus.

Here was a woman who certainly was not of the highest morals. She had lived with six different men, and did not seem to have too much concern that the one whom she lived with at the time was not her husband at all. Yet, she became so excited over her conversation with the Lord that she began to spread the word to others. Let us not give up hope. The most surprising persons sometimes turn to the Lord.

Joh 4:31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

Joh 4:32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

Joh 4:33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

The disciples were worried that the Lord must be getting hungry. They pleaded with Him to stop long enough to take some nourishment. Jesus surprised them by telling them he had food they did not know about.

This shocked them. They had not seen anyone bring Him anything to eat. Surely they would have seen it had this been the case.

Joh 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Sometimes we become so involved in our activities we do not even become hungry at meal time. Jesus was attempting to tell his listeners nothing compares with the satisfaction of presenting the gospel to men.

Joh 4:35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

They need not wait for the wheat fields to ripen. There was another kind of harvest which could be taken right away. That harvest could be seen around them on every side. The souls were ripe. They needed immediate reaping.

Joh 4:36 And he that reapeth receiveth

wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

The one who reaped the harvest of souls which Jesus pointed out would gather something much more precious than heads of wheat. They would gather something more valuable than all that is in the world. If a man gained the whole world and lost his own soul, he would profit nothing.

Joh 4:37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

It is very often true that workers in fields do different tasks. One may sow the seed. Another who did not even know the one who did the sowing might take in the ripe harvest.

Joh 4:38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

Who were those others who had sown the seed that Jesus was at this telling his disciples stood ready for the reaping? They were those who had lived faithfully in years gone by and had proclaimed the Word of God to whatever degree it had been revealed to them.

Any humble gospel preacher who has baptised large numbers of persons will tell you the results would have been much less abundant if those who responded had not been taught before he ever

arrived on the scene.

For four thousand years God had been cultivating the harvest into which Christ was sending his disciples. They must not let the harvest go to waste.

Joh 4:39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

Joh 4:40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

Joh 4:41 And many more believed because of his own word;

Joh 4:42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

When the woman who had met Christ at the well in Samaria spread the word around that she had found a man who had powers which were greater than any person she had ever seen, those whom she told persuaded Jesus to remain in their territory for a time. Many became believers.

The topic changes now in the middle of this fantastic chapter.

Joh 4:43 Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

Joh 4:44 For Jesus himself testified, that a

prophet hath no honour in his own country.

Joh 4:45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

After two days Jesus left Samaria and went northward into Galilee. An interesting statement is made about him. The text says, "*For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honor in his own country.*" Apparently, Jesus felt that he would be heard better in Galilee than he would have been in the area of Jerusalem.

Joh 4:46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

Joh 4:47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

As the Lord came back into the city of Cana, where he had changed the water into wine, He was met by a nobleman whose son was very sick at Capernaum. The man had heard that Jesus was returning from Judea to Galilee. He begged Jesus to come down to Capernaum and heal his son who was at the very point of death.

Joh 4:48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

Joh 4:49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

Jesus reply to the man almost seems cruel. He said to him, *“Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.”* Of course, Jesus knew he would grant the man’s request to heal his son. But, Jesus wanted to sink a needed lesson deep into the heart of this sorrow filled man. There are some things which are far more important than awesome miracles. He wanted the man to realize that it was much more important that his son be made well than it was for the Lord to demonstrate his power to strike awe into the hearts of men. Yes, it is true that the miraculous powers of Jesus established him as the true Son of God. But, receiving his son whole and well would be the thing hanging heavy on the heart of the nobleman. Jesus told him to, *“Go thy way. Thy son liveth.”*

Joh 4:50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

Joh 4:51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

Joh 4:52 Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

Joh 4:53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

Joh 4:54 This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

As the man went on his way at the command of the Lord, his servants met him. They said, "*Thy son liveth.*" The man then inquired as to what time of the day his son had gotten well. They told him it was about the seventh hour of the day when his fever left him. The father realized the time they had given him was the same as it was when Jesus had told him his son had been made alive.

As a result of this healing, the man himself believed, and also his entire household followed his example. We are told this was the second miracle Jesus did when he came out of Judea and entered into Galilee.

Although I have discussed the matter before, I am going to take the time to deal with it again. I want to be sure the readers realize the difference between providential action on the part of God and the working of miracles.

The miracles Jesus and the apostles did had certain characteristics which we must not miss. First, they were performed before numerous witnesses. Today we hear men and women say they have witnessed a miracle privately. No one can either confirm or deny what they are claiming. That is

not the normal way in which the miracles of the New Testament were done.

Secondly, the miracles were of such nature that no one could deny they were miracles. They were not cures of backaches, or hardness of hearing. They were making a completely deaf man to hear, or causing legs which had been shriveled for many years to become whole and well. When Jesus rose from the grave, it was undeniable that he had been dead. The soldier had come along and thrust a spear into his side, from which blood and water poured. Then, after a secure guard was placed at the tomb, Jesus was seen by hundreds of credible witnesses who were able to recognize him as the same person who had claimed to be the Messiah. Miracles are out where everyone can see them. They are of such nature that no one can deny God is behind them.

In contrast, providence works behind the scenes. Just what was it that caused King Ahasuerus to wake in the middle of the night and begin reading the chronicles of the kingdom? As a result of reading these chronicles, Ahasuerus recalled that his life had been saved by Mordecai. This resulted in the escape of the Jews from the death sentence Haman had caused to be pronounced upon them. God is constantly working his providential will among men today. He is able to accomplish this through natural means, and without a host of witnesses.

The old timers used to pray to God that he “choose our changes for us.” What they meant was that God work his providential will into their lives

and see that they walked in the good ways.

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Chapter 5

Joh 5:1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Joh 5:2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

Joh 5:3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

Joh 5:4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

In this fifth chapter of John Jesus listed various witnesses who testify that he is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. At this point in his ministry, Jesus was performing one great miracle after another. As we enter chapter five of the book of John, he had just healed a nobleman's son who had been at the point of death. After this he moved from Galilee down to the city of Jerusalem to attend a feast which was taking place in that city. This was probably one of the three main feasts which all male Jews were expected to attend. Jesus would have honored the will of his Father by being at the feast.

In Jerusalem there was a sheep market. Many of our rural folk today will remember mule markets and cattle markets. Large numbers of sheep no doubt passed through the market day by day.

Near the sheep market there was a pool. It was called the Pool of Bethesda, and had a number of porches surrounding it. Many persons with physical problems gathered at the pool to be healed of their diseases and handicaps. Some were blind. Some had withered limbs. Some were lame. All dreamed of being healed of their deficiencies.

It was said that an angel went down at certain times into the pool. If a man could get into the waters first after they were stirred up by the angel, that person would be healed. It did not matter what the disease was. It would be cured.

Joh 5:5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

Joh 5:6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

Joh 5:7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

Joh 5:8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

Joh 5:9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

There was a man who had come to the pool for healing. He was bedridden and had been in that condition for thirty-eight years. How he longed for

the day he could forsake his bed and walk like other men. If he could only get into the troubled waters of the pool before any other, he would be made whole. The difficulty was that there were others who were able to move much more easily than he could. It appeared that he had no hope.

Jesus passed by and saw the man. He knew the man had been sick for a very long time. He asked him a question. *“Wilt thou be made whole?”* Jesus knew the answer before it was spoken. The man explained that he had no one to carry him to the water fast enough to get into it before others entered in. Someone always got in before he was able to get there.

I think an important truth needs to be noticed here. We do not live in the age when Jesus walked the earth. But we have problems which seem to have no answers. We are sometimes very much like this impotent man who could not find the solution to his healing needs. Although Jesus is not here in the flesh, he is definitely here in spirit. He knows of our trials and he knows how to help us overcome them. There are many in this world who need to look toward heaven and call for Jesus to make them whole. He will respond in the way he knows to be best.

Jesus simply looked at the man and said to him, *“Rise, take up thy bed and walk.”* God can do what man cannot. It was not really necessary that the man get into the pool. He could be healed by a simple word from the lips of Jesus. The healing was immediate. The man not only became able to walk. He arose and took his bed with him. The joy

in his heart must have been beyond description. After thirty-eight years, he could move about like other men.

Joh 5:10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

Joh 5:11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

Joh 5:12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

Joh 5:13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

But there was a problem. It was the Sabbath day. No work was to be done on the Sabbath day. The Jews were constantly watching to see if they could snare Jesus either from the things he said or the things he did. They found two ways to attack him here. He had healed a man on the Sabbath. And the man whom he had healed had carried his bed on the Sabbath. They felt they had a case against the Lord. He could not be the Son of God and break the Sabbath.

The Jews approached the man who was healed and asked him if he did not know it was against God's law to carry his bed around on the Sabbath. His answer was that the man who had healed him had told him to take up his bed and walk. They then asked him who the man was that had

commanded him to carry his bed. The man was unable to point Jesus out because the Lord had removed himself from the scene and the multitude who were there at the pool.

Joh 5:14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

Joh 5:15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

Joh 5:16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

Later on, Jesus found the man in the temple and told him that since he had been made whole, he must go his way and sin no more. If he did sin, an even worse thing might happen to him.

We have here another matter of importance. Many who have come to Jesus in our own day for healing of the soul, do not show their gratitude by living righteous lives. They turn back to the world and plunge themselves back into the darkness of sin. When this happens, the latter condition is worse than the first. It is like the sow, who being washed, returns to wallowing in the mud. It is like the dog who having vomited, eats its own vomit. My friends, be sure to turn to Jesus when there is a need for healing; but be very careful that you do not turn back to sin again after you have been cleansed.

The man who had been made whole then told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. They then set out to kill him for doing these things on the Sabbath day. They really cared little for the law. They were only interested in eliminating Jesus from the scene.

Joh 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

Joh 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

Joh 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

Joh 5:20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

Joh 5:21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

Joh 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

Joh 5:23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

When they accused Jesus of working on the

Sabbath, Jesus answered them by saying that his Father worked on the Sabbath and he did also. This made the Jews even more angry. Jesus had called God his Father in a way that meant Jesus was more than a mere man. He was saying he was the divine Son of God. They accused him of making himself equal with God. They considered this to be blasphemy.

Jesus was ready with a very powerful answer. When he did something it was the same as if the Father in heaven had done that thing. If Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath, they could be certain the Father would have done the same thing.

Second; the Father had revealed to his Son what he did and how he did it. Not only would the Jews see marvels such as he had just done for the impotent man. They would see even greater things in the future. They need not think they could stop Christ from the work he came to do.

Third; the Father could even quicken the dead and bring them to life if he chose to do that. He had given that same power to the Son and Jesus had the right to heal whosoever he decided to heal. The Father trusted in the Son to make proper judgments.

Joh 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Joh 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The

hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Joh 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

Joh 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Joh 5:28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

Joh 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Joh 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

Joh 5:31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

Joh 5:32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

Joh 5:33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

Joh 5:34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.

Joh 5:35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

Jesus added that any man who failed to honor him as the Son of God had failed to honor his Father. Jesus claimed God as his Father. The Father had claimed Jesus as his dearly beloved Son. Those who were willing to believe on Jesus as the Son of God could pass from death to life and escape from the condemnation of the Devil.

Jesus pointed out that he had power to raise the dead to life if he chose to do that. They should have taken note that he already had enough power to bring the dead to life. But even more, there would come a time when all the dead would hear his voice and come forth from the grave; some unto the resurrection of life; others to the resurrection of damnation. Jesus would be the final judge. The Jews were way out of order in attempting to judge the Son of man. He was to be their judge. They were not his. And Jesus judgment would be fair and impartial. He would not seek to judge according to his own will. He would do the will of his Father.

Then Jesus turned to the matter of various witnesses. How could the Jews, or any other persons, know he was the Son of God? The evidence was overwhelming. All they had to do was to open their eyes and ears, and soften their hard hearts. Then they would see that his claims to be God's own Son were true and dependable. He did not just dream up his claims and pass them off on others to satisfy his own pride or lust for power. That sort of thing is the work of the Devil. Jesus was absolutely honest and those who believed him

would find his claims to be correct.

Joh 5:36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

Joh 5:37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

Joh 5:38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

Joh 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Joh 5:40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Joh 5:41 I receive not honour from men.

Joh 5:42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

Joh 5:43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

Jesus then suggested there were five witnesses telling of his Sonship. The first of these was his own claim. He understood that this might cause them trouble. Any man can make practically any claim for himself. The claim might be true, or it might not. He would not expect the Jews to believe him just because he claimed to be God's Son.

He did not have to depend upon his own witness. He could also depend on the witness of John the baptist. John had said he was told to wait until the Holy Spirit descended and remained on someone. He would know that person was the one who would baptize in the Holy Spirit, and that he was the Son of God. Thus there were two witnesses. Jesus himself, and John the baptist.

Jesus then added a third witness. He said he had a more powerful witness than that of John the baptist. The works the Father had given him to do bore witness that he was sent by his Father. Nicodemus recognized this. When darkness covered the earth at the time of Jesus crucifixion, the centurion who commanded the soldiers in placing him on the cross, cried out, *“Truly, this was the Son of God.”* When Peter and the other apostles were asked who they believed Jesus to be, Peter answered, *“Thou art the Son of the Living God.”* Yes, Jesus could point to the many miracles which he had done, and the wonders which surrounded his life from his birth to his death. These works were witness that he was authorized to heal a man on the Sabbath day.

The Father himself had borne witness that Jesus was his Son. He had done so at the time of the Lord’s baptism. He had also done so at the time of the transfiguration. The Jews had not been very observant. If they had been, they would have believed in Jesus as the Christ.

Joh 5:44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour

that cometh from God only?

Joh 5:45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

Joh 5:46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.

Joh 5:47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

Jesus had one more witness to bring forth. That witness was the Holy Scriptures. The Jews took great pride in their knowledge of the law and the prophets. They searched the Scriptures and quoted them often. Yet, they had failed to find Christ in those Scriptures. The Jews did not have the love of God in their hearts. If they had truly understood the words of Moses, they would have given Jesus Christ honor as the Son of God. They were willing to accept the words of men who taught their own opinions. They had failed to accept the words of Moses who wrote of Christ.

How could the Jews hear the words of Christ if they refused to hear and understand the words Moses wrote telling of his coming.

Chapter 6

Joh 6:1 After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.

Joh 6:2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

Joh 6:3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

Joh 6:4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

Joh 6:5 When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

Joh 6:6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

Joh 6:7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

Joh 6:8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

Joh 6:9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

Joh 6:10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

This sixth chapter of the gospel according to John. is a chapter explaining how men may gain spiritual nourishment by feasting upon the teachings

of Jesus Christ. He is the Bread of Life. Read on as we consider this great chapter of the Word of God.

At this time Jesus was in the province of Galilee, in the north of Canaan. He had performed many wonders and great multitudes followed him wherever he went.

The Lord went up on a mountain near the edge of the Sea of Galilee. As he sat down with his disciples, he saw the thousands of people gathering near him. As he lifted up his eyes and looked out across the sea of people, he turned to Philip and asked him, "*Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?*" Jesus knew very well what he was about to do. He asked the question to test Philip's faith.

Philip was puzzled. It would take a tremendous amount of bread to feed so great a multitude of people. It was clear to Philip that they had nowhere near enough food for all the people. He was about to learn another powerful lesson about the Saviour.

Peter was not much better off. He had seen a lad with five barley loaves and two small fish. But, it was ridiculous to think of feeding thousands of people with such a small amount. He would also be taught the power of the Christ.

There were about five thousand in the crowd. Jesus commanded that they all sit down on the grass on the side of the mountain. This must have been an impressive sight. Jesus could look over their heads to the Sea of Galilee in the background. Could he provide food for all those hungry people? Of course he could. But they would have to see it done to believe it.

Joh 6:11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

Joh 6:12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

Joh 6:13 Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

He took the five loaves and gave thanks. Then he gave bread to the apostles, and they in turn gave it to the multitude. He did the same with the two small fish. Everyone was told to eat as much as they needed. After they had eaten, Jesus commanded that they pick up the leftovers in order that nothing be wasted. When they did so, it was found that they had twelve basketfulls of food. There were twelve apostles. This would mean each of the apostles could have filled a basket which he had been using to distribute to the people.

Joh 6:14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

The people who saw this miracle said, *“This is*

of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.” The prophet they were talking about was the one Moses said would be like unto him. It was the prophet which Moses said men must hear if they were not to be cut off from God. It was the Messiah. It was the Son of the Living God. They were so impressed that they were ready to take Jesus by force and make him a king. We would say they were ready to draft him as king.

But Jesus did not work on men’s schedules. He was not yet ready to sit upon his throne. That would wait until he had been crucified and raised to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father on his throne. Satan had offered to give Christ all the kingdoms of the world if he would fall down and worship him. Jesus refused Satan’s offer also. His kingdom was to be far greater than either Satan or this multitude realized

.Joh 6:15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

Joh 6:16 And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

Joh 6:17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

Joh 6:18 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

Joh 6:19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh

unto the ship: and they were afraid.

Joh 6:20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

Jesus departed and went off by himself. In the meantime the apostles got into a boat and started across the Sea of Galilee. While they were making the crossing, a storm came up. As the tempest beat upon the ship, they looked out across the water and saw Jesus in the distance. They were afraid, but Jesus told them, "*It is I, be not afraid.*" They took him aboard and were soon safe on the other side of the sea.

Many of the people who had been fed with the loaves and fishes were concerned about where Jesus had gone. It was not long before they discovered that he had gone across the sea. They immediately followed him and arrived the following day.

Joh 6:21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

Joh 6:22 The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone;

Joh 6:23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

Joh 6:24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

Joh 6:25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

Joh 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

Joh 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Joh 6:28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

Joh 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

At this point Jesus was ready to follow up his physical blessings with a far more important blessing. These people needed much more than a full stomach. They needed the truth from God which would feed their souls and make them spiritually strong. He began by accusing them of following him simply to receive more loaves and fishes. They had been putting out great effort to keep up with him that they might be fed.

He said they should be laboring for bread which

does not perish. Physical bread becomes moldy after a short period of time. The bread which Jesus was about to provide for them would endure forever and would bring everlasting life if they would receive it.

The people then asked Jesus a very logical question. If we are to work for the bread of life, what kind of work are we to do? Jesus told them the work of God is to believe on the one whom God has sent. Of course the one whom God has sent is his Son, Jesus Christ.

Joh 6:30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

Joh 6:31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Joh 6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

Joh 6:33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Joh 6:34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

Joh 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Joh 6:36 But I said unto you, That ye also

have seen me, and believe not.

Joh 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Joh 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

Joh 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Joh 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

The people then wanted Jesus to give them a sign which would prove he was the one whom God had sent. This was ridiculous. They should have believed from the sign they had already seen. Nevertheless, Jesus was patient and moved on with his lesson. Long ago in the wilderness, God had sent manna from heaven to feed the wanderers. That bread was not sufficient to give everlasting life. But God had now sent Jesus from heaven with the true bread which could give eternal life to the world. The people quickly cried out, "*Lord, give us of this bread.*"

Jesus was ready to come to the point of his lesson. The entire scene, from the feeding of the five thousand with the loaves and fishes, to the present conversation had all led to this moment.

