

INTRODUCTION

Meet Dr. Luke. Luke was the author of both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. Paul refers to him as "the beloved physician" (Col. 4:14) and one of his "fellow workers" (Philemon 24). He no doubt ministered to Paul's personal medical needs on his second missionary journey, and during Paul's imprisonment in Rome. He also helped in the work of preaching the gospel. He was the first medical missionary. Some scholars think that he was the first minister of the church at Philippi. Just before Paul's execution by the emperor Nero, Luke is mentioned for the last time in the Bible. Paul says, "only Luke is with me" (2 Tim. 4:11). Luke generally is thought to have been a Gentile. Early Christian tradition says that Luke came from Antioch of Syria, that he, like Paul, was single, and that he lived to the age of 84.

Luke's Gospel. Luke wrote his Gospel for a Greek audience. He stresses more than the other three Gospels the humanity of Jesus. His favorite title for Jesus is "Son of man." He draws special attention to Jesus' concern for outcasts, the poor, children and women. More prayers of Jesus are recorded by Luke than the other Gospel writers.

Listed below is an outline of the life of Jesus with the nineteen most important events. Those marked with * are described in Luke.

- A. Preparation Phase: 30 years (Matt. 1:1-4:11; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 1:1-3:21; John 1:1-51).
 - *1. Birth.
 - *2. Temple Visit (age 12).
 - *3. Baptism (age 30).
- B. Obscurity Phase: 1 year (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 3:21-4:13; John 2:1-4:54).
 - *4. Temptation.
 - 5. First Miracle at Cana.
 - 6. First Cleansing of Temple.
- C. Popularity Phase: 1 year (Matt. 4:12-9:35; Mark 1:14-5:43; Luke 4:14-9:17; John 5:5:1-47).
 - *7. Twelve ordained.
 - *8. Two resurrections.
 - *9. Feeding of 5,000.
- D. Opposition Phase: 1 year (Matt. 9:36-18:35; Mark 6:1-9:50; Luke 9:18-13:21; John 6:1-10:39).
 - 10. Feeding of 4,000.
 - *11. Peter's Confession.
 - *12. Transfiguration.
 - *13. Sending forth the 72.
- E. Persecution Phase: 3 months (Matt. 19:1-20:34; Mark 10:1-52; Luke 13:22-19:27; John 10:40-11:57).
 - *14. Resurrection of Lazarus.
- F. Final Week (Matt. 21:1-27:66; Mark 11:15-47; Luke 19:28-23:56; John 12:1-19:42).
 - *15. Triumphal Entry.
 - *16. Second Cleansing of Temple.
 - *17. Crucifixion.
- G. Triumph Phase: 40 days (Matt. 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-20; Luke 24:1-53; John 20:1-21:25).
 - *18. Resurrection.
 - *19. Ascension.

PREFACE

Luke 1:1-4

I. Previous Efforts (1:1-2):

A. Their Number (1:1a): *Many have undertaken to draw up an account:* When Luke began to write in about AD 60 others had already written accounts of various aspects of the life of Jesus. None of them, however, had done what Luke aims to do. Most of those earliest written records of Jesus' life have not survived. We do, however, have the Gospel of Matthew, and possibly Mark, which had already been written at the time Luke took up the pen.

B. Their Subject (1:1b): *The things that have been fulfilled among us:* For Luke history was no accident. It was the fulfillment of a divine plan. The coming of Christ had been predicted by the prophets of the Old Testament.

C. Their Sources (1:2):

1. Eyewitnesses (1:2a): ***Just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses:*** Luke was not himself an eyewitness of the events of Jesus' life. He relied on the testimony of the eyewitnesses. During travels with Paul in Palestine he would have had abundant opportunity to interview those eyewitnesses.

2. Original teachers (1:2b): ***And servants of the word:*** The eyewitnesses had been willing to pass down to others that of which they had personal knowledge. They preached and taught the word or gospel.

II. Luke's Intentions (1:3-4):

A. Luke's Investigation (1:3a): *I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning:* Luke wanted his account of Christ's life to be both complete and accurate.

B. Luke's Goal (1:3b): *An orderly account:* Luke aimed to record the events of Christ's life in chronological order.

C. Luke's Patron (1:3c): *Most excellent Theophilus:* The name *Theophilus* means "lover of God." He probably was a wealthy Gentile Christian who provided the money to get the book of Luke published. It is thought that he lived in or near Rome. Luke writes this book with Gentiles like Theophilus in mind.

D. Luke's Purpose (1:4): *So that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught:* Theophilus already was a believer, but he was in need of further grounding in the truth about Jesus. Many false teachers were twisting the facts of Christ's life. Theophilus need to have accurate facts upon which to build his faith.¹

PREPARATION FOR THE SAVIOR

Luke 1:5-4:13

Annunciations

Luke 1:5-56

I. Announcement of John's Birth (1:5-25):

A. Time of the Announcement (1:5a): *In the time of Herod king of Judea:* Herod the Great ruled the Jews from 37-4 BC. He is not to be confused with his son Herod the tetrarch mentioned later in Luke. Though not a Jew himself, Herod had been appointed by the Romans to be the King of the Jews.

¹ Why is it important for us to have accurate information about the life of Jesus? What are some problems which might arise when members of a church are not well taught about Jesus' life?

The area in which the Jews lived is called Judea. Herod is the monster who ordered the infants in Bethlehem to be killed as recorded by Matthew.

B. Recipients of the Announcement (1:5b-7):

1. Their ancestry (1:5b): ***There was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron:*** During the days of David the priests had been organized into 24 divisions (1 Chron 24:1-6). Twice a year each division was on duty in the temple in Jerusalem for one week. Under the Law of Moses all priests were required to be descendants of Aaron. The Law did not require a priest to marry a wife of the priestly family, but this was considered a special blessing.²
2. Their character (1:6): ***Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly:*** To be upright or righteous means to be obedient to the will of God. Zechariah and Elizabeth obeyed the rules and regulations of the Law of Moses.³
3. Their problem (1:7): ***But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years:*** A married woman who could not bear children was considered to be under a curse. She was looked down upon by other women. Through the years Elizabeth had endured this sorrow. She and her husband were at the stage of life when, humanly speaking, it was impossible for them to have children.

C. Circumstances of the Announcement (1:8-10):

1. On duty at the temple (1:8): ***Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God:*** A priestly division served for one week in the Jerusalem temple twice a year.
2. Chosen for special service (1:9): ***He was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense:*** The priests would divide the temple duties by casting lots. This was equivalent to the modern practice of drawing straws. Among the more desirable duties, was entering into the beautiful temple to offer up incense at the golden altar of incense that stood immediately in front of the curtain which divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. A priest was only allowed to have this privilege once in his lifetime.
3. Engaged in solemn ministry (1:10): ***And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside:*** Incense was offered twice a day, in the morning and in mid-afternoon. Worshipers actually did not enter the temple; they remained outside in the vast courtyards which surrounded the sacred building.⁴

D. Agent of the Announcement (1:11-13a):

1. The appearance of an angel (1:11): ***Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense:*** Angels