The Lord said, "*I am the Bread of Life.*" He added that those who came to him to receive his word would be accepted. No one would be rejected. No one would be cast out as long as they followed him. Those who heard and obeyed his word would be raised to everlasting life on the last day.

Joh 6:41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

Joh 6:42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

Joh 6:43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Joh 6:46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

Certain Jews were unhappy and murmured about his saying that he had come down from heaven. He sounded like he was making himself greater than men. They knew him as the son of Joseph the carpenter who lived in Nazareth.

Jesus heard their murmuring and continued his lesson. He told them not to murmur. No man could

come to God the Father unless he was drawn to God by Jesus. No man had ever seen the Father. Jesus had seen the Father and had come to earth to present his truth to men. He that believed on Christ could have everlasting life because he is the Bread of Life. Believing his teachings was like eating spiritual bread which would give eternal life to the soul. The bread which came down from heaven in the times of the wandering in the wilderness had not kept those Hebrews alive. They were dead. However; the bread which Jesus could supply would keep men alive forever.

Joh 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

Joh 6:48 I am that bread of life.

Joh 6:49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

Joh 6:50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

Jesus then began talking about them eating his flesh and drinking his blood. He pointed out that the bread he would give was his own flesh. The Jews argued among themselves. Surely Jesus was not going to let men feed upon his fleshly body. Jesus reply was that anyone who refused to eat his flesh and drink his blood would not have eternal life. Those who did eat his flesh and drink his blood would have eternal life and would be raised up to be with God in the last day.

These are puzzling words, even to us today. How

does one eat the flesh of Christ and drink the blood of Christ? His body was resurrected from the grave and his apostles saw him ascend into heaven. It seems impossible for us to eat his flesh and drink his blood.

Joh 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Joh 6:52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Joh 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Joh 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

Joh 6:56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

Joh 6:57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

Joh 6:58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

Joh 6:59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

The answer is found in the establishment of the Lord's Supper. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, he informed his disciples that the fruit of the vine represented his blood and the bread represented his flesh. Whenever a Christian partakes of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, that Christian symbolically eats of the flesh and drinks the blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus even said that the one who eats of this bread will live forever. Jesus Christ will dwell in him, and he will dwell in that Christian. The life which Christ can give is found in that Christian. As long as he remains true to the teachings of the Saviour, he need have no fear. He will be safe in the arms of the heavenly Father.

Joh 6:60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

Joh 6:61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

Joh 6:62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

Joh 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Joh 6:64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning

who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Joh 6:66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Even the apostles themselves began to murmur at what Jesus had just said. They saw this as a hard saying. Who could hear and understand it? Jesus must have looked upon them as though they were but little children who were not yet mature enough to comprehend spiritual truths. He asked them if what he had said had offended them. If it had offended them they would understand later. There would be a day in which they would see the Son of man ascend up to heaven, where he had been before. He then added that it is the Spirit which quickens, or gives life. It is not the flesh.

You see, my friends, One could eat all the physical bread in the world and never take hold on eternal life. That physical bread might give life to the body. It would not give life to the Spirit. The flesh will die some day. If men and women have been faithful to Christ and have fed upon his teachings; if they have followed him wherever he leads and have communed with him through partaking of the Lord's Supper, a new immortal and incorruptible body is waiting for them. We know not what we shall be like, but we shall be like him. We shall be changed in the twinkling of

an eye and we shall be clothed in that new body which will never decay. Even as Jesus was lifted up off this earth, the faithful will be called forth from the grave and will also be lifted up to be with him in the city foursquare.

The Lord added that there were some in his presence at that very time who would betray him. Judas was in the group. Jesus said, "*No man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father.*" Without the drawing power of the Father in heaven, working through the life and teachings of his Son, no man could ever be saved and go to heaven.

After Jesus had said this, some of those who had been following him turned away and did not follow him any more. I think we can guess the reason. Those who turned back were the ones who had never realized what he was really saying. They were the ones who were interested only in the healing of physical disease and the filling of physical stomachs. When they came to realize there was something far more important than these things, they balked and turned away. This attitude has not disappeared in our present world. There are those who preach primarily a social gospel, and there are those who desire to have only a social gospel preached to them. They never rise above the level of full stomachs and healthy bodies.

**Joh 6:67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve,
Will ye also go away?**

Joh 6:68 Then Simon Peter answered him,

Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

Joh 6:69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Joh 6:70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

Joh 6:71 He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

Jesus then asked the twelve apostles if they also would turn back and follow him no more. Simon Peter gave the correct answer. *“Lord, to whom shall we go. Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”*

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Chapter 7

Joh 7:1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

Joh 7:2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

Joh 7:3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

Joh 7:4 For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

Joh 7:5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

In the seventh chapter of the Gospel of Christ according to John, we find Jesus going straight into the temple area in spite of the fact that the Jews were furious with him and seeking to take his life. Jesus had the same kind of calm courage that he and his apostles urged all Christians to have in every age and every place. He is our example.

The rulers of the Jews in Galilee had become extremely angry with the Lord for talking about Jehovah as his Father. They could see that he did not consider himself as other men. He claimed to be the Son of God in a way no one else dared to do. They accused him of blasphemy and tried to find some way by which they could eliminate him, even if it went so far as to murder him.

As the chapter opens we are informed that

because the Jews sought to kill him, Jesus left the city of Jerusalem in Judea and moved northward into the province of Galilee. I think we are safe in saying Jesus was not afraid of the Jews. At the time he was crucified it would have been possible for him to call several legions of angels to his side to protect him. He did not do that because it was the will of his Father that he offer his life for the sins of men.

It must be true then that Jesus had another reason for avoiding those who wished to kill him. I believe that reason was that he had many things to do and to teach before he was ready to lay down his life. He did not leave Judea because he was afraid to die. He left because he was not yet ready to die.

While Jesus was in Galilee with his disciples, the feast of tabernacles was to be celebrated in Jerusalem. This was one of the feasts all male Jews were expected to attend. Jesus disciples urged him to attend the feast in order that the wonderful miracles he had been doing could be seen by more people. They told him no man who sought to be widely recognized would do his works in secret. He would do them where all could see.

Joh 7:6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.

Joh 7:7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

Joh 7:8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not

up yet unto this feast: for my time is not yet full come.

Joh 7:9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

Joh 7:10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

Joh 7:11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

Joh 7:12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

Joh 7:13 Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

Jesus replied that, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast for my time is not yet full come. Jesus then allowed the disciples to go on to Jerusalem and he remained behind in Galilee for a while.

Only after the disciples had gone did Jesus make his way to Jerusalem. When he did go, he went secretly and not openly. Jesus knew the disciples could appear at the feast without a great commotion. On the other hand, if he made a public appearance, there would be a disturbance. The Jews did not hate his disciples as they hated Jesus. He did wish to attend the feast. But he did not wish to cause a riot.

Word did get around that he had come. They immediately tried to find him so they could vent their wrath on him. At the same time there was quite a difference of opinion among the common people. Some said he was a good man. Others said he was an imposter and a deceiver of the people. Even though many of the people thought Jesus was a good man, they were afraid to tell others how they felt because they feared the Jews who hated him.

Joh 7:14 Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

Joh 7:15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

Joh 7:16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

Joh 7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Joh 7:18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

Then, suddenly, Jesus changed his actions. He went directly to the temple and began to teach the people publicly. The power and wisdom of his preaching was so great the people were amazed and wondered how the son of a carpenter was able to speak as he did without having been educated at the feet of the great teachers of the day.

Jesus then explained that the things he taught were not from the minds of men. They were the teachings of the Father in heaven who had sent him into the world. He challenged his listeners to put the things which he preached into practice and see if they were divine or if they were from men. Men very often spoke to glorify themselves. Jesus indicated that he was not speaking in order to glorify himself. He was trying to glorify the Father in heaven.

Joh 7:19 Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

Joh 7:20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?

Joh 7:21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

Joh 7:22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.

Joh 7:23 If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

Joh 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

He then accused those who hated him of having the law of Moses and studying that law, but not knowing the real meaning of that law. If they had known the real meaning of Moses words, they

would not have tried to kill him. They would have recognized him as the Messiah whom God had promised.

The Jews then accused the Lord of being crazy. He must be insane, or he would not be accusing them of trying to kill him. He must be possessed of a devil.

Jesus did not bother to reply to the charge that he had a devil. He went to the heart of their feelings. They were unhappy because he had healed a man on the Sabbath day and told him to take up his bed and walk. Jesus pointed out a flaw in their thinking. They did not have any objection to circumcizing male babies on the Sabbath. They did not consider that to be breaking the law of Moses. Why then did they become so incensed over him having healed a man on the Sabbath.

Now another wave of suspicion appeared. Some said, *“Is this not the one the rulers are trying to kill?”* If it is him, then why do they not do anything to him. He is speaking very boldly, where all can hear him.

Yet, they were puzzled. They knew Jesus had come from Nazareth in Galilee. They did not expect to know where the Messiah had come from when he arrived. How could this man be the Messiah?

Joh 7:25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?

Joh 7:26 But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

Joh 7:27 Howbeit we know this man whence

he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

Joh 7:28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

Joh 7:29 But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

Joh 7:30 Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

Jesus answered that they knew him, and they knew where he had come from. They needed to realize that he had not come through his own will, but that he had come because he was sent by the Father. They could depend upon the truth of that which he spoke to them because it was from God.

His words so inflamed those who hated him that their hatred became even greater. They were ready to lay hands on him while he was still speaking. The scripture says it was not possible for them to do that because his hour was not yet come. They were foolish men who tried to match their power against that of the Creator of the universe. There was no way those who were jealous of the Lord could kill him until the time was ripe. We are not told why they were not able to lay hands on Christ. All we know is that as much as they wanted to stop him, they were not able. God's plan was unrolling at the speed he wanted it to unroll; not at the will of those who fought against him.

Joh 7:31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?

Joh 7:32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

Joh 7:33 Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

Joh 7:34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.

Joh 7:35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

Joh 7:36 What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?

The number of people who believed the words of Christ was increasing. Some of the people were saying, "When Christ comes, will he do any greater miracles than this man has done?" They realized, just as Nicodemus had recognized, that no man could do the miracles which Jesus did unless he had the power of God.

When the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to capture Jesus, he had a message for them.

“You have just a little time to do what you wish to do to me. In a short time you will look for me and you will be unable to find me because I am going back to the one who sent me. You will not be able to take me because you will not be able to come to me then.”

The Jews were left with big questions. Just where was it that Jesus would go that they would not be able to find him? Would he leave Palestine and go out into the Gentile lands such as Egypt or Rome? Is he going to cease teaching the Jews and start teaching the Gentiles in other lands?

Joh 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

The feast lasted for several days. On the last day of the feast Jesus called out to the people, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Jesus was not speaking about the kind of water he had asked the woman of Samaria to give him from the well of Sychar. He was talking about the refreshing which is provided by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life. It refreshes and gives life to the soul. Physical water only heals the thirst of the body.

Joh 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow

rivers of living water.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Then Jesus said something very interesting. He said, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given because he had not yet been glorified. To understand the meaning of Jesus words here, we need to turn to the second chapter of Acts. Jesus apostles were told to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high before they went forth to fulfil the Great Commission. As they waited, they heard a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind. They saw tongues like as of fire which sat upon each of them. Then they began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Later in the chapter Peter told his listeners that Jesus had been resurrected from the grave and had received the promise; and that having received the promise of the Spirit, he had shed forth that which the audience on Pentecost had seen. As Jesus spoke here, he had not yet been crucified, nor had he been resurrected and taken up into heaven. Therefore, the Spirit had not yet been poured out as Peter mentioned.

Joh 7:40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.

Joh 7:41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?

Joh 7:42 Hath not the scripture said, That

Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

Joh 7:43 So there was a division among the people because of him.

Once more the people took several different views of Christ's authority. Some were certain Jesus must be the long sought prophet about which Moses had spoken. Others were not convinced. How could the Messiah come out of Galilee? Surely he should have arisen out of Jerusalem in Judea. They remembered the scripture which spoke of Jesus coming from Bethlehem. Bethlehem was just a few miles from Jerusalem. They did not realize Jesus had been born in Bethlehem, even though he was raised in Nazareth of Galilee.

Joh 7:44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

Joh 7:45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

Joh 7:46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

Joh 7:47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

Joh 7:48 Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

Joh 7:49 But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.

The officers who had been told to capture Jesus returned to the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were asked why they had not taken him. Their

answer was that, “Never a man spake like this man.” And they were absolutely correct. No man in all the history of the world has ever spoken with the wisdom and understanding that Jesus did.

The Pharisees could hardly believe their ears. Had the officers themselves been converted by the teachings of Jesus? They mocked the officers and asked them if they had seen any of the rulers of the Pharisees hearing the things which Jesus taught. They clearly thought the answer to that question was no. But it was not. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Pharisees. He had come to Jesus by night and had requested that Jesus talk to him about spiritual truths.

Joh 7:50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

Joh 7:51 Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

Joh 7:52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

Joh 7:53 And every man went unto his own house.

Nicodemus himself then spoke up. He loved the Lord. He knew Jesus was telling the truth when he claimed to have been sent from the Father in heaven. Nicodemus asked the rest of the Pharisees a very important question. Did they believe a man could be condemned under the law without being

heard in his defense? Could they truly sentence him before they had any crime of which they could accuse him?

They replied angrily. Was Nicodemus a true Pharisee, or had he also been raised in Galilee. If he had really been observant he would certainly know that no prophet had ever come out of Galilee. That was not true. There were prophets who came out of Galilee.

That finished the events of the day. The people, including the Pharisees, left Jesus and went to their homes. Jesus departed to go to the mount of Olives.

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Chapter 8

Joh 8:1 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

Joh 8:2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

Joh 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

Joh 8:4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

Joh 8:5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

The topic of discussion today is the eighth chapter of the book of John. It speaks of Jesus as the light of the world, and then goes on to talk about the true seed of Abraham. You need to stay with us during this study.

Jesus had been teaching at the temple in Jerusalem. We are told that he went out to the Mount of Olives and then returned the next morning to continue his preaching. It causes us to wonder if he slept somewhere on the side of the mountain. At one time he said the foxes and birds had homes, but the Son of man had not where to lay his head.

As usual, the scribes and the Pharisees were doing their best to embarrass the Lord. This time they brought a woman whom they had found in

the very act of adultery. They pointed out to Jesus that the law of Moses said anyone who was proven guilty of adultery should be stoned to death. They were apparently hoping Jesus would tell them to let the woman go, and then they would be able to accuse him of breaking the law of Moses and discredit him before the people.

Joh 8:6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

Joh 8:7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

Joh 8:8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

Joh 8:9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

Joh 8:10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

Joh 8:11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

What would Jesus say? Would he tell them to stone her? Or would his love for lost humanity cause

him to tell them to let her go? Once again, Jesus spoiled their plans. He turned the matter back on the accusers. He stooped down and wrote on the ground with his finger. We do not know what he wrote. Someone has suggested that he had begun to write a list of the sins of those who had accused the woman. After he rose from his stooped position, he said to the accusers, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." The law said the one who had first made the charge of breaking the law was to be the one to cast the first stone. At that point every one of the accusers felt the pressure of his own conscience and departed, leaving the woman alone with Jesus.

Jesus then told the woman to go her way and sin no more. It is clear that Jesus knew she was penitent of heart. It is also clear that he did not excuse her adultery and tell her not to worry about it. She had sinned. She was to cease from her sin.

Joh 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Joh 8:13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

Joh 8:14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

Joh 8:15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

Joh 8:16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

Joh 8:17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

Joh 8:18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

Joh 8:19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

Joh 8:20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

Joh 8:21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

Joh 8:22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

The Lord then proceeded to teach about his authority and right to judge. He first told the people he was the Light of the world. Those who would follow him would not walk in darkness. They would walk in the light.

The Pharisees had not learned the lesson Jesus taught back in the fifth chapter when he called

five witnesses to testify to his divine authority. They accused him of bearing witness of himself. Jesus said it did not matter that he was claiming authority for himself. The claim to be the light of the world was true. They were trying to judge through human eyes. When he judged, it was with the help of the Father who had sent him into the world. His Father had sent him and they should have realized that the Father had recognized Jesus as his Son. If they had truly realized the truth of Jesus teaching, and the power of his deeds, they would also have known the Father. The law had specified that two witnesses were needed to prove one true. Jesus claimed to have those two witnesses. One was himself. The other was his Father.

Again Jesus told the Pharisees he was going away. He said, *“I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go, ye cannot come.”* The Pharisees were puzzled, just as they had been before. Was Jesus about to commit suicide? Was that the reason, he had said he was going somewhere that they could not go?

Joh 8:23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

Joh 8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

The Lord replied that he had come from above. They were of this world. He was going back to be with his Father. If they continued to live as they

were living, they could not follow him to heaven. They would die in their sins. Now we begin to see why Jesus taught this lesson right after telling the woman taken in adultery to go her way and sin no more. The Pharisees had judged the woman worthy of death because of her sin. It appears that she was ready to turn from her sin and live. It was not so with them. They were about to die in their sin and give up any hope of eternity in heaven. Jesus said, *“If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”*

Joh 8:25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.

The Pharisees then asked Jesus, “Who art thou?” He seemed to think he had the right to lecture to them and expect them to receive his words without disputing with him. Jesus reply was that he was the same one he had claimed to be from the beginning. He had many more things to say. When all was said and done the things he said would judge the world. The Father who had sent him to earth is true and Jesus was only telling the world what his Father had told him to say.

Joh 8:26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

Joh 8:27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

Joh 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

Joh 8:29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

Joh 8:30 As he spake these words, many believed on him.

Joh 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

Joh 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Next, Jesus told them the time would come when many of them would realize his words were true. They would realize this after they had lifted him up. He spoke of his crucifixion and resurrection. After Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead, there were many Jews who believed on his name and followed his truth. Even as Jesus spoke, there were those who were persuaded he was the Son of God.

The next point Jesus made was that hearing and believing what he had to say would free men from bondage. *“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

The Pharisees did not appreciate being told they were in bondage. They did not consider themselves

slaves. Nor did they agree that they ever had been slaves. They were the descendants of Abraham. They were proud to be Jews. How could Jesus say they would be made free if they had never been enslaved?

Jesus began to explain how this could be. They were not slaves to men. They were slaves to sin. Any man who committed sin was a slave to sin. It had control of his life and he obeyed it. If they wished to be free from sin, they would have to hear the words of the Father. Others were only servants in the Father's house. Jesus was the Only Begotten Son of the Father. If the Son made them free, they would truly be free.

Joh 8:33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

Joh 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

Joh 8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

Joh 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Joh 8:37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

Joh 8:38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

Joh 8:39 They answered and said unto him,

Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

Joh 8:40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

Joh 8:41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

Joh 8:42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

Joh 8:43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

The Jews had said they were Abraham's seed. In other words Abraham was their father. Jesus explained that he was the Son of God. They were setting out to kill him, but if they had truly been the children of Abraham, they would have followed in the faith of Abraham rather than to try to murder God's Son. They had tried to kill Jesus. Abraham would not have done anything of the kind. They were certainly not true children of Abraham. They only claimed to be.

Then Jesus explained to them who their true father was. It was neither Abraham nor the Father in heaven. They were angry again. Jesus seemed to be saying no one knew who their father was. This would make them bastards who had been born as a result of fornication.

Joh 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Jesus then explained what he meant. Their father was the Devil. They were not acting like the Father in heaven. They were not acting like Abraham. They were acting like Satan. Satan had been a murderer from the very beginning. He had tried to destroy Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. There was no truth in him. He was a liar and could even be called the “father of liars.” The Pharisees loved the lie more than the truth. They were trying to bring about the death of Jesus. Therefore, they had proved they descended from the Devil.

Joh 8:45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Joh 8:46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

Joh 8:47 He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

He asked them why they would not believe the truth when he told it to them. The one who

was from God would be glad to hear the teachings God's Son was presenting to mankind. If they were descended from God, they would hear. Since they did not hear, they were certainly not children of the Father in heaven.

Joh 8:48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

Joh 8:49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

Joh 8:50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Joh 8:51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

Joh 8:52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

Joh 8:53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

The Pharisees retorted by claiming they had been absolutely right when they had claimed Jesus had a Devil. He must be one of the hated Samaritans and under the control of evil forces. Jesus put them straight. He was not possessed. He was acting by the authority of his Father. But when he honored

his Father by teaching that which the Father had commanded, the Pharisees dishonored the Father's Son.

The next saying of Jesus provoked the Jews again. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying he shall never see death." Now the Jews were even more certain the Lord was crazy. Abraham was dead. The prophets of old were dead. If such faithful men as these had all died, what right did Jesus have to say that those who listened to his words would never die. Did Jesus believe he was greater than Father Abraham? Just who did Jesus think he was?

Joh 8:54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

Joh 8:55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

Joh 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Joh 8:57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

Joh 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Jesus' answer was, *"If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: Yet ye have not*

known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.”

While Jesus was preaching the sermon on the mount, he had said his followers were to do their good works so men could see those works and glorify the Father which is in heaven. That is exactly what he was telling the Pharisees he was doing himself. He was not seeking glory for himself. He was seeking to obey his Father and glorify Him.

My friends, do you want to receive glory? There is a way to receive it. Jesus submitted himself to the Father and was obedient to him even when it meant death upon the cross. He prayed that the cup might pass from him if it was possible. If it was not, then he was willing to obey even unto death. Paul said that as a result of Jesus being obedient unto death, God had given him a name above every name. Every knee would someday bow to him, and every tongue would someday confess his greatness as the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is even so with each of us. If we humble ourselves here and remain obedient unto death, God will give us a crown of life which is laid up for the faithful.

When Jesus compared the actions of the Jews to his own behavior, he said he was convinced the Jews did not know his Father. They had claimed to know God and to have descended from Abraham. Neither of these things was true. They did not know God. They did not act like Abraham.

Abraham had wandered through this life seeking a city which had foundations. He was so faithful he was willing to offer his son Isaac upon an altar. He had anxiously looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. Because he had caught just a glimpse of the new day which was coming in Christ, Abraham was exceedingly glad. How strange it was that those who claimed to be Abraham's children would despise the day of the Lord when Abraham himself looked forward to it so eagerly!

The Pharisees were still unwilling to hear and believe the Lord. It appeared to them that Jesus was saying he and Abraham had spent time together. If that was true, Jesus would have had to be centuries old, not the young man they were seeing before them. Jesus was less than fifty years old. Abraham had lived almost two thousand years before. How could Jesus say he had seen Abraham, or Abraham had seen him?

Jesus admitted he was as old as Abraham. He said, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.*" As the Word of God, Jesus is eternal. He has existed from before the foundation of the earth.

Joh 8:59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

The Jews picked up stones to kill him on the

Chapter 9

Joh 9:1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

Joh 9:2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Joh 9:3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

The Pharisees hated Jesus from the time he began his preaching with the sermon on the mount. The people had recognized Jesus as one who spoke with authority and not as the scribes. The jealousy of these religious leaders became more heated each time they came into contact with the Saviour. They were determined to destroy him. As chapter eight closed, they had picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus simply walked through the midst of them and went on his way. They were powerless to kill him. His time had not yet come. He had more work to do on this earth.

As Jesus moved through the area of the temple in Jerusalem, he passed by a blind man. The man did not just have dim eyesight. He had been blind since he was born. The miracle Jesus was about to do was not a questionable thing which might or might not be a miracle. So-called faith healers today love to find someone with thick glasses, or someone who walks with a slight limp. Then when the person claims to have perfect eyesight, or walks a few steps like a normal person, the healer says

praise the Lord, we have a miracle. No one could doubt the wonder Jesus was about to perform.

As Jesus passed the blind man, his disciples asked him a question many have wondered about. Why do innocent people suffer from infirmities? Why is it not the rank sinners who have to live with sickness and trials of many kinds? The disciples wanted to know if the blind man was in his condition because of his own sin, or because his parents had sinned.

Jesus answer was surprising. He said the man's blindness was not caused by his own sin, or the sin of his parents. In this particular case, he had been allowed to live in blindness for many years in order that a very precious lesson could be taught concerning the power of God and the nature of Jesus Christ. If this seems cruel to you my friends, remember that through the experiences of this one man, millions of men and women have been blessed with the truth that Jesus Christ, the Son of God is the light of the world. I feel sure the man did not know the part he would play in the preaching of the gospel, as he sat blind by the wayside. I am just as sure, he would say it was worth it if he could know what his life had meant to others through the centuries.

Joh 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

Joh 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

~~Jesus told his disciples there was work to be~~

done. Through this blind man, the works of the Father in heaven could be demonstrated. The time was short. Jesus must work while it was day. The time would come when no man could serve God in this present life. Jesus said, *“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”* Yes, men see by the light. If Jesus can make a man who has been blind for a life time see, then he can also make men who are spiritually blind see. Give him the opportunity to open your eyes dear reader. He will do it if you will give him the chance. The time may be shorter than you think.

Joh 9:6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

Joh 9:7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

Joh 9:8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

Joh 9:9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

Christ spat on the ground. He then made clay from the spittle and put the mixture on the eyes of the blind man. The man was told to go to the pool of Siloam and wash his eyes. When he did that, he could see. This seems distasteful does it not? Do

not back off. There are things God will ask you to do that may seem to be distasteful. If you wish to receive God's blessings, it is wise to listen to his directions. There are many today who refuse to be baptized because the process does not make any sense to them. Actually it makes a great deal of sense. But, since men do not see the reason, they refuse to obey the Word of God. How foolish!

Joh 9:10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

Joh 9:11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

Joh 9:12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

Those who knew the blind man were amazed. Was this not the man who had sat and begged for years? Some said it was he. Others said it could not be the same one. It must be someone who looked like him. The man who had been blind but now could see said, "I am he." Many had not witnessed what had taken place. They asked how this wonder was accomplished. The healed man said, "A man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes. He told me to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. When I washed, I was able to see."

They immediately wanted to see the man who had brought about this healing. Jesus had already gone. When they asked where he was, the man

could only say, “I do not know.” They then took the healed man to the Pharisees and discussed the matter with them.

Joh 9:13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

Joh 9:14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

Joh 9:15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Joh 9:16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

Joh 9:17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

The Pharisees knew it was Jesus who had done the healing. They also knew it had been done on the Sabbath day. They made sure the man repeated his story again. Then Pharisees were divided in their attitudes. Some said a sinner could not possibly do such miracles as Jesus was doing. Others said Jesus could not have acted with God’s approval to heal a man on the Sabbath day.

Joh 9:18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the

parents of him that had received his sight.

Joh 9:19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

They began questioning the man himself. What did he think about the man who had healed him. He replied that he thought the one who healed him was a prophet of God. They were still having trouble believing this was the same man who had sat begging before. They went to the man's parents and questioned them. Is this your son? If he was born blind, then how come he is able to see now?

Joh 9:20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

Joh 9:21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

Joh 9:22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

Joh 9:23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

The parents agreed that this was truly their son. They also said the man had been blind from the time he was born. They refused to say how he had been made to see because the Jews had

threatened to throw anyone out of the synagogue who confessed Jesus to be the Christ. They told the Pharisees to go ask the man himself.

Joh 9:24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

Joh 9:25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

They went back to the man and told him to give praise to God and not to Jesus. They said we know this man is a sinner. The man then said, *“I do not know whether or not he is a sinner. I do know that I was blind and now I can see.”* They replied by asking him what was done to make him see. The man was disgusted with them by this time. He began to mock them. He had told them once and they did not believe him. Did they wish to become disciples of Jesus? Did they need this information in order to follow the Christ?

Joh 9:26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

Joh 9:27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

Joh 9:28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples.

Joh 9:29 We know that God spake unto

Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

Joh 9:30 The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

Joh 9:31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Joh 9:32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

Joh 9:33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

The Jews became very angry. This man might be a disciple of Christ. They were not. They were followers of Moses. God had spoken to Moses, but they did not know where Christ had come from.

The man continued to mock them. He said, "This is a very marvelous thing. It is strange that you know so little about this man and yet he was able to open my eyes and make me see." He went on. God does not hear sinners. God hears those who worship him. The thing which has happened here is the kind of thing the world has never seen before. If this Jesus was not from God he could not have done what he has done.

The Jews could not handle such teaching from one who was not of their own group. They accused the man of having been blind because he was born as a result of fornication. How could a man so vile as that be so bold as to try to instruct them. They

threw him out of their sight.

Just for a moment my friends, let us turn to the life of Job. When Job had lost his possessions and his children, when he was covered with boils and was hurting from the top of his head to the soles of his feet, his three friends contended that it must be because of his sins that these things had happened to him. Job was perplexed. He knew he had done nothing so bad that such horror should come upon him. But, what Job did not understand was that God was using him to teach Satan a lesson about the strength of man's faith. God knew Job would survive every temptation Satan could cast in his direction. It was not Job's fault that he was suffering. God was using him to bring many other men to glory.

Much the same was true concerning this man who had been born blind. The Pharisees refused to believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. Jesus used the blind man to prove Jesus claims. The man suffered for a time. But, he would become a witness for the Sonship of the Saviour of the world.

Joh 9:34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that the man had been cast out. He went to find the man and comfort him. This is typical of Jesus. The downtrodden and unfortunate always pluck his heartstrings. Not only does he care about the poor. He expects his disciples from

that time to this to share in his concern for fellow humans. God has spelled out our relationships in four different areas. He tells us how we are to react to the Godhead. He tells us how to react toward our fellow humans. He tells us how to react toward nature, and he tells us how to react toward our own selves. We are not left without guidance. But, above all, Jesus Christ came to show us by his own example, how these things were to be put into action. It was to be expected that he would seek out this man who had been misused and abused by the Pharisees.

Joh 9:35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

When the Lord found the man he asked him if he believed on the Son of God. The man was still a bit confused. Who was this Son of God upon whom he was supposed to believe? Jesus explained that the man had both seen the Son of God and had talked with him. It was the Son of God who was then talking with him.

Joh 9:36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

Joh 9:37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

Joh 9:38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

Joh 9:39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

Joh 9:40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

Joh 9:41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

The reaction of the man was to say, “*Lord, I believe.*” My friend, would you believe in Christ as the Son of God if you were to have a miracle performed on you? We sometimes make some strong statements about what we would or would not do. One time the rich man, who had been suffering in torment, suggested that someone be allowed to go to his brethren who were still alive and warn them of the danger they faced by living in sin. Abraham answered the rich man by saying it would make little difference if a man were to come back from hell and tell them of the danger. If they would not listen to the teachings of Moses and the prophets, neither would they listen to the warnings of one who had come back from hell itself. If some of us had a miracle performed on us, we would still insist it was only a coincidence.

After telling Jesus he believed in him as the Son of God, the man who had been healed worshipped the Lord. Here is an example of gratitude. Jesus Christ has cleansed many of you who listen to this program. Do you humble yourself before him and

praise his holy name? Or, are you like the nine lepers who went on their way and never turned to thank the Lord for what he had done for them?

Jesus then explained that he had come into the world to judge men. There were some who were blind and who would see if it was made possible. There were others who had been given the opportunity to see and who would rather be blind. The man who had been physically blind for a lifetime wished with all his heart that he could see the light of day. Not only did Jesus make it possible for him to see the light of day, he made it possible for him to see spiritually. He revealed to the man that he, Jesus, is the Light of the world.

It was not the same with the Pharisees. They had been able to see physically for their entire lives. In spite of that, they had refused to see spiritual things which they had been given every chance to see. The Pharisees wanted to know if Jesus thought they were blind. Jesus said if they had been blind it would be different. The problem was that they **would not see**. It was not that they could not see. Because they would not see, they were living in sin.

Chapter 10

Joh 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

Joh 10:2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

Joh 10:3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

Joh 10:4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

This tenth chapter of John is full of pictures. Jesus is the door. Jesus is the vine. Jesus is the resurrection. As the ninth chapter closed, Jesus was having a confrontation with the Pharisees over the healing of a blind man. He had told them they could have seen the truth. However, they were determined not to see it. I believe this tenth chapter is a follow up on the idea of blindness. Sheep need a Shepherd to help them find the way to everlasting life. There is a strong connection between what will be said in this chapter and that which was said in the twenty-third Psalm.

The Pharisees were making an attempt to enter the Kingdom of God without going through the door. That is a characteristic of the blind. Since they do not see, they sometimes try to follow impossible paths.

We are not as familiar with the sheepfold as those were to whom Jesus addressed the words of

this chapter. The sheepfold was an enclosure where the sheep could be kept safe through the darkness of the night when wolves or other enemies might attack them. There was only one entrance to the sheepfold. It was, however, possible for a thief to climb over the top of the barrier and carry off one or more sheep. That is why Jesus said the one who entered the sheepfold in any other way than through the door was a thief and a robber.

The Pharisees were trying to enter into God's sheepfold by some other door than the one God had made. They were trying their best to steal the sheep of God. They were false shepherds. The true shepherd would enter by the door provided by God, the owner of the sheep.

Jesus said the porter of the sheepfold would know the real shepherd of the sheep. He would recognize him and would open the door to him. He would not need to slip in some other way. Once the real shepherd was inside the sheepfold, he would call out and the sheep would hear his voice and follow him.

In the time of Jesus, several shepherds might drive their sheep into a single sheepfold. We are told that each of these flocks of sheep was able to recognize the voice of their own shepherd. If there were five different flocks of sheep in the sheepfold, only the sheep of the one shepherd who called would move toward him and follow him out to the pasture for the day. Since I was raised on a dairy farm, I can believe this is true. Our dairy cows would move up toward the gate at the end of the day. All that was necessary was to open the gate

and call out for them to come. They would quickly line up and head for the barn where they knew they would find grain to eat.

Joh 10:5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

Joh 10:6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

Joh 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

Joh 10:8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

The Lord went on to say the sheep would not follow a stranger. They would recognize the stranger was not their shepherd and they would flee from him. I also understand how this could be. In testing milk at twenty six various farms during the course of a month, I went back to each of the farms twelve times during the year. I recall one farm where there were a large number of registered Jersey cows. The owner could go into the barn where the cows were in stanchion's and they were quite unconcerned. But, the moment I entered, they knew a stranger was there. They would stop eating and listen for the slightest noise. Then they would show signs of nervousness and fear.

The Pharisees had difficulty understanding what Jesus was saying. They were the strangers who

were trying to lead God's sheep away from him. Yet they would not admit they were doing it.

Joh 10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Joh 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

God had complained in days of old that the shepherds of Israel had scattered his sheep. He promised that one day he would punish those evil shepherds and would go out himself and bring in the lost sheep. Since Jesus was "God with us." He is the fulfilment of that promise. If any man enters into Christ, he will be led to the pasture and will find rest, protection and food for his soul.

The thieves had come for a quite different reason than Jesus had come. They were interested only in what they could get from the sheep. The thief would kill and destroy the sheep. That was exactly the opposite of the motives of Jesus. He had come to provide a more abundant life for the sheep rather than to take their lives.

Not only did Christ come to give his sheep a more abundant life. He was willing to sacrifice his own life for the safety of the sheep. The Pharisees had no love for the sheep. They did not own the sheep and they were not interested in protecting them, except to increase their own gain. If the Pharisees heard the wolves coming, they would quickly run

off to protect themselves and leave the sheep for the wolves to eat.

The book of Ezekiel has much to say about God's attitude toward those who are supposed to be feeding his sheep, but instead take advantage of them. One of the things which was said about these false shepherds was that God would remove his flock from their hands. I think this is a point which should be heard carefully by those who preach and act as elders today. If such persons fail to love God's flock and care for it, God will see that they lose the opportunity to lead.

Joh 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Joh 10:12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

Joh 10:13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

Joh 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

Joh 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Jesus pointed out that he was the Good Shepherd. He would never forsake the sheep who had been placed under his leadership. He knew who his sheep were and he was willing to lay down his life for them. They, in turn knew him and would follow him wherever he led them. He indicated the Father in

heaven could trust him with the sheep.

Joh 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Joh 10:17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

One time an elderly man whom I respected much for his knowledge of the Bible asked a penetrating question about the next verse in this chapter. The verse says that Jesus had other sheep which were not of the fold which he then tended. He must also go and get those sheep and bring them into the fold so there would be one fold and one shepherd over that one fold.

The question the gentleman asked me had to do with the identity of the sheep which were not of the fold Jesus then tended. I replied that I believed the other sheep whom Jesus wished to bring into the one fold were the Gentiles. I still believe that is the meaning of his statement. Up to that time God's people had been the Jews. Later on, Jesus would give the great commission and command his apostles to go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every nation. I am delighted that he gave that commandment. I am a Gentile. I am one of those other sheep which were not of the Jews. Jesus loves me and cares for me. He has seen to it that I may enter into the one sheepfold where

he can lead me and protect me from all harm.

Joh 10:18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Joh 10:19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

Joh 10:20 And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

Joh 10:21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

Jesus made it clear that his life could not be taken from him. He would willingly offer his life to protect his sheep and cause them to have the abundant life, but there is no power in existence great enough to kill the shepherd while he cares for his sheep.

It is foolish to think that any power is sufficient to murder Christ if he decided to resist it. Jesus was there and aided in the creation of the heaven and the earth. Jesus was able to bring the dead to life. He was able to cast out demons and to calm the sea. If and when Jesus decided to lay down his life for the sheep, he could do that. But until the time was ripe for this to happen, no one could cause it to happen.

The Pharisees went into a state of confusion again. As was often the case, there were those like Nicodemus who believed. Some said he certainly

must not be possessed by a devil, or he could not do the great works he had done, such as the healing of the blind man.

Sadly, most of them found one reason or another for turning away from him and going on their way toward death and separation from God. There were some who said he was insane. There were some who said he was possessed by a devil. The Pharisees thought they had power. They refused to recognize Jesus as the Son of God. To them, he must be crazy or he would not be calling them thieves and robbers.

Joh 10:22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

Joh 10:23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

Joh 10:24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

Joh 10:25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

The feast of the dedication had arrived in Jerusalem and Jesus was walking in the temple. The Jews gathered around him and demanded that he tell them in so many words whether or not he was the Christ, or the Messiah for whom the Jews waited. Jesus replied that he had already told them but they would not believe what he said. They would not even believe when he performed great

signs and wonders before them.

Joh 10:26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

Joh 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Joh 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Joh 10:29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Joh 10:30 I and my Father are one.

He gave them the reason they were having such a hard time with him. They were not his sheep. If they had been his sheep, they would have recognized him as the Good Shepherd. They would have known him and followed him. This was sad, because if they had followed him, they could have found eternal life. As long as they continued to follow him, there was no power on earth or in heaven that could tear his sheep from under his sheltering arm. No man would be able to pluck them away from his Father. Then he added, I and my Father are one.

Joh 10:31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

Joh 10:32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

Joh 10:33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for

blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

Joh 10:34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

Joh 10:35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

Joh 10:36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

Joh 10:37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

Joh 10:38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

Joh 10:39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

The Jews then picked up stones once more and were ready to stone him to death. They considered his statement that he and the Father are one to have been blasphemy. Anyone guilty of blasphemy was to be stoned to death. Their mistake lay in refusing to understand the truth of what Jesus was saying. He is divine. He had the right to claim oneness with God.

Joh 10:40 And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

Joh 10:41 And many resorted unto him, and

said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

Joh 10:42 And many believed on him there.

They asked him what right he had to make himself a God. Jesus reply was that an Old Testament scripture even said other men were gods. Since the scriptures are correct and certain men had been called gods, he had the right to call himself the Son of God. The reference Jesus referred to was the eighty-second Psalm. The faithful of Jehovah were called “sons of God.” If the scripture called men the sons of God, Jesus, who is his Son in a far deeper sense, has every right to call God his Father and to say he is one with him. They tried to take him, but Jesus escaped from them and went to the area where John had baptized him in the Jordan River.

As they had done before, many heard of his teaching and his great works. They came. They heard, and they believed.

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Chapter 11

Joh 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

Joh 11:2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

The eleventh chapter of the book of John includes the account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It is a powerful message for each of us. If Jesus truly raised Lazarus from the dead, he can also raise us from the grave, he can also raise each of us. We must be ready to meet him when the time comes. The Bible is not a group of fairy tales or fables. It is the most real book in all the world through all of history. Those who ignore it will be called into judgment for their rebellion. Those who hear and obey it will be rewarded beyond imagination.

Jesus did not have many real close friends. Most of us have friends, relatives and neighbors whom we meet and talk with day by day. Because Jesus spent the last three years of his life moving about the land of Palestine with his small band of apostles, he did not enjoy the blessing of settling in one neighborhood and getting close to a collection of friends.

Yet there was one family with whom he became quite close. That was the one consisting of two sisters and a brother who lived in Bethany. The brother was Lazarus. The two sisters were Mary and Martha. Jesus spent as much time with these

three as he did with any other persons outside the apostolic band that traveled with him.

Joh 11:3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

Joh 11:4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Joh 11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

Joh 11:6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Joh 11:7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

One day Mary and Martha sent to Jesus to tell him their brother Lazarus was extremely sick. Mary was the same woman who had once before fallen at Jesus feet and wiped them off with her tear-soaked hair. Jesus loved all three of these individuals very deeply. When he heard about the sickness of Lazarus he said the sickness was not unto death, but it would be a means by which the Son of God might be glorified.

The Lord did some very surprising things. As much as he loved people, he sometimes allowed them to bear burdens which were not understood at first. This was one of the times that happened. Jesus almost completely ignored the urgent news

that Lazarus was ill. He proceeded to spend two whole days at his present location, before going to see about the man. After the two days had passed he told his disciples they would go back into Judea where Lazarus lived.

Joh 11:8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

Joh 11:9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

Joh 11:10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

Jesus disciples were concerned about him going to the area of Jerusalem and Bethany. The Jews there had sought to stone him to death. Was he going to walk straight back there into a barrage of stones which would take his life?

What an interesting answer Jesus gave to them. He said there are twelve hours of light during the day. If a man walks in the light he will not stumble. But if he walks in the dark he will stumble because there is no light in him. What did Jesus mean by talking about walking in the light here? I think he was saying, he had a certain amount of time for life on this earth. He would then go back to his Father in heaven. In another place he said, we must work the works of him that sent us while it is yet day. The night cometh when no man can work. Jesus night was ahead. He would be removed

from this earth through crucifixion. Therefore, he must go to Bethany and see about Lazarus in spite of the stones that might be waiting. It was still his daytime. As long as it was still his daytime, he would not stumble and fall short of the work which faced him.

Joh 11:11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

Joh 11:12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

Joh 11:13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

Joh 11:14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

Joh 11:15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

Joh 11:16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

He pointed out that his friend Lazarus had already gone to sleep. However, it was not the permanent sleep which does not end. It was the type of sleep which Jesus could interrupt and bring the persons who slept back to consciousness. He was ready to go and wake Lazarus from his sleep.

His disciples were relieved. If Lazarus was sleeping, that would be good for him. He might

feel much better when he awoke. Jesus corrected the disciples quickly. He said, “Lazarus is dead.” Furthermore, Jesus went on to say he was glad that he was not there when Lazarus died. As a result of Lazarus having died, the disciples might be made to believe more completely in the divine power of the Son of God. We can see that Jesus deliberately waited for the two days before he started in order that Lazarus would be dead when he arrived. This would allow him to show that men can be raised from the grave.

Thomas, the apostle, was firmly convinced that Jesus would be killed by the Jews if he returned to Bethany. He showed great courage when he said to the other disciples, “*Let us also go, that we may die with him.*”

By the time Jesus and his disciples reached Bethany it was found that Lazarus had died and had been lying in the grave for four days. It was a time of great grief for Mary, Martha and their friends who had gathered to mourn with them.

Joh 11:17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

Joh 11:18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

Joh 11:19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

As soon as Martha heard that Jesus had come near, she went out to meet him. Mary remained

in the house. At a previous time it was Mary who had chosen to stay close to Jesus while Martha went about the process of serving her guest. Jesus had said Mary has chosen the better part. This time Mary seems stunned by the delay in Jesus' coming.

Joh 11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

Joh 11:21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

Joh 11:22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

Joh 11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

When Martha met the Lord she had a question for him. *“If thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, he will give it.”* She seems to be the one with the greater faith this time. Jesus answered her by saying, *“Thy brother shall rise again.”* Martha thought he was talking about the final resurrection. She said, I know he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Joh 11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Joh 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the

resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

Joh 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Joh 11:27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

At that point Jesus spoke some of the most powerful and hope filled words that fell from his lips during his entire ministry on earth. He said, "*I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*"

Jesus used figures of speech to describe himself a number of times. He said, I am the door of the sheepfold, I am the Good Shepherd, I am the Vine and ye are the branches. But there is no more vivid figure than the one here. Jesus is the resurrection. Later, he will say, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. The two figures fit together like hand in glove. Death lies in the future for all men. It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the Judgment. Nevertheless, Jesus has the keys to death, hell and the grave. He is the way out of the grave and into the mansion prepared for the faithful in the presence of the Father in heaven. Lazarus helped Jesus in making this very solemn point.

Also I would like to point out that this passage

is the answer to the question Job asked when he was crying out for help. *“If a man die, shall he live again?”* Jesus answer is, *“Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live.”*

Joh 11:28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

Joh 11:29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

Joh 11:30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

Joh 11:31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

Joh 11:32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

Joh 11:33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.

Joh 11:34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

Joh 11:35 Jesus wept.

Martha quickly went back to their house, where Mary was. She told Mary to come because Jesus

was calling for her. Mary arose right away and started out to meet Jesus on the way. He had not yet come into Bethany. The Jews who were in the house watched Mary depart and thought she was going to the grave to mourn for her brother. They decided to accompany her to the grave. Instead, she went to meet the Lord. When Jesus saw her weeping, and also those who had come with her, he was very troubled inside. He asked, *“Where have you laid him?”* They pointed out the way to him. And then Jesus wept. He did not weep because Lazarus was dead. He wept because his friends were weeping. He well knew he could bring Lazarus back to life.

Joh 11:36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

Joh 11:37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

Joh 11:38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

Joh 11:39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

Joh 11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

The people were perplexed. They wondered why

a man who had been able to perform all of the wonderful miracles Jesus had performed could not have prevented Lazarus from dying if he loved him so much as to weep over him. Jesus then groaned within himself again. It was not pleasant for him to see men and women stricken with grief.

There was a stone over the mouth of the grave where Lazarus had been placed. Jesus commanded that the stone be rolled away from the opening. Martha was horrified. She said, Master, by this time he stinks, for he has been dead four days. She did not understand the power of the Son of God. Jesus chided her slightly. He said, *“Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”*

Joh 11:41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

Joh 11:42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

After they had removed the stone from the opening of the grave, Jesus looked up into the heavens and thanked God that God had heard him. This sounds like thanking him for what had happened before it happened. Remember that Jesus had been praying to his Father throughout his entire ministry. He knew the Father had heard him in

the past and he was certain he was hearing him at that time.

Jesus then explained that he had said what he had because he wished for those who were present to realize he was about to bring Lazarus from the dead through the power of Jehovah, the God of heaven, and that they might believe the Father had sent his Son into the world to save mankind.

Joh 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

Joh 11:44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Joh 11:45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

The Lord then cried out in a loud voice. "*Lazarus, come forth.*" As soon as Jesus called him, Lazarus appeared at the mouth of the grave, still wrapped in the graveclothes with which he had been wrapped. His face had been separately wrapped in another piece of cloth. Jesus then said, Loose him, and let him go. He was simply saying, remove the entangling wrappings and allow him his freedom to move around as any living man would do.

Marshall Keeble was perhaps the most well known of all the black preachers of the gospel in the generation just passed. Keeble made the

following observation. He said it was a good thing Jesus limited his call to Lazarus. If he had just said “*Come forth.*” all that were in the graves might have poured forth from all over the earth.

Joh 11:46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

Joh 11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

Joh 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

Joh 11:49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

Joh 11:50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

Joh 11:51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

Joh 11:52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Joh 11:53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

Joh 11:54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

As a result of Lazarus rising from the dead, there were many of the Jews who had been mourning with the sisters over the death of their brother who believed on the Christ as Saviour of the world. But that was not the case with all of them. There were some who reported to the Pharisees what had happened.

The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered to prepare a plan for dealing with Jesus. They were determined to do something about the man. He had interfered with their playhouse long enough. From this point on, John's account of the life of Christ focuses upon the effort of the chief priests and Pharisees to kill him. It was simply not possible for them to accept him as the foundation stone for the building of the church. They would destroy their own souls before they would allow Jesus to direct their paths.

The problem in getting rid of Jesus was that he was doing many mighty miracles which no one could deny. Caiaphas had a recommendation. It was far better that one man die for the people than that an entire nation die. Caiaphas did not realize he was making a prediction that Jesus would die for all men, not only the Jews, but also men of every nation who would one day come to Jesus.

Joh 11:55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

Joh 11:56 Then sought they for Jesus, and

spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

Joh 11:57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.

It was time for the Jewish Passover. The Jewish leaders wondered among themselves whether or not Jesus would come to attend the Passover. If he came to the feast, they had decided that would be the proper time to take him and kill him. They sent out the word that if any man saw him in the area they were to inform the Pharisees and chief priests that they might capture him. If Jesus was raising men from the dead, he must die!

The chief priests and Pharisees might as well have saved their anxieties. Jesus would be there. He did not want to die, any more than you or I would. But He had come to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of all who would believe upon Him. He was ready to face the coming hour.

Chapter 12

Joh 12:1 Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

Joh 12:2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

This twelfth chapter of John tells us of the entry of the Lord into the city of Jerusalem. He will not leave the city for any length of time again. He will be crucified within a matter of a few days. The last half of the book of John is devoted to these few days at the close of Christ's life.

Jesus would die on the day of the Passover feast. Six days before that he came to the village of Bethany, just across the Mount of Olives from the city of Jerusalem. Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived in Bethany. This is the same Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead a short time before this visit.

This place was as close to being home for the Lord as any during the few short years of his personal ministry. He loved all three of these persons. And they also loved him. He knew it would not be long before he was to die for the sins of the world. It was quite natural that he stop for a short time to see his friends. They made a supper for him, and as usual, Martha served the meal. Lazarus sat at the table with him.

Joh 12:3 Then took Mary a pound of

ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Joh 12:4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

Joh 12:5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

Joh 12:6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Joh 12:7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

Joh 12:8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

While he was eating, Mary came with some precious ointment and put it upon his feet. Then she wiped his feet with her hair. The whole house was filled with the smell of the ointment.

Judas could not contain himself. He saw this as a waste of money. He asked why the ointment was not sold and the money received for it given to the poor. Judas did not ask this because of any real concern for the needy. He asked because he carried the money bag for the band of apostles. He was a thief and had been taking from the bag for his own purposes.

Jesus scolded Judas and said to leave Mary alone. She had unknowingly begun to prepare him for his burial.

Joh 12:9 Much people of the Jews therefore

knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

Joh 12:10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

Joh 12:11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

Joh 12:12 On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

Many of the people heard Jesus was at Bethany and came to see him. They also desired to see Lazarus who had risen from the grave. So many of these people believed on Jesus because of these things that the Pharisees became even more determined to kill him.

Joh 12:13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Joh 12:14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

Joh 12:15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

Joh 12:16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had

done these things unto him.

Joh 12:17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

Joh 12:18 For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

Joh 12:19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

The next scene is one of the grandest in the entire book of God. As Jesus moved toward the city of Jerusalem, the common people began to walk with him and sing his praises. They cut palm branches and strewed them in his path to honor him as the Son of David whose coming was prophesied in the Old Testament. They cried out, "*Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.*" They found a young ass and Jesus rode him into the city as a fulfilment of the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9. Even his own disciples did not fully understand what was happening. Later, after his death, they remembered and understood.

While the common people glorified Christ, the Pharisees decided the whole world was going after him. Since this would take away from their own glory, they must take quick action.

Joh 12:20 And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the

feast:

Joh 12:21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

Joh 12:22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

Joh 12:23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

Joh 12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

Joh 12:25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Joh 12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

There were certain Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast. I do not believe these were Grecian Jews, or Jews who spoke Greek and had come from neighboring lands. I think they were Gentiles who had been converted to Jehovah and who joined the Jews in the Passover celebration. The reason I believe this is that Jesus immediately began to talk about welcoming any man who would come to serve him.

Joh 12:27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

~~**Joh 12:28** Father, glorify thy name. Then~~

came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

From this we can see that Jesus understood clearly that his death was just ahead. When he died for the sins of men, all men would be welcome to come to him and serve him. His body would be like a grain of wheat which fell into the ground and produced an entire wheat plant. Notice the word “any” in Jesus statement. It was not just the Jews who would be welcome as his servants. Any man or woman would be invited. The main thing which would be important was that the ones who came would be willing to give their lives for God, just as he was about to do. He would die for men of every land and every color. Men and women from every land and of every color were going to be free to become his followers.

Jesus did not want to die. He wanted to pray to his Father in heaven that he be saved from going through what was ahead. That did not keep him from being willing to offer himself. There are many things we humans do that we do not want to do, yet knowing all the time they must be done. That was the way it was with our Lord. He could not pray for his Father to keep him from the coming suffering. The hour had come and he was ready.

Now I have a question for you dear reader. Jesus was ready to die for you in order that you might have eternal life. Are you ready to live for him and be faithful unto death? Count the cost, and then count the benefits of living for Jesus. You will find

the benefits far outweigh the cost.

Joh 12:29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Joh 12:30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

Joh 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

The Father in heaven knew very well what kind of anguish and torment his Son was going through. God spoke to his Son at that moment. He told him he had glorified the name of Christ already, and that he would glorify it again. It seems the people who were nearby heard the voice of God but did not recognize it for what it was. Some thought it had thundered. Others thought an angel must have spoken to Jesus. Jesus attempted to satisfy their curiosity. He told them the voice had come for their sakes, not for his own. What did he mean by saying that? I think he was telling them, he knew his Father had been with him from the beginning, but that they needed to realize the importance of what was about to take place. His hour of glory was just ahead. His death would mean the Devil, or Prince of this world, would lose his greatest weapon, death and eternal punishment. With the death of Christ on the cross, death would lose its sting. The grave would lose its victory. The serpent had been wounded. He would writhe around for

some time and then would be cast into the lake of fire, along with his angels and with all who have followed him.

Joh 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Joh 12:33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.

Joh 12:34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

Then Jesus said, *"If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me."* Jesus is the light of the world. If you have noticed how insects are drawn to a light in the midst of darkness, you can understand that Jesus is capable of drawing men to himself because he has been lifted up on the cross.

Jesus is lifted up in several ways. He was lifted up on the cross. He was lifted up from the Mount of Olives when he ascended back to heaven. He is lifted up every time men glorify his name and serve him here on earth. In this particular case, Jesus was talking about his coming crucifixion. Verse thirty-three of this chapter says he was signifying what sort of death he was to die. Most of us do not know how we will die. Jesus knew!

The disciples were confused. They had heard that when the Great King came, he would reign over an eternal kingdom. It was to last for ever and ever. If Jesus was to die, how could this prophecy of the

coming Messiah be fulfilled? If Jesus was not this Son of man who was to come and reign for ever, who was it to be?

We find Jesus patiently answering questions from his disciples many times when they failed to comprehend the importance of himself or the life he lived. Once again he replied with the same patience he had shown when he spoke to Nicodemus about being born a second time, and when he spoke to the woman at the well in Samaria when he talked with her about the water of life. This time he would try to explain about his coming death as being a light in the middle of spiritual darkness.

Joh 12:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

Joh 12:36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

Joh 12:37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

The light is there my friends. Jesus is that light. As he was lifted up on the cross that light shines unto all the world. If you live in darknes, it is not his fault, nor is it the fault of the Father in heaven. The children of light will walk in the light. They will be able to see the dangers of life and the goal toward which they are moving. The children

of darkness do not see either the dangers which face them, or the heavenly city which is prepared for the faithful.

Joh 12:38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Joh 12:39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

Joh 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

Joh 12:41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

Though many believed, there were also many who did not. Even after seeing the miracles which he did, they turned away from him. Isaiah had prophesied that just such things would happen. In the fifty-third chapter of the book of Isaiah, the prophet spoke of the suffering Saviour. He asked the question, "*Lord, who hath believed our report.*" In every century there have been those who believed and those who were unbelievers. It is not that they cannot believe. They will not. They shut their eyes to the light. They stop their ears to the power of the Word of God. They stiffen their necks and harden their hearts. Isaiah had foreseen all of this and spoke of Jesus the Christ. It is truly sad

but there are those who are so very sick and who have spiritual medicine so very close, yet will not come to the Great Physician who can cause them to see, to hear and to live.

Joh 12:42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

Joh 12:43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Among those who believed in Christ were some of the chief rulers of the synagogue. Nevertheless, they did not let it be known that they believed because they knew they would have been put out of the synagogue. These men loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. The book of Revelation speaks of such persons when it says the fearful shall not inherit eternal life.

Joh 12:44 Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

Joh 12:45 And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.

Joh 12:46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

Joh 12:47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

Joh 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and

receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Joh 12:49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

Joh 12:50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

The Lord then proceeded to give the people a short talk on the importance of believing and obeying the words which he spoke. He pointed out that these were words of spiritual light. They were words which came not from him as a human, but came from the divine Father. The man who heard his words and obeyed them would see the Father who had sent Jesus into the world.

Jesus had not come into the world to gain pleasure by condemning men. He had come that they might have life and have it more abundantly. Yet, if men failed to listen to his words, they would find themselves answering for their behavior in the judgment. The Father had given commandment as to what his Son Jesus Christ was to say to men. Those who hear and obey will find the commandments of God lead to everlasting life. Those who turn away will gnash their teeth unendingly.

Jesus said, *“I speak therefore even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”*

The Book Of John – Chapter 12

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Chapter 13

Joh 13:1 Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

Joh 13:2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

Joh 13:3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

As chapter thirteen of John began, Jesus and his disciples had gathered to partake of the Passover Feast. Back in the days of Moses, God had commanded that this feast be kept. A lamb without blemish was to be killed on that day. That lamb was a type of Jesus Christ. It was to be just a matter of hours before Jesus Christ, whom John the baptist called the "Lamb of God" would be killed upon the cross. Jesus knew very well that his hour was at hand. He had even told his disciples ahead of time that he would be taken by his enemies and murdered. It was just a matter of how and when.

The Lord and his band of apostles had finished eating the supper and the Devil had invaded the heart of Judas. Judas had already complained that the ointment which Mary had used to anoint Christ should have been sold and the money placed in

the bag which he carried. Satan apparently saw a chance to take Judas for his own and Judas invited him into his soul. Now Judas decided to betray Christ.

Joh 13:4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

Joh 13:5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

When they had finished eating, Jesus took a towel and wrapped it around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the apostles feet, and to wipe their feet dry with the towel. As was often the case, Jesus did these things to focus their minds upon a very important lesson. There were two classes of persons among the apostles. There was Judas who was ready to betray him. And there were those who sought to serve God. Jesus had a lesson for both classes.

When the Lord came to Simon Peter, Peter was embarrassed. This was the Son of God. Surely he ought not to be humbling himself to the extent that he would wash Peter's feet. That was a task for servants, not for the Lord of lords and the Only Begotten Son of God. Peter objected.

Joh 13:6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou

wash my feet?

Joh 13:7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

Joh 13:8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Joh 13:9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

Joh 13:10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

Jesus answered him by saying that he did not understand at that time, but the time would come when he would understand much better. Then Peter declared that there would never come a time when Christ should wash his feet. Then Jesus hit home with lesson number one. He said unless Peter allowed him to wash him, he could have no part with him. Of course Jesus was talking about the forgiveness of sins. The time would come when his blood would wash away the sins of men. If Peter did not allow Christ to cleanse him of his sins, he could have no place in the Kingdom of God.

Peter was still confused. If Jesus wanted to wash him, then he ought not to wash his feet. It would be better to wash his hands or his head rather than his feet. Jesus indicated that the apostles hands and the rest of their body were already clean. Only their feet were in need of washing.

Joh 13:11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

Joh 13:12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

Then he headed for his next lesson. He said, *“Ye are not all clean.”* He was speaking of Judas. Judas may have had a clean body. But he did not have a clean heart. His heart was filled with malice and treason.

Jesus continued to wash the feet of each of the apostles. Then he sat down and began to talk to them. He asked them if they understood what he had done. Before they answered, he began to explain.

Joh 13:13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

Joh 13:14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.

Joh 13:15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

They were in the habit of calling Jesus “Master.” This was correct. He was their Master. Now if the Master had humbled himself to the level of a servant and had washed their feet, they also ought to be willing to humble themselves and wash one another’s feet. This is one of those places in the

Bible where changes in society make a difference in how a teaching is applied. At the time Jesus made this statement, men walked on dusty roads in sandals. Their feet became crusted with dirt. It was a service to one whose feet were dirty to see that his feet were clean and refreshed. A host very often saw to these matters. Jesus was not above serving the apostles in this way. Today the host would be more apt to take the coat and hat of the guest and see that it was properly hung up.

Jesus then concluded this lesson. If he, being their Master, had served them, they should certainly be ready and willing to serve their fellow man. He added that such service would make the one who served happy.

Joh 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

Joh 13:17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Joh 13:18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

Joh 13:19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

Joh 13:20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

With lesson number two before the disciples,

Jesus turned back to his discussion of Judas. Judas was one among the disciples who had not humbled his heart to serve others. He was unclean with sin. He was ready to lift himself up against the Saviour. Christ referred to an Old Testament scripture.

Psalm 41:9. "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

Joh 13:21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Joh 13:22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

Joh 13:23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Joh 13:24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

Joh 13:25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

Then Jesus became more specific. He said, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*" This caused real concern among the apostles. They looked at one another wondering who among them would be so ungrateful as to betray the one who had loved them so much. John happened to be sitting very close to the Saviour. Simon Peter asked John to question the Lord as to just who it was that would do such a terrible thing. John

asked him.

Joh 13:26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

Joh 13:27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

Jesus said it would be the one to whom he would give a sop when he had dipped it. There could be no mistake. Jesus would take a piece of bread and dip it into a bowl of liquid. Then he would offer the piece of bread to one of the apostles. That would be the one who would betray him. I would hate to have been in the place of Judas at that moment. Everyone would know what was in his heart. Jesus dipped the bread and handed it to Judas. Then he said, *“That thou doest, do quickly.”*

I once heard of a situation in which this verse was quoted to one who had decided to leave the Roman Catholic priesthood. The person had served as a priest for some time. During a period of time he decided he was wrong in his faith and practice. He informed his superiors of his decision to leave. After lengthy discussion during which it became clear that he was determined to turn away from his responsibilities as a priest, one of those who had been trying to keep him in Romanism said to him, *“That thou doest, do quickly.”* His superior was calling the former priest a Judas who had betrayed

the Lord. I must disagree.

I do believe it is a terrible thing for one to follow Jesus for some time and then turn away to the world. To do that is to crucify him afresh and trample his blood underfoot. It insults all three members of the Godhead. God is insulted by having the gift of his Son ignored. Christ is insulted by having his cause damaged. The Holy Spirit is insulted by having his truth rejected. One cannot betray Christ and expect to remain protected from the fires of hell.

Joh 13:28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

Joh 13:29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

The rest of the apostles did not understand why Jesus had said to Judas that he was to do quickly that which he was about to do. They thought perhaps Jesus was telling him to go and buy things which were needed for the feast. Or maybe he was being told to take some money from the bag and see that it was given to the poor. But Judas knew. He went out immediately into the night and left the rest of the apostles in the room.

Dear reader, do you sometimes wonder about the meaning of certain statements in the Bible? I certainly do. The thoughts of God are far above our own.

Isaiah 55:8-9“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

There is a song which says, “Sometime, somewhere we’ll understand.” God knows much better than we do just how things are going to turn out in the future. To be honest with you, it is difficult for me to understand what Paul meant when he said the faithful will be given new bodies that are spiritual and incorruptible. I will simply have to wait until the time comes and see just what was meant. I am sure the Jews did not understand that every time they sacrificed a Passover lamb, they were demonstrating how much farther God is able to see ahead than we are able to see. God knew Jesus would be crucified. The Jews did not know that.

Another point I would like to make is that when Judas decided to forsake Jesus Christ, he went out into the night. Dear friends, that is where men are before they come to Christ. That is where men go when they turn away from Christ. They may not be aware of the darkness through which they wander. Their physical eyes see the material things around them. But their spiritual eyes have been closed. They are surrounded by dangers of which they have no knowledge. Just as in the case of Judas, they make easy prey for the Devil.

Joh 13:30 He then having received the sop

went immediately out: and it was night.

Joh 13:31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

Joh 13:32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

Joh 13:33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.

As soon as Judas had left, Jesus predicted that the time had come for the Son of man to be glorified. Now this is a strange saying. How could it be that being betrayed and crucified would glorify the Lord? Paul spoke of this in the book of Philippians. He said Jesus had emptied himself of the glory of heaven to take upon himself the form of a servant and become obedient even unto death. He then followed this by saying that as a result of Jesus willingness to humble himself, God had raised him up and given him a name above all names. The word glorify or glorified is used five times in two verses of John thirteen. Listen. *“Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.”* Jesus had said earlier, *“If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto myself.”* It is true. The crucified Christ is glorified by both God and men.

The Lord then repeated a statement he had made to the Jewish rulers. He told the apostles he was going somewhere that they could not follow him right away. But they would follow him later on. He was going back to the Father in heaven. They would follow when the time came.

Joh 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Joh 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

In the meantime Jesus told them he was giving them a new commandment. That they should love one another as he had loved them. The command to love one another was not new. This commandment had been given in Old Testament times. The newness was in the fact that they were to love one another **as Jesus had loved them**. If they would keep that commandment, the world would know they were Jesus disciples.

Joh 13:36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

Joh 13:37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

Joh 13:38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till

thou hast denied me thrice.

Once again, it was Peter who spoke out. He wanted to know where Jesus was going. Peter wanted to know why he could not follow Jesus then. Why did he have to wait until later? Peter did understand that there might well be serious danger ahead if he decided to follow the Lord. He promised Jesus that he would be willing to follow him, even if it was necessary to lay down his own life.

Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. He told him that before the cock crew Peter would deny him three times. How strong are you my friend? Would you follow Jesus, even if it meant you must

Chapter 14

Joh 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

Joh 14:2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Joh 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Joh 14:4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

This fourteenth chapter of the gospel according to John, tells of Jesus preparing his apostles for his coming departure from this earth. He informs them that he must go. Then he tells them he will not leave them without help. And he tells them he will come back some day to take them to be with him in heaven. There are thoughts in this chapter that are able to soothe any man or woman who wonders if the trials of this world will never end.

In previous studies I have mentioned the fact that almost all of the last half of the gospel according to John deals with the coming death, burial and resurrection of the Saviour. He has now gone back to the area of Jerusalem where the rulers of the Jews and the chief priests have decided to kill him at the first opportunity. He has raised Lazarus from the grave. This increased the jealousy of his enemies to a higher level than ever before. Jesus knew this very well. In spite of the danger he faced, he kept

moving ever closer to the city where he was to be put on trial and condemned to die.

It was important to Jesus that he prepare his apostles for the terrible things which were not far ahead. They must carry on the work for which he had prepared them. If you were Jesus, what would you have said to those who had given up everything to follow you and hear your teaching. How could you give them the strength they would need to continue even after your death? Let us see how Jesus handled the matter.

Yes, their hearts would be troubled in the very near future. They would see their precious Master arrested, crucified and buried. It would take every bit of courage and strength they could gather to survive and move onward after he was gone.

But Jesus softened the problems by saying there was a purpose in all that was happening. He was not passing away into nothingness. He was going to be preparing a place where he could be with them in the future. When he was ready, and they were ready, he would come back to get them that they might be with him once more. They need not worry that he was going away forever.

Joh 14:5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Joh 14:7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Thomas was very puzzled. Where was Jesus going? Jesus had said they knew the way. How could they know the way when they really did not know where he would be?

Jesus gave Thomas a very short and clear answer to his question. He said, *“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.”* Thomas was being led to a magnificent truth. Jesus was going home to his Father in heaven. But not only was Jesus going home to be with his Father. He had provided the teaching and example by which his disciples could also go home to the Father. By hearing and watching Jesus, they had actually seen the Father at work.

Joh 14:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Joh 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Joh 14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Joh 14:11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Philip then entered the conversation. He wanted Jesus to show them the Father. If they could see him, they could go to him. Jesus took his lesson

a step farther. Those who had been with him for over three years should have understood that he was the express image of the Father. Sons in the flesh often resemble their earthly fathers. Jesus Christ was the Son of God in a very special way. Jesus is so much like the Father in heaven that when men see Jesus, they can say they have seen the Father. Jesus added that he was in the Father and the Father was in him. It was the Father in heaven who had given him the words that he taught. It was the Father in heaven who had given him the power to do the miracles which he had done. If they were having trouble seeing the Father in Jesus, they must look carefully at the signs, wonders and mighty deeds he had done. These would prove that the Father was in him, and that he was the Way to the Father.

Joh 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Joh 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Next, Jesus made one of those startling statement for which he was so well known. He said,

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go

unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

I wondered greatly about this verse in my early days as a Christian. Was it saying Christians of the twentieth century could do greater miracles than Jesus Christ himself had done? I am going to make a confession to you. My brother and I shared a dormitory room on a Christian college campus. We were both determined to check out this verse. We decided to see if we could cause a piece of paper to fall over by concentrating on it doing so. He sat on one side of the table. I sat on the other. He prayed that it fall toward me. I prayed the same. We had folded it ever so slightly to keep it upright. We sat for many minutes in perfect silence, waiting for it to fall. Needless to say, the paper never even trembled.

I am now convinced we followed the wrong path. Jesus was not talking about physical miracles when he said his disciples would one day do greater things than he had done. He was talking about healing the spiritually diseased. He was talking about bringing the spiritually dead to life. These are greater works than healing a physically blind man, or causing a physically lame man to walk. Yes, my friends. I can do greater things than Jesus did when he raised Lazarus from the grave. Through the power of the Word of God, I can cause a spiritually blind man to see. I can cause a spiritually lame man to walk. I can even cause a man who is dead in his sins

to be buried with his Lord in baptism and begin to walk a new life in Christ. I challenge you to do the same.

Joh 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Joh 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

There is something Jesus does for us, and there is something we are to do for him. When he asks us to keep his commandments, we are to do so. If we ask him for that which is good and proper, he will see that we receive our wish.

Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Joh 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Joh 14:19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

Joh 14:20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

Joh 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:

and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

The Lord then promised that after his departure, he would send the Holy Spirit as another Comforter. His followers need never worry that the Holy Spirit would depart from them. He would be with them forever. The new relationship between the Holy Spirit and each Christian would be even closer than that which they had enjoyed with Jesus. The Holy Spirit would not only be with them. He would dwell in them. As their own spirit dwelt in their body and provided physical life, even so the Holy Spirit would dwell in them and provide spiritual life.

Jesus made it clear that the time was short before he would disappear from this world. The world would not see him any more. However the faithful would see him. When the day arrived that they saw Jesus, they would know that he was in the Father and the Father was in him. At that time, they would receive eternal life.

Joh 14:22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Joh 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Joh 14:24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

Joh 14:25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

This time Judas was the one to ask a question. How could it be that when he manifested himself, the world would not see him but the faithful would see him. Jesus offered him an answer.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.”

There is a sense in which all three persons of the Godhead dwell within the man of God. Since I do not even understand how the ordinary spirit of man dwells within his body, I am not able to tell you precisely how God, the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit dwell in my body. But, the Bible tells me they do dwell in the Christian, and I accept that as true. I might add that centuries ago David prayed that God not take his Holy Spirit from David. The body of a man is called an earthly tabernacle. A tabernacle is a temporary dwelling

place. My spirit temporarily dwells in my fleshly tabernacle. It also provides a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit, and for the Father and the Son. The main point of this is that I am never alone. God is with me.

Jesus then proceeded to tell them the fact that they had been willing to hear his own teachings and obey them would cause the Holy Spirit to come and teach them all things. There were things they were not ready to hear at the time of Jesus departure. When the time came for those truths to be given, the Holy Spirit would give them. He would lead them unto all truth. He would teach them things which Jesus had not yet taught them, and he would bring to their remembrance those things which Jesus had taught them.

This was very important in those early days of Christianity, before the Bible was written and collected in a single book. The Word of God cannot be lightly taken. It must be protected carefully to see that it is not polluted with the traditions of men.

Joh 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Joh 14:28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Joh 14:29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass,

ye might believe.

Joh 14:30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

Joh 14:31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

Jesus then promised them one more great blessing. He promised to leave his peace with them. This is no unimportant thing. Here was the Lord facing crucifixion within just a matter of hours. Yet, he tells the disciples he is going to allow them to share in his peace. How could dying on a cross be considered peace? Jesus went on to say the peace he was leaving them was not the kind of peace the world knows about. It was not the peace which comes because all is quiet and tranquil in this life. The peace about which Jesus was speaking was peace with God and peace with one's self. The world does not understand that peace. It was the kind of Peace which allowed Christ to hang on the cross and say, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" The Christian can share in that kind of peace even though the waves of a chaotic world are heaving all around him.

Christ told his disciples it was to be a time of rejoicing when he went away, because if he went away he would come back again to receive them. Jesus was not sorrowful that he was going home to be with his Father in heaven. That was where

he had been before he ever emptied himself of his glory and came down to this lowly land of sin and sorrow to sacrifice himself for us and to bear our stripes upon his back. If they truly loved Jesus, they would rejoice at the thought that he was going to his heavenly home to be with his Father.

The Lord told the disciples that they had been informed of what was going to happen, even before it happened. That would allow them to know it had been planned ahead of time. The Devil would come to do his evil work. He is the Prince of this world. He delights in sin and death. He has nothing to do with Christ as the Prince of peace. When all was said and done, the world would be able to see that Jesus Christ was only keeping the commandments of the Father.

The chapter closes as Jesus said to his disciples, “*Arise, let us go hence.*” Where was he going? He was once more headed in the direction of the place of the skull where he would be lifted up in crucifixion, like a common murderer or thief. As a Lamb before the shearer, so opened he not his mouth.

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Chapter 15

Joh 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Joh 15:2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

This fifteenth chapter of John talks about the importance of getting into Christ, living in Christ, and dying in Christ. If we continue in him, we will find the real freedom which all men cherish. We need to drink deeply from the water of life. Jesus can refresh and vitalize our lives. There are two places in the New Testament where the print is almost completely red in red letter editions of the Bible. These red portions indicate Jesus is the one doing the talking. One of those places is in Matthew. The fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew contain the sermon on the mount. For three whole chapters, we have only the unbroken words of Christ. The other place where there is a mass of red print is in the fourteenth through the seventeenth chapters of John. In Matthew, Jesus was beginning his ministry. In John, he was drawing it to a close. Both are filled with very meaningful thoughts.

The chapter opens with Jesus declaring he is the true vine and his Father is the husbandman.

There are three related persons and things listed in the first two verses. There is the one who supervises the vine. That is God the Father. There is the vine which he supervises. That vine is Christ.

Then, there are the branches of the vine which draw nourishment from the vine. These branches are the individual Christians. Jesus is not talking here about those in the world. He is talking about those who have become Christians and promised to follow him. It is true that the world does not draw nourishment from Christ. It would not be expected that as long as they remain separated from Jesus, they would receive such nourishment. It is different with the one who has become a Christian. We expect such a person to enjoy a rich and full spiritual life in Christ.

Jesus indicated that there are so-called Christians who do not live like that. They should be bearing fruit, but they are not. I have heard it said that the sectarian world is made up of many branches in Christ. Thus each branch would be a different sect. That is not the meaning of this passage. The passage is talking about each Christian being a branch. God inspects every Christian to see if that Christian is bearing fruit in his vineyard. If they are not bearing fruit, they may expect to be corrected that they may begin doing so.

As a high school student in agriculture class, I was one of a group who went out to an orchard where the owner was pruning trees. He explained to us that the entire tree would bear more fruit if certain of the branches were cut off. We got involved and some of us actually learned how to purge the branches of a tree in order that it might produce a greater harvest.

Joh 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Joh 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Jesus is interested in a harvest of souls. Useless branches just get in the way. They must be cut off in order that the rest of the tree is not hindered. It is not right for a Christian branch to suck food from the vine and then not produce any fruit. At the time a person becomes a Christian, that which is useless is removed from their life. Jesus said, *“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”* Therefore, it is through the Word of Christ that men are purged or pruned. Jesus expects them to remain free from their sinful ways when they follow him.

Joh 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Joh 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Joh 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Joh 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Joh 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

The Lord then proceeded to tell what will happen to the Christian if the pruning or purging does not cause fruit bearing. That person will be cut off from Christ. He will wither and die spiritually, just as a branch which is cut off from its stem will soon dry up and be fit for nothing but casting into the fire.

There is another path. One can produce much fruit in the Kingdom of God. When that happens, God takes notice of the fine harvest. He is pleased with the life of that person. Then, rather than being cast into the fire and burned, that person has the privilege of asking God for whatever blessings he needs. They will be provided for him. Of course the requests men make must harmonize with the will of God. God will not give anything to a faithful Christian which will harm him.

Joh 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Verse ten of this chapter tells us to keep the commandments of God in order that we may abide in the love of Christ. He kept the Father's commandments, and he expects us to keep them also. When we keep those commandments, Christ loves us in a very special way. Christ loves the souls of all men. They are precious to him. He even died for us while we were yet sinners. At the same time, he has a deeper love for those who have decided to follow him in the keeping of the commandments of the Father in heaven.

Joh 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Joh 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Joh 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Joh 15:14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Jesus explained that for a person to be full of joy, it is necessary to follow his teaching and example. Those who spend much of their time wallowing around in sin and seeking the pleasures of this world will never find the meaning of true joy. Jesus is the source of true joy. And that joy only comes when one walks in the light as Jesus did. It only comes when men are willing to love their Christian brethren and sacrifice their own life for the sake of others. One of the most beautiful verses in the Bible is found in this chapter. It says, "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*"

Jesus said the Pharisees told others what to do, but they did not do those things themselves. In contrast, Jesus did practice what he preached. When he asked us to lay down our lives for our friends, he was quite willing to set the example. His death on the cross was not necessary for his own pleasure. He did not want to suffer and die on Calvary. He did it because he was willing to lay down his life for his friends. He went on to say that those who

keep his commandments are his friends.

My friends, Do you find it difficult to obey commands? Many do find it hard. This ought not to be the case with the commandments of Jesus. He never gives commands strictly for the sake of bossing us around. Every command he gave was meant to make our lives more satisfying and productive. His commands are the food which comes from the vine. Our obedient lives are the fruit which he expects to be produced. Obedience to Christ should never be a burden. It should be a joy.

Next, the Lord pointed out a difference between a servant and a friend. A master ordinarily does not tell his servants much about why they are expected to keep certain commandments. Friends are allowed to be in on what is going on. Jesus called us friends rather than servants because he was careful to explain to us the reason for serving. It is easier to serve when we know the reasons why we are commanded to act in certain ways.

Joh 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Joh 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Joh 15:17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Notice the next verse now. It is a bit puzzling. Jesus said,

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain. . . These things I command you, that ye love one another.”

You see, my friends, It was not our idea that Jesus would give his life for us. It was his idea. Now if it was his idea to give his life for his friends, we should follow in his steps and love each other sufficiently that we would serve others. God is love.

Joh 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

Joh 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Joh 15:20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

Joh 15:21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me.

Joh 15:22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

Jesus' next words were,

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

It was once a part of my chores to feed the chickens. At times a chicken would be pecked by another chicken. Blood would come. When the other chickens saw the blood on that one chicken, they realized it was different from them. They would then all begin to peck on that bloody chicken until it died. Men are a bit like that. When we see someone who is different from ourselves, we tend to be a bit suspicious. Jesus was saying that Christians are different from those in the world. Because they are different, the world often makes life difficult for them. Jesus said, The world **hateth** you.

Joh 15:23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

Joh 15:24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

Joh 15:25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

There does not have to be a strong reason why the world hates Christians. The good life the Christian

lives is in great contrast to the evil manners of the worldly person. The man in the world knows the life of the Christian makes his or her own sin look blacker. The sinner is much more comfortable when he can associate only with others whose hearts are full of wickedness. The Christian makes the sinner feel guilty. It makes him want to get even for making him so uncomfortable.

The Saviour made it clear that Christians would suffer persecution. If the worldly persons hated him as much as they did, would it not be expected that they would also hate those who followed in his ways?

The Lord did not list a long list of things which sinners would do to persecute Christians. He did not have to do that. Christians have had the opportunity to know just what he was talking about through experience. The trials come about because of name calling. For example, the sinner will mockingly say, "*Well I am no saint, but—*." He will talk about Christians being hypocrites, or having a "holier than thou" attitude. Sometimes bosses will favor the non-Christian in giving raises or promotions.

If the world heard the sayings of Jesus, it would also hear the sayings of the apostles who taught the same things he had taught. If the world rejected the sayings of Jesus, it would also reject the sayings of the apostles when they taught those same things. He then said they would do these terrible things to Christians because they did not know the Father who had sent Jesus to earth. He

was using the word “know” in the sense of realizing just who the Father is and what he is like. Men who do not understand the nature of God will act differently than those who do know something of his character.

Jesus said that it was because he had uncovered the nakedness of their sin that they hated him. If he had never come to earth and taught the principles of right and wrong, they might have had some excuse for their sinful ways. But that was not the way it was. He did come to earth. He did tell them what sin was. He showed them what righteousness was. Because he had uncovered their sin, they hated him for making them look bad. When they hated Jesus, they also hated his Father. After all, it was the Father who had sent his Son to tell the sinner about his sin and caused him to call out for the sinners to repent and become part of the Kingdom of heaven.

If Jesus had never come to men and spelled out what was right and wrong, no man would have known his guilt and the deadly danger of his ways. But, Jesus had come, and they very well knew what was wrong in their life, and what they should do about it.

As we come to the close of the chapter, Jesus told his listeners the hate the sinners felt toward him had been prophesied in Old Testament times. It had been said that they would hate him without a cause. They did just that.

Jesus was not worried about what the sinners had to say about him, or what the sinners did to him. He would send the Holy Spirit who would

tell the truth about him. Then the apostles, and the Christians of every age, would present the true picture of the Christ.

Joh 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

Joh 15:27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the

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Chapter 16

Joh 16:1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

Joh 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

Joh 16:3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

Joh 16:4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

This chapter is one of four chapters in which Jesus is talking about closing out his work here on earth in the flesh and departing from his beloved apostles. The scenes are deeply touching. Goodbyes are always sentimental, and the one between Jesus and his apostles was especially emotional.

As we begin this sixteenth chapter of John, Jesus had already told his apostles that he was going to go and prepare a place for them that he might come back and receive them to himself. In this present chapter He is continuing to prepare them for his departure. He has more to say about what will happen to them during the time he is away preparing a place for them in heaven.

When Jesus used the word “offended” he did not use it in exactly the same way we use it today. He was not talking about having their feelings hurt.

He was talking about them being persecuted to the point that they might turn back and become unfaithful to God. The things he had been saying, and the things he was about to say, were intended to keep them from becoming discouraged.

He did not try to cover up the difficulties that were ahead of them. He told them they would be put out of the synagogues and the time would even come when those who killed them would think they had done God a favor. The reason the world would do these things was because the world does not recognize either the Father in heaven, or the Son of God on earth. Remember, my friends, Jesus prayed at the cross for God to forgive his murderers because they did not know the horror of what they were doing. The apostles would have to contend with the same kind of ignorance.

Joh 16:5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

Joh 16:6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Jesus went on to say He was telling them about these coming trials so they would realize He knew about them before they happened. Knowing He had the power to see the future would give them confidence in following Him to heaven.

It would not help them to cover up the difficulties which lay ahead of them. The answer was not in giving them false hope. The answer was to be found in sending them a Comforter to help them through

the persecutions.

Joh 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

Joh 16:8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Joh 16:9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

Jesus promised to send them a comforter. He had not finished the task of spreading the Word of God. There were still things to be taught, even to the apostles. Also there were lands far beyond Palestine where men must hear the truth. The Comforter would complete the work which Jesus had begun.

Let us look at three things the Comforter would do. First, the Comforter would tell the world about sin. Men would be caused to know what was wrong in their lives. Before one can live as he should live, he must know what needs to be corrected. Second, the Comforter would tell the world about righteousness. Not only must one be told what is wrong; he must also be told what he should be doing.

Joh 16:10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

Joh 16:11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Joh 16:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Joh 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Joh 16:14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Joh 16:15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

It is not enough to do nothing. One must cease to do wrong. He must turn to that which is right. The Comforter would give instructions for righteous living. Third, the Comforter would tell men about the judgment which is to come. After we have been told what to avoid, and what we should be doing, we must understand the consequences of our actions. The Comforter would inform men of the joy of heaven and the terror of damnation. Thus, men would be thoroughly prepared for godly living. They would know what they should not do, what they should do, and the consequences of choosing either path.

Jesus said when the Comforter came he would not work independently of the Father and the Son. He would speak only those things that are in agreement with the will of God. He would be known as the Spirit of truth because he would present only the truth which would prepare men for heaven.

Joh 16:16 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

Joh 16:17 Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

Joh 16:18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

Joh 16:19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?

The Lord then told the apostles it would be just a little while before they would not see Him any more. Then after a little while they would see him again. This would be true because it was time for him to go to his Father. This left the apostles bewildered. They could not understand what he meant.

Joh 16:20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

Joh 16:21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

Joh 16:22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Jesus knew they were puzzled. He decided to explain himself a little more. He then illustrated what he meant. When a woman is in labor during the birth of her baby, she finds the delivery of the baby a very difficult time. Yet, as soon as the baby is born the anguish turns to joy as she casts her eyes upon her newborn child. It would be like that with the apostles. The time of persecution would be hard to bear. But when Jesus returned to take them to heaven, the anguish would turn to unspeakable joy.

I think, my friends, that we at least partially understand what Jesus was saying to his apostles. His words were not meant just for them. They were meant also for any disciple in any age who finds life difficult because of the trials and sorrow of this world. Just like the apostles, we need the comfort which only God can give. It sometimes appears as if the difficulties of this life are unending. Jesus says that is not the case. If we will give ourselves to him, he will provide the help we need to pass through every trial. This help will come through the Comforter he was ready to send when he departed.

I think an appropriate question right here would be, "Just how can I take advantage of the help which the Comforter is supposed to provide?" I have never seen him. I have never heard him

Speak to me in an audible voice. How can I receive the assistance Jesus said would be there for those who were traveling this pilgrim journey in a land of sin and sorrow? I believe there is a clear answer to those questions. I believe that answer is found in the New Testament. Jesus said the Comforter is the Spirit of truth.

Let's go back to verse thirteen of this chapter for a moment. There, Jesus said, "*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth.*" I believe this was done through the presentation of the body of truth found in our present New Testament. Paul told Timothy,

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The truth which the Comforter, or Spirit of truth, or Holy Spirit was to provide would be given to us through inspired men who wrote this truth down as it was presented by the Spirit. It is a complete body of directions which tells us of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come. With these directions men have no excuse for ignoring the Way, the Truth and the Life to come.

But, I can almost hear the reader asking me if

God does not guide each and every life today in his providential wisdom. Yes, he does. He places open doors before us when we show we desire to do his will. When we pass through those doors of opportunity, he will see that new opportunities are placed before us. Such things are not spelled out in the Bible. Yet, they are a part of God's leading. The Hebrew letter tells us God's children can expect chastisement when they do wrong. It is said that if a man does not receive correction from God, he is not a true child of the Father. The Father will always chastise his own. If there is no chastisement, the person must be a bastard and not a child.

Prayer plays a part in the assistance of the Holy Spirit, or Comforter of God. The eighth chapter of Romans is an entire chapter dealing with the help men may receive through the Spirit of God. In the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth verses of that chapter, we read:

Rom 8:27-28 "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Joh 16:23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

Joh 16:24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that

your joy may be full.

Joh 16:25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

Joh 16:26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

Joh 16:27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

Joh 16:28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

Prayer makes a difference in the life of the Christian. When the faithful child of God knows he needs guidance in times of difficulty, he opens his heart to God and asks for help. The Comforter knows both the trials and the power of God to overcome those trials. He takes our prayers to the Father and the Father then sees that all things work together for the good of his praying child. Jesus was offering tremendous blessings to every faithful Christian when he promised he would send the Comforter to assist us until he returned.

I think it is also meaningful that the very end of the eighth chapter of Romans says there is nothing that can separate the faithful from the love of God. Neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come can separate us from God's love, which is in Christ Jesus. Most of the apostles died as martyrs. They were killed

by those who hated Jesus Christ and his church. But not even their death could destroy them. They will be raised from the grave to meet their Lord when he comes back for them.

Joh 16:29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

Joh 16:30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

Joh 16:31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

Joh 16:32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

Joh 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

After Jesus left, the apostles were to ask the Father for what they needed. Up to that time they had not asked God through the name of Jesus Christ. After he left, they would ask in his name. When they did so, Jesus would see that their prayers were heard and answered.

The apostles then told Jesus they were sure that he had come from God. Jesus replied with a question. Did they really believe he had come

forth from God? If they did, they were prepared for the hour that was to come. The time was just ahead when each would be scattered in different directions and Jesus would be left alone. He added that he would not truly be alone, even though they left him. The Father would still be with him and would care for him.

He then added that he had told them these things about the Comforter and about the possibility of prayer through his own name that they might have peace during tribulation. They were to be of good cheer. Since Jesus had overcome the world, they must do the same.

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Chapter 17

Joh 17:1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

Joh 17:2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

Joh 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Joh 17:4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Joh 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Those who love Jehovah and try to live according to his will are facing an ever increasing mountain of worldliness today. It is getting harder and harder for families to live on one salary. Women feel that they must leave the home in order to help pay the bills. Large companies often care very little about putting pressure on their workers to work shifts on Sunday that keep them from attending either morning or evening worship services. The Bible is intended to help God's children to overcome every obstacle in living the good life. Study the book of God.

We have now reached the seventeenth chapter of the book of John. If there is any chapter in the

Bible that should tug at our heartstrings today, this one is the one. It is Jesus prayer for unity. He did not want his disciples to argue and fight with one another. He desired that they all speak the same things and that they would all love one another in order that the world might believe that he was the Son of God and Saviour of the world. This is a beautiful and touching section of the Word of God.

As I have pointed out in our studies of the last three chapters of this book of John, the print is almost all in red letters if you have a Bible that shows Jesus words in red. It was to be a very short time before the Lord was arrested and taken to his trial and crucifixion. He knew this perfectly well and felt that he needed to fortify his followers for the difficult times he knew would face them just ahead. We pay close attention to the words of those who are on their death bed. We know those words are apt to be very meaningful. It was so in the case of Jesus. This entire chapter is a prayer as Jesus spoke to his dear Father in heaven.

Now these are strange words for a man who is headed straight to his death at the hands of his enemies. There were two groups of very influential people in the world of that day. One was the Greeks and the other was the Romans. The Greeks prided themselves on their thinking ability. They produced some of the most important philosophers the world has seen. They did not see the death of Jesus upon the cross as a mark of wisdom. How could a wise man allow himself to be murdered. Surely a thinking man would have found a way to prevent

his own murder. Jesus' prayer sounds strange. It would seem that his death would belittle him in the eyes of the Greeks.

On the other hand, the Romans were known for their powerful armed forces. They had taken over that part of the world from the Greek empire which had just faded in its glory. Strength and power were all important to them. Any man who lacked the ability to defend himself against his enemies could hardly be considered worthy of glory.

Nevertheless, Jesus' prayer would be answered. Though his death would seem to be foolishness to the Greeks and weakness to the Romans, God would turn his crucifixion into an avenue of greatness such as the world had never seen before, and would never see again. More men and women have followed Jesus Christ than have honored any other person in all of history. That honor is paid because he died upon the cross for your sins and mine.

Jesus then began to thank God for giving him the opportunity to offer eternal life to all who would hear his words and follow in his footsteps. He stated that he had finished the work which his Father had given him to do. He had glorified the Father by obeying his will, and he would continue to do that, even as he hung upon the cross. His prayer now was that the Father would also glorify him. He prayed that he might be able to return to the glory which he had with the Father before this world was even created.

Philippians tells us Jesus considered it not robbery to be thought equal with the Father. In spite of that, he emptied himself of that glory and

came to earth to take on a body of flesh and live as a servant. He needed to show mankind what it meant to be children of their heavenly Father. He had done that. Now he was ready to go back to the heavenly places.

Joh 17:6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

Joh 17:7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

Joh 17:8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

Joh 17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

Jesus said he had manifested, or made known unto men those things which he was charged with. He had not failed to teach men the way of godliness. He had not lost the apostles whom God had given him from out of the world. They had kept his word. They knew the things Jesus taught were not of this world, but were from the Father.

He added that he was praying for those who had heard and obeyed the word which he taught. He did not pray for the worldly men who refused to hear the truth. The ones who had listened and

obeyed belonged to God. They could expect his care and kindness. They could expect his guidance. But, those who loved the world should not expect such concern from the heavenly Father. If they chose to reject him, they could expect him to reject them.

My friends, do not make the mistake of thinking this chapter teaches individuals are foreordained to salvation or condemnation. Jesus is not saying here that there are some who have been determined as fuel for the fires of hell, or the bliss of heaven. It is the world that is determined to go to hell. It is the faithful who are determined to live with God in heaven. At any time, any man or woman has the freedom of choice to leave the world and follow Christ. At any time, any man or woman who has been living a godly life has the freedom of choice to leave that life and follow after Satan. Jesus did not pray for those who were too stubborn to obey. He was praying for those whose hearts could be touched with the truth.

Joh 17:10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

Joh 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Joh 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that

the scripture might be fulfilled.

The next thought Jesus presented in his prayer was that he cherished God's servants as his own. If they belonged to the Father, they also belonged to him. He said, "*All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.*" Now we can begin to understand what he meant when he prayed that the Father would glorify him in spite of the cross. He knew men would give him glory for shedding his blood in order that their sins might be washed away. The redeemed would glorify the Father and the Son in gratitude for the removal of the stain of guilt from their lives. God would glorify his Son through the tongues and the lives of those who loved him because he first loved them.

Jesus had come to live among worldly humans in order that they might be saved from their sin. He was now ready to leave the world and go back to heaven. His disciples would not follow immediately. They would find it necessary to live in the world, surrounded by worldly persons. Jesus knew it would not be an easy way of life. He prayed that they might not be overcome by the trials which lay ahead of them.

It hurt Jesus terribly that one of the twelve had done just what I mentioned previously. Judas had traveled with the band of apostles for over three years. He had heard the words of life which fell from the lips of his Lord. He had watched the many wondrous miracles which his Master had done. Yet, worldliness had overcome him. He had fallen to the temptation to steal from the purse which the

rest had entrusted in his hands. The things of this world had become more important to him than the Word of God. Jesus said he had not been able to keep Judas. He called him the son of perdition.

Jesus knows that in every time and place there will be those like Judas who have started to follow him and then turned back. Still, he had to preach the principles the Father had charged him with teaching. There were eleven who did not turn back. It will be the same with God's people today. We are charged with living the Christian life and with teaching it to others. Some will reject it before ever beginning to follow Christ. Others will start to follow and then turn back. But some will hear and obey. They will be faithful unto death. They will receive the crown of everlasting life. They make it all worth while.

Joh 17:13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Joh 17:14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Joh 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Joh 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Jesus said he had spoken the will of God in order that men might find joy and have it fulfilled in them. The life of a Christian is the only way to

find real joy. Moses, in the long ago made a choice to follow God. He realized that the temporary pleasures of the palace of Pharaoh would fade away. The joy of obeying God would last past time and on into eternity. It is true that the burdens of following Jesus sometimes seem heavy. It is not true that they are heavier than the burdens of life in the grasp of Satan.

Then the Lord predicted the world would hate his disciples. Those of the world would hate them because of the difference between them. Just as they hated Jesus for not being of the world, they would also hate those who followed his pattern of life. Such a life of holiness causes the sins of unholy men to look even blacker than they would if they were not seen in contrast to evil deeds.

The word of God is powerful. Those who abide by it will find the way of escape from the bondage and attractions of sin. Any man who chooses to do so can break the chains of the Evil One. We must live in a world filled with sin. We do not have to partake of that sin. It does not matter that worldly people may hate us.

Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Joh 17:18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Joh 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Joh 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me

through their word;

Joh 17:21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

But Jesus did not forget there were to be many in future years who would need his prayer for them just as much as the apostles and others who grieved at his death at Calvary. He said, *“I pray also for those shall believe on me through their words.”* Until the end of time, Jesus prayer was to ring on for centuries. The great commission was given to insure that the teachings of Jesus would be carried on until time would be no more. Every man or woman who heard and believed would need the prayer of Jesus just as much as those did who saw him walk the paths of Palestine.

Joh 17:22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

Joh 17:23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Joh 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Joh 17:25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee,

and these have known that thou hast sent me.

Joh 17:26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Jesus then emphasized the importance of oneness among those who were baptized into him. He prayed,

“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”

It must truly grieve our Lord today that there are hundreds of sectarian groups, all teaching different doctrines and practicing different practices, yet calling themselves his followers. Can we really say today that the so-called Christian world is one even as Christ and the Father are one. Certainly not! We have a long way to go before we can make the claim that we are one as they are one.

Jesus closed his prayer by asking that the faithful might be permitted to be with him and behold his glory in heaven. We are reminded of the words of Revelation where we are told there is no need of the sun in that land of endless day. God and the Lamb are the light thereof.

I close by quoting the last verse of the chapter; the last words of this precious prayer of Christ.

“And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

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Chapter 18

Joh 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

Joh 18:2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

Joh 18:3 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Joh 18:4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

There are only three more chapters after this eighteenth chapter. Jesus is closing out his ministry on earth. We will cover his betrayal and arrest in this chapter. Then, in the next three chapters, we will study his trial, his crucifixion, his burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven. We will also note his great commission to go into all the world and spread the good news to all men. But for now, we turn to the eighteenth chapter which tells of his betrayal and arrest.

Right after Jesus touching prayer which he offered for the unity of his followers in chapter seventeen, he moved across the Kidron valley to the Mount of Olives. He was walking directly into the path of death. Judas had already made contact with the Pharisees and arranged to deliver him. He knew

this. Yet he deliberately went to a place where it would be no problem to find him.

It was not far from the temple area across the Kidron valley to the location of the beautiful Garden of Gethsemane Perhaps a quarter of a mile. It was quiet and peaceful there. Jesus found special comfort in going there to pray. Yes, he was aware that Judas would know right where he was going. That did not prevent him from seeking out his precious garden where he could commune with his Father in heaven.

The chief priests and the Pharisees knew the general area in which their victim was to be found. Judas had told them. They assigned a band of soldiers to go with Judas and get Jesus. How foolish that was. The Lord could have called many, many times as much force as they had in their tiny band of soldiers. He did not do that. It must have been an impressive sight. They had lanterns, torches and weapons of various kinds so they could see where they were going in the night, and so they could overcome him and take him prisoner.

Jesus actually met them as they approached him. He knew why they had come. He knew exactly what was about to happen. Nevertheless, he asked them a question which should have sent shivers up and down their spine. He said, "Whom seek ye?" In a way, they knew whom they sought. In another way they did not have the faintest idea. They answered that they were seeking Jesus of Nazareth. They did not realize they were seeking the Son of the Only True and Living God. The leader of the band

would realize that later, after the earthquake and the darkness fell upon the earth at the time of Jesus death. Right now it seemed to them they were simply looking for a man their leaders hated.

Joh 18:5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

Joh 18:6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Joh 18:7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

Joh 18:8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

Jesus made it easy for them. He said, "*I am he.*" The implication is that you may take me if you desire. Isaiah had predicted that he would be led to the slaughter as a lamb, dumb before the shearer. Isaiah was right.

Although John does not record it in this book, we are told that it was at this point that Judas came to him and embraced him with a kiss. Judas had already informed the soldiers they would know who they were after because Judas would do just that. The worst kind of betrayal is that which comes at the hand of a former friend. We can already feel the

pain Jesus must have experienced when one of his own apostles took a leading part in his murder.

Jesus then asked them again, "*Whom seek ye?*" They repeated that they were seeking for Jesus of Nazareth. He replied that since they had found the one for whom they were looking, they should not bother the faithful apostles who were there with him. They were to let the apostles go their way.

Joh 18:10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Joh 18:11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

Simon Peter was ready to fight for his Lord. He drew a sword and cut off the ear of a servant of the High Priest. The man's name was Malchus. Jesus told Peter he was to put up his sword.

It would be necessary for Jesus to drink the cup of suffering which the Father in heaven had given to him. A cup of poison was often given to criminals in that day. They were to drink the cup as a punishment for their sin. It was not so with Jesus. He had a cup to drink, but it was not a result of his sin. He was sinless. Still, it was a cup of suffering. No doubt the grief he felt at the things which were going on was more than any of us will ever know. The Lord had prayed that, if it was possible, that cup might be taken away. It was

not possible. Therefore, he would drink it.

Joh 18:12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

Joh 18:13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

Joh 18:14 Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Joh 18:15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

Joh 18:16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

And so they took our Lord. First, they went to Annas who was the father-in-law of the present High Priest. Annas had apparently been a High Priest before this. Caiaphas had already recommended that Jesus die rather than for the Romans to become irritated with the Jews for allowing Jesus to proclaim himself as a king. He said it was better for one man to die for the people than for all to die. This was actually a prediction that Jesus would die for the sins of all men, even though Caiaphas did not know it.

Joh 18:17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

Peter and one of the other disciples followed Jesus into the palace of the High Priest. When the maiden keeping the door saw Peter, she knew he was the one who had cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant. She asked Peter if he was not one of Jesus disciples. He said very clearly, "*I am not.*" There should be no fear in letting others know we are disciples of the Lord. Peter was no doubt afraid of the loss of his life. The loss of physical life is a small loss when compared to the gain which can come in eternal life. That, however, may be much easier to say than to carry out in practice. At least Peter loved his Lord enough to want to be with him in his difficulty. Most of the others had already separated from him.

Joh 18:18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

It was cold and there were a number of servants and military men standing around a fire warming their hands. Peter joined them and began to warm his hands. That was not the best kind of company. Sometimes those with whom we associate can alter our path of action away from that which we know is best. That was to be the case with Peter.

Joh 18:19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

Joh 18:20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

Joh 18:21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

Joh 18:22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

Joh 18:23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

Joh 18:24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

Annas then asked Jesus about his doctrine and the disciples who followed him. Jesus made it perfectly clear that he was not ready to go through a lengthy questioning period. He had not taught in secret. He had gone directly to the temple and the synagogue. Everyone knew what he had taught. There was no further need to question him. They could find many witnesses who could tell them exactly what he taught.

One of the officers who heard what Jesus said slapped the Lord with the palm of his hand and asked him why he had answered the High Priest

in such a manner. Jesus replied that if he had spoken evil the officer should tell him what that evil was. If not, he should answer as to why he had slapped him.

Annas then sent Jesus to Caiaphas in bonds. Annas was apparently called the High Priest just as we might call a past president, who was still living by his former title. Former presidents of a nation are called President after they no longer held the office.

Joh 18:25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

Joh 18:26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

Joh 18:27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

As Peter stood by the fire, warming himself, one of the others asked him if he was not also one of Jesus disciples. For the second time, Peter denied and said, "*I am not!*" Immediately one of the relatives of the man whose ear Peter had cut off repeated the question. "*Are you not one of his disciples. Did I not see you in the garden with him?*" A third time, Peter denied it. Then the cock crew, fulfilling a prediction Jesus had made that Peter would deny him three times before the cock crew.

Joh 18:28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas

unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

Joh 18:29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

Joh 18:30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

Joh 18:31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

Joh 18:32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

Jesus was then led to a hall of judgment where his fate would be determined. Pilate, the Roman governor would preside over his trial. If he was to be sentenced to death, the Romans would have to give permission. A number of the Jews did not go into the judgment hall because that would have defiled them and they would not have been able to eat the Passover Feast. Little did they realize they were delivering the true Passover Lamb of God to be sacrificed for the sins of the world.

Joh 18:33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

Joh 18:34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou

this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

Joh 18:35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

Pilate came out to those who led Jesus. He asked them what accusations they had against him. Their reply is almost humorous if it were not such a tragedy. They said, He is a malefactor. If he were not, we would not have brought him to you. A malefactor is one who does things that are evil. It comes from a combination of the word “factor” and the word “mal.” We have factors in math and we have maladies that make us sick. Thus, they were saying Jesus was a factor in bringing bad things.

You will notice that they did not tell what those bad things were. They could not because there were none. Pilate was disgusted with them. He said for them to go and judge him by the law of the Jews. That was not satisfactory to them. They wanted him dead. The Romans would not allow them to carry out the death sentence unless he was found guilty of serious crimes by a Roman court.

They must have then accused Jesus of being a traitor and trying to take the throne of Caesar. Pilate began to question Jesus as to whether he claimed to be a king of the Jews. Jesus asked him if he had come to this conclusion himself, or was it by word of mouth. Pilate indicated that he was not a Jew and therefore he would not have known

whether or not Jesus was trying to make himself a king over them. It was the Jews who had delivered Jesus to him to be tried. Was he guilty, or was he not guilty?

Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Joh 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Jesus then made a very profound statement to Pilate. He said,

“My kingdom is not of this world, then would my servants fight, that I would not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

Jesus never intended to be a king over a material earthly kingdom. The Devil failed to understand that. The people who tried to make Jesus a king on earth after seeing his wonderful miracles did not understand that. Even the disciples who asked him if he was ready to restore the kingdom of Israel did not understand it. Pilate would join that group. It seemed to Pilate that Jesus was admitting the very thing of which the Jews had accused him.

And so Pilate asked him one more question to

check it out. “*Art thou a king then?*” Jesus answered. Here are his words. “*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*” Jesus point was that he was the king who ruled by truth. He did not rule by pomp and political influence. It was true that he was a king. Pilate had spoken truth when he had suggested Jesus claimed to be a ruler. Jesus had been born to be a king. He had presented his principles of behavior. Those who were subject to him would follow the truth which he had taught.

Joh 18:38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

Joh 18:39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

Joh 18:40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Pilate then asked a question which the wise men of the ages have discussed. “*What is truth?*” How do we know the truth when we are faced with it? Pilate knew Jesus was innocent of treason against Caesar. He went back out to the Jews and said he found no fault in Jesus Christ.

Pilate gave them a choice. He had the right to release one prisoner at the time of the Passover.

There was a serious criminal named Barabbas who had already been found guilty. Pilate asked the Jews whether he should release Jesus or Barabbas. The Jews quickly responded, “*Not this man, but Barabbas.*” How terrible!!

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Chapter 19

Joh 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

Joh 19:2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

Joh 19:3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

As the nineteenth chapter of John begins, the multitude had just cried out for Jesus to be crucified. Pilate had offered a choice. It was a custom during the Feast of the Passover that one criminal be released and forgiven of his crime. Pilate had given the people the opportunity to choose between Barabbas, who was a murderer, and Jesus Christ who was God's own dear Son. The crowd had chosen to release Barabbas and send Jesus to the cross.

Pilate accepted the decision and prepared for the crucifixion by having Jesus scourged, or beaten severely with what we might call a cat of nine-tails. Following this, our Lord was turned over to the military officers who seem to have been given the chance to treat him in any way they could dream up. Since he had admitted that he was a King, they braided a crown of thorns to press down upon his forehead. We can imagine that the blood began to drip down across his face from the puncture wounds. Following this, they brought a purple robe and put it upon him. Purple was the color worn often by royalty. Then they cried out in mockery, "*Hail the King of the Jews.*"

~~—Joh 19:4 Pilate therefore went forth again,~~

and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

Joh 19:5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

Joh 19:6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.

Pilate was a bit nervous about the whole matter. As he brought Jesus out to them, he said, Behold, I bring him forth to you that you may know that I find no fault in him. The chief priests then cried out, "*Crucify him! Crucify him!*" Pilate did not want the blood of an innocent man on his hands. If the Jews wished to crucify Jesus, he wanted to make it sure that he did not agree with the decision. Why then did he agree to it? It was no doubt because he feared that he would be reported as having been sympathetic with a man who wished to replace Caesar as ruler of the Roman Empire.

Pilate told the accusers to take Christ and crucify him if they could find justification for it in their own law. The Jews informed him that by their law Jesus should die because he claimed to be the Son of God. They considered that blasphemy. This would have been the case if Jesus had not truly been God's Son. But Jesus was God's Son.

Joh 19:7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because

he made himself the Son of God.

Joh 19:8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

Joh 19:9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

Joh 19:10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

Joh 19:11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

Joh 19:12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

Joh 19:13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

Joh 19:14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

Joh 19:15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

Joh 19:16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.

Joh 19:17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

Joh 19:18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

Pilate decided to talk to Jesus one more time. He asked Jesus from where he had come. Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate told him that was not a wise decision. Did Jesus not know that Pilate had the power to either crucify him or release him? Jesus answer was plain and clear. He told Pilate that he could have no power at all except it had been allowed him by God in heaven. Pilate wanted very badly to release the Lord. But when the crowd cried out that if he released Jesus he had made himself an enemy of Caesar, Pilate gave in. He brought Jesus out to them and said to the Jews, "*Behold, your King.*"

The Jews replied that they had no king but Caesar. It was true. They had rejected the King of glory and were ready to nail him to the cross.

And so they took Jesus and led him to the place of the skull. He was made to carry the cross upon which he was to be hung. When they reached the hill of Calvary, they crucified him between two thieves. This fulfilled another prophecy that said he would be associated with malefactors in his death.

Joh 19:19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was **JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

Joh 19:20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

Joh 19:21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

Joh 19:22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

It was common to write the crime over the head of the one being crucified. Pilate had it written over Jesus head that he was The King of the Jews. The Jews did not like that. They insisted that the wording should be, He said, I am the King of the Jews. Pilate refused to change what he had written.

Joh 19:23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

Joh 19:24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the

soldiers did.

The soldiers then took Jesus garments and began to decide who would claim them. There were four soldiers and each was to receive a part of his clothing. We are left to wonder if the Lord may not have been completely exposed to the eyes of those who stood by. Since people would have been horrified to see a painting of Jesus with no clothing at all, artists have shown him draped with just enough to cover his nakedness. This may not have been the case.

There was one piece of his clothing that was more appealing than the rest. He had a seamless coat which they all wanted. They decided to cast lots for it rather than tearing it into four pieces. I have wondered if Jesus owned anything at all, other than the clothing on his back. It is quite possible that when they took his clothing, they left him without an earthly possession. His treasures were in heaven where he had urged his disciples to place theirs also.

Joh 19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

Joh 19:26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

Joh 19:27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

Joh 19:28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

Joh 19:29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

Joh 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Near the cross stood several who were near and dear to our Lord. There was his mother. There was Mary Magdalene. There was also John the apostle, who wrote this account. As Jesus looked down at his mother and at John, He told his mother that she must treat John the apostle as her own son. He told John to treat Jesus mother as if she was his own mother. We are told that from that time John took Jesus mother into his own home. Those who take guided tours to the area of the seven churches of Asia are shown a small cottage in Ephesus where it is claimed that John provided a home for Mary in her later years. John lived to be an old man and was said to have been an elder in the church at Ephesus.

Jesus realized the end was near. He had become very thirsty. He asked for a drink to quench his thirst. One of the soldiers took a sponge and filled it with vinegar. Jesus took a small amount of it and then said, "*It is finished.*"

What was it that was finished? It was his life in fleshly form as he lived to provide an example of

perfect obedience to the will of his Father in heaven. The activities of Jesus will never be completely finished. One of the most meaningful sermons I have ever read was presented by B.C. Goodpasture. It is a sermon titled, "*The Unfinished Work of Jesus Christ.*" I would first point out that Jesus still had things to do on earth before he left it completely. He came back for forty days and instructed his apostles concerning the things they were to preach after he was gone. He will also come back some day to take the faithful. Although they will be caught up to be with him in the air, rather than to meet him on the surface of the earth, he will be close enough that every eye shall see him.

But there is another sense in which the work of Jesus is still unfinished. The church is the body of Jesus Christ today. There are still multitudes of people to be taught. There are many things that Jesus would be doing if he were here in his own fleshly body. Those things must be done by those who are the members of his body today. Wherever they are gathered together, the Lord is in the midst of them.

And so we must correctly understand what Jesus was saying when he uttered those words, "*It is finished.*" After speaking those words, the Lord bowed his head and his spirit left his body. He gave up the ghost.

Joh 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day),

besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Joh 19:32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

Joh 19:33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

Joh 19:34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

It was the time just before the Passover feast. It was not proper that bodies should hang on the crosses during the Sabbath day. Therefore, the Jews urged Pilate to see that the legs of the crucified might be broken to be sure they were dead and could be taken down. Permission was granted and the soldiers came to do their duty. They came to the two thieves and broke their legs. They were still alive. But, when they came to the Lord, they found that he had already died.. There was no need to break his legs.

This chapter of John tells of many fulfilled prophecies. This is one of the most impressive. King David had prophesied in Psalms:

Psalm 34:20, “He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.”

It is interesting that God is able to providentially bring events around to the place where such prophecies can be fulfilled, even by those who would

not like to be working on His side. Jesus had suffered more than the two thieves who were crucified on his right and on his left. His life departed before theirs. His legs needed not to be broken to hasten his death. God knew this would happen a thousand years before it took place.

Just to make absolutely certain that Jesus was dead, one of the soldiers took a spear and thrust it into the Saviour's side. When this was done, blood and water came forth from the wound. The blood and water was an indication that death had taken place and the blood had already begun to separate, as it does in death.

Joh 19:35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

Joh 19:36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

Joh 19:37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

John then pointed out that this was in fulfilment of the prophecy of David, which foretold that he would be gazed upon by those who had pierced him.

Psa 22:16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

Not all of those who witnessed the crucifixion were enemies. As we have already noticed. Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and John the apostle were all present. The record continues by telling us two other very important persons in the life of Jesus were also very much involved at the time of his death. The first of these was Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph was a wealthy man who had become a disciple of the Lord. He had been afraid to make his position known before the Jewish rulers. He had followed Jesus secretly.

Joh 19:38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

With the death of his Master, Joseph of Arimathea came forward. He requested that he might be allowed to take the body and give it decent burial. Pilate agreed and Joseph took the body.

Joh 19:39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

Joh 19:40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Joh 19:41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

Joh 19:42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

The second of the two was Nicodemus. This was the Nicodemus who had come to Jesus to ask questions about the Kingdom of God, as recorded in the third chapter of this book of John. Jesus had explained to Nicodemus that one must be born a second time in order to enter into that kingdom. Nicodemus may have also been hesitant to make his relationship to Christ known to the Jews. After Jesus death, Nicodemus also was ready to join Joseph of Arimathea in preparing Jesus for burial. Joseph provided the burial place in a garden which he owned. Nicodemus brought the linen clothes and the spices which were commonly used by the Jews before burial.

There is a difference of opinion concerning the place of Jesus burial. Tourists are told the church of the Sepulchre in Jerusalem may have been the place. Later, they are taken to a beautiful garden which is also said to have been the place. After seeing both of these places, I think the garden is the actual place of burial. There is a ledge of rock containing marks which much like the eyes, nose and mouth of a person. Today this spot is called the "place of the skull." It is within about a football

field distance from the garden. I believe the two are connected.

Perhaps it makes little difference where Jesus was laid to rest in the grave. He remained there for a very short time before the stone was rolled away and he conquered death, hell and the grave to return to the place of glory which he had before the world began.

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Chapter 20

Joh 20:1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Joh 20:2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

Joh 20:3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

Joh 20:4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

Joh 20:5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

Joh 20:6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

Joh 20:7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

Joh 20:8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

Joh 20:9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

Joh 20:10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

The twentieth chapter of the book of John is a record of those who saw the Lord after he had risen from the grave. Altogether, there were over five hundred persons who saw him. Over five hundred persons are not apt to have a simultaneous hallucination. It is an indisputable fact that the Son of God arose from the grave on the third day and gave all who will obey his commandments the hope that they also will defeat death. This is a rich chapter.

They had crucified Jesus upon the cross. Joseph of Arimathea had asked for and received his dead body. Joseph was proud to provide a tomb for the burial of his Lord. Nicodemus brought spices to prepare the body according to the custom of the Jews. Christ had been laid in the tomb and a stone was rolled over the entrance.

On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene rose up early in the morning, before it had become light. She went to the tomb and found the stone rolled back from the entrance. Extremely excited, she ran to tell Peter and John that the Lord had been removed from the sepulchre and she had no idea where he had been taken.

Both Peter and John ran to the tomb. John ran faster than Peter and came to the empty tomb first. He had to stoop down to look in. When he did so he could see the linen clothing in which Christ had been wrapped. The clothing was lying in the tomb, but Christ was not there. Peter soon caught up. John had stopped at the entrance. Peter was not like that. He burst into the tomb. There he found

the linen clothing and also the napkin which had been wrapped around the head of Jesus. The two pieces were separate from one another.

Today there has been much discussion over a piece of linen called the Shroud of Turin. This piece of cloth is said to have an imprint of a man's face on it. There are some who are convinced this is the very cloth in which Christ was wrapped when he was laid in the sepulchre. I doubt that it is. The shroud of Turin is a single piece of cloth. This present passage in John says there were two pieces.

When John went into the tomb and saw the graveclothes, he believed in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Undoubtedly he had believed in him before, but now he had even stronger evidence than ever before. Jesus had predicted that he would be killed and would rise again on the third day. Now the prophecy had been fulfilled. The two apostles then went away to their own homes.

Joh 20:11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

Joh 20:12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Joh 20:13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

Joh 20:14 And when she had thus said, she

turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Joh 20:15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Mary Magdalene did not go right away. She remained at the tomb weeping over the death of her Saviour and the absence of his body. Little did she know that tremendous joy lay just ahead for those who loved Jesus and kept his words.

As Mary stood weeping beside the tomb, she stooped down and looked inside. She was amazed to see two angels sitting there. One was sitting where Jesus head had been. The other sat at the feet. As Mary wondered about seeing them there, they spoke to her. They said, "Woman, why weepest thou." Mary quickly answered them that her Lord had been taken away and she did not know where they had laid him.

What a horrible accusation it is that cruel men have made concerning the relationship between Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene. They take such passages as this as proof that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were more than just friends; that they were lovers. Oh yes, they were lovers, but not in the sense that such critics of the Bible would claim. Jesus loved Mary Magdalene as one who had turned from a worldly life and followed him in praise and

holy living. Mary loved Jesus because he had lifted her from a lost and sinful path and set her on the road to the eternal city of God.

Both men and women weep to this day in sympathy for those who found that empty tomb. But we also rejoice with them in the later discovery that the empty tomb told of Christ's victory over death, hell and the grave.

As Mary turned back from the door of the sepulchre, Jesus himself stood there ready to speak to her. In the dusk of the morning, she did not realize it was the Lord. She thought the figure was that of the caretaker of the garden where the tomb was. This was soon to change. Jesus spoke to her and said, "*Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?*" Even then, Mary did not realize she was talking to Christ. Still thinking it was the gardener, she asked him if he knew where they had taken the body. If the gardener would tell her, she would get the body and remove it from the garden.

Joh 20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Joh 20:18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

Again Jesus spoke to her. He simply called her name, "*Mary.*" Then she recognized him. She said, "*Rabboni, or Master!*" Some have wondered why Jesus said, "*Touch me not.*" I think the reason for this may be found in the meaning of the Greek word which is translated into our English word "touch." It is a much stronger word than our word touch. It means to hold on to, or to cling to. I believe Jesus was telling Mary that she must not put anything in the way of his return to his Father in heaven. He did not wish for her to grieve over his absence. That made it more difficult for him to leave. Mary then went and told the other disciples that Jesus had spoken to her.

Joh 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

Joh 20:20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

Joh 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

The evening of that same day, the disciples had assembled in a room where the doors had been shut because they were afraid of the Jews who had caused the death of their Master. While they were gathered there, Jesus stood in the midst of them

and said, *“Peace be unto you.”* Then he showed them the wounds in his hands and in his side. Now the sadness began to be replaced with unspeakable joy. The Lord was not dead. He was alive.

He continued to speak of the peace which he offered them. He said again, *“Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”* The time up to the crucifixion had been filled with turmoil. Yet as Jesus went to the cross, he had said he would give peace to his disciples. It was not the peace the world knows. It was peace with God.

Now the disciples were going through a time of terrible anguish. What were they to do in the face of the hatred of the Pharisees. These hypocrites despised anything connected with Jesus Christ. The lives of his followers were in serious danger. Jesus statement that the same peace his Father had given to him would be given to them was a great encouragement. Even if their lives were taken, they could live again, even as Jesus did.

Joh 20:22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

Joh 20:23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

Now we begin to understand better just what Jesus meant when he talked about the peace he had for them. The peace came from the knowledge that the Holy Spirit would be with them and provide for every need as they faced life and death for the

Lord.

If you are interested in just how much difference it makes that one has the Holy Spirit to help him, please read the eighth chapter of Romans. That chapter makes it clear that nothing can stand in the way of the Christian when God has given that person his Holy Spirit. The disciples would enjoy the peace that comes from having sins washed away. They could also teach others so that they could experience the same joy and strength.

Joh 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

Joh 20:25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

Thomas was one of the twelve apostles. He had not been present when Jesus appeared in their midst and showed them his wounded hands and side. When the others came to him and told him they had seen Christ, he was disappointed. It was hard for him to accept the fact, even though his closest companions declared it.

Thomas doubted. He needed to have the evidence presented to him personally rather than to take it as true from others. I am in sympathy with Thomas. In a matter as important as this, the evidence

should be so strong that it cannot be doubted. Thomas provided an even stronger set of evidence for every man today when he said he wanted to see Jesus personally and feel the wounds in his side and hands. I am grateful to Thomas for increasing my own faith.

Joh 20:26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

Joh 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

Joh 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Joh 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Eight days after he had appeared to the other disciples, they were again gathered in a room with locked doors. Once again, Jesus appeared in the midst of them. This time he repeated his promise of peace to them. He also invited Thomas to do exactly what he had said he needed. Christ said, *“Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”*

There are two basic kinds of evidence. One is called empirical evidence. That is evidence which has come first hand. Someone has seen, heard, touched, tasted or smelled something personally. The other type of evidence is called vicarious evidence. This is evidence which comes through someone else. The person does not personally experience the facts with his own five senses. He relies on the truthfulness of someone else. Thomas wanted empirical evidence. Jesus saw that he received just what he desired.

Because of what Thomas had experienced, he said to Jesus, "*My Lord and my God.*" He knew Jesus had been raised from the dead. It was not hoax. No one was deceiving him. Jesus was alive!

All of this is interesting when compared with another story found in the Bible. This is the story of Lazarus and the rich man. Both had died. Lazarus was in the bosom of Abraham in the paradise of God. The rich man found himself in torment. At that point, the rich man wanted someone to go back and warn his brothers who were still alive, in order they might not suffer the same fate he was suffering.

The reply to his request was that if men failed to hear Moses and the prophets they would not believe, even if someone were to return from the grave and warn them of the terrors of hell. Sometimes we think we would act in a certain way if we had stronger evidence than God has provided. That is a dangerous position. God knows how much evidence we need in order to believe. He knows what kind of evidence we need.

Joh 20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

Joh 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

The last two verses of this chapter tell us there were many other things which Jesus did that are not included in this book of John. The ones that are included were sufficient to believe and have eternal life. Jesus told Thomas that he was blessed because he had seen and believed. He then added that those who had not seen him personally, as Thomas had, would also be blessed.

You and I have never seen the crucified Lord. Our own evidence is largely vicarious. Nevertheless, God has provided all the evidence we need to believe that Christ lived, died, rose again and ascended into heaven, and that he is preparing a place for us that he may come again and take us unto himself.

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Chapter 21

Joh 21:1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

Joh 21:2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

Joh 21:3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

Joh 21:4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

The twenty-first and last chapter of the gospel according to John is a chapter in which Jesus instructs his apostles to “feed his sheep.” The Lord was about to leave them and return to heaven until he comes back in judgment. It was very important to him that the teaching he had done be carried on after he departed. We will see how he urged them to be faithful and continue his work. We must take the same lesson seriously. God’s lambs must be fed in every age, until he comes again!

Early in his ministry Jesus went to the Sea of Galilee to pick out some of his apostles. James and John were the sons of Zebedee who was a fisherman. Simon Peter was also called from his fishing boat to follow Jesus and become a fisher of

men. These three became very close to the Lord. On several occasions they were with him when the others were not. This was true on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was also true in the Garden of Gethsemane shortly before his betrayal by Judas.

Here we find Christ going back to this same body of water to show himself to them once again. They had been puzzled when he was taken from them at the cross. For a brief time they were like sheep without a Shepherd. What were they to do while they waited for further instructions?

Peter did the very natural thing. He decided to go back to his fishing boat. Several of the apostles were together near the shores of the Sea of Tiberias, also known as the Sea of Galilee. James, John and two other disciples were there with him. Peter said, "I go a fishing." He was not talking about fishing for men. He was talking about casting his net into the waters of the sea, just as he had some three years before when Jesus called him from his fishing boat.

The others who were there agreed that it was a good idea. They would go fishing with Peter. So they entered into the boats and fished throughout the night. They had no luck at all. The fish were there but they had stayed away from the nets of the fishermen. Morning had come and as they came near the shore, they saw Jesus standing there. At first they did not recognize Christ. This is interesting. It is the same reaction that Mary Magdalene had when Jesus appeared to her near the tomb in the early morning after he had risen from the grave. Perhaps it was for the same reasons. First, they

did not expect to see him. Second, it may have still been a bit hazy and difficult to see details at a distance.

Joh 21:5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

Joh 21:6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

Jesus called out to them, “*Children, have ye any meat?*” He was really asking whether or not they had caught any fish. They should have been suspicious that it was Jesus when he used the word “children.” Strangers would hardly use that word to speak to grown men.

They answered the question. No, they had not caught any fish. Jesus then commanded them to cast their nets on the right side of the ship, and promised them that they would find fish there. Another record of this same event tells us they hesitated at first because they had toiled all night and had caught no fish. But they did what he commanded. They must have been amazed when their nets were filled with fish. The nets were so heavy they had difficulty pulling them back into the boat.

There is a strong lesson here for Christians. If we attempt to lean on our own judgment and ignore the instructions of God and Christ, we will

not bring in a net full of souls. If we follow the directions given by the divine mind, we will have far more success. There are many who are wasting their time using various gimmicks to draw in large crowds to religious services. These gimmicks may glitter and shine for the moment. They may even attract men who hunger after glitter. In contrast, the gospel is the real bait which God's fishermen should be using. It will catch those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

Joh 21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

Joh 21:8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

As they were trying to haul in their nets which were bursting with fish, John realized the one who had spoken to them was their beloved Jesus. He said, "*It is the Lord.*" Peter quickly agreed. Peter had been very scantily clothed. The record says he was naked. This probably means he was not fully dressed. At any rate, Peter did not take the time to put on his clothes. He jumped into the water and began to move toward the Lord. The others soon followed in a small boat. It was only about three hundred feet from the fishing boat to the shore where Jesus was waiting.

Joh 21:9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Joh 21:10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

Joh 21:11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

Joh 21:12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

Joh 21:13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

Joh 21:14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

When they came to the shore, they found a fire burning. Fish and bread were baking over the fire. Jesus commanded that they also bring some of the fish which they had just caught. Jesus then invited them to eat with him. Remember my friends, this is the resurrected Lord. Later on Luke was to say they had touched the Lord and they had eaten with him. Does this mean the resurrected body will require physical food as our bodies to today. I doubt it. If there is neither marriage nor being given in marriage in heaven, it is doubtful that there will be eating and feeding there either. This is very likely just a way for Jesus to prove that

he had actually risen from the grave. After eating with Jesus, the disciples had no doubt this was the same one they had served and loved for several years. We are reminded that this was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples after his resurrection. Again we are reminded that Jesus did not limit his appearances to one or two persons. He appeared over and over, and he appeared to over five hundred persons in all. We may have confidence in the claim that he was resurrected, and also in the promise that we may be raised.

Joh 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

After they had eaten, Jesus turned to Peter and asked him a very personal question. He said, "*Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?*" Just what did Jesus mean when he asked that question. Did he point to the remains of the fish they had been eating? If so, he would have been asking Peter if he would rather spend his life fishing on the sea of Galilee, or would he rather spend it preaching the gospel and fishing for men.

But as Jesus asked this question, he might have been pointing to the other apostles. Did Peter love him more than the rest of the apostles. He sometimes indicated that he did. When Jesus said men would deny him, Peter had said if everyone else denied

the Lord, he would never deny him. Now Jesus seems to be putting Peter's feet to the fire. After Peter had been so confident that he would never deny, he did just that. He denied not just once but three times within a short space of time. In a way, Jesus is now trying to see that Peter will overcome such weakness in the future.

And so he asked Peter if he truly loved him to the depths of his heart. This first time Jesus asked Peter the question, he used a mild form of the word love. It was as if he asked Peter if Peter was fond of him. It makes me think of the time when I first told my wife I loved her. I knew I did, but I really had a hard time saying it. That meant real commitment. It was not all that hard to tell her I thought a lot of her. But to come right out in black and white and say, "I love you with all my heart." was much, much more difficult. Jesus was going to lead Peter to a complete commitment. For each of the three times Peter had denied Christ, he was going to have to answer the question, "Do you love me?"

Joh 21:16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

The first time Jesus asked the question, Peter replied, "Yea Lord, thou knowest I love thee." But the Greek word Peter used for love was the mild

word which meant he was fond of Jesus. Jesus then requested that Peter feed his lambs. Jesus lambs were the tender disciples who needed the teaching which Jesus had provided for his apostles through those three years they had traveled together. Jesus wanted Peter to see that they were properly nourished with spiritual food.

After the first question, Jesus repeated it. He said, "*Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?*" Peter must have wondered why the Lord would asked him the same question a second time. It is not unlikely that he was somewhat annoyed. It may have crept into his mind that Jesus was reminding him of his several denials. But Peter answered patiently, "*Yea Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.*" The second time Jesus made the same response. He told Peter to "*Feed my sheep.*"

Joh 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Then, for the third time Jesus asked Peter a similar question. This time, he changed it just a little. Where he had used the mild form of the word "love" before, he put a far stronger word in its place. This time it was the word "agape". Agape is a love that is so strong it gives up everything in order to promote the well being of that which

is loved. Jesus was taking Peter to the limit of love. Did Peter love him so much that he would actually give his life for the welfare of Christ and his Kingdom?

I have no doubt at all that Peter's conscience was pinching hard by this time. He knew very well that Jesus was reminding him of his three denials. He was saying to Peter,

“I know you think you love me, but you must be far stronger than you were before. If you love me more than these fish, or more than these other apostles do, you must be responsible for teaching my tender disciples and causing them to grow in spiritual strength.”

Joh 21:18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

Peter was greatly annoyed now. He was ready to make that great commitment that Christ had been pressing for. Peter would stand up before those thousands on the day of Pentecost and feed Christ's lambs. The denier would become the proclaimer. The same lips which had trembled with fear and said, *“I do not know the man.”* would speak out boldly and call for men to *“Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”*

Joh 21:19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Joh 21:20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

Joh 21:21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

Jesus then told Peter he must do the work while he had opportunity. The time would come when Peter would be old and others would have to carry him about. He would not be able to go where he wished on his own power. The sheep which Peter was to feed must be fed at the earliest time possible. Jesus added the words, "*Follow me.*"

Peter looked around and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following the Lord. Peter seems to have been just a little bit jealous. It was John whom he had seen. John had sat next to Jesus as they ate and John had leaned over against Jesus. Peter was concerned. If Jesus was so insistent on Peter feeding his sheep, what would John be expected to do?

Joh 21:22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

Joh 21:23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come,

what is that to thee?


Joh 21:24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

Joh 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

In Jesus' answer to Peter there is a powerful lesson for all Christians of every age. Jesus told Peter, "*If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.*" The point Jesus was making to Peter was that what he expected John to do did not take away from what he expected Peter to do. If Jesus was satisfied to let John dally around, Peter was still expected to feed Jesus sheep as he had already been told to do.

Each of us who call ourselves Christians have been given certain talents and certain opportunities. We are expected to use those talents and seize each opportunity. We cannot excuse ourselves by looking at the lives of others and saying we can neglect our duties because those others are failing to serve as they should. Each of us will be judged on our own. We will not have to answer for the decisions others have made. It is true that we must try to bring them to a higher level of service. Nevertheless, we must not allow the lazy behavior of others to become the standard for our own lives.

Just as Peter was told to feed the sheep of the

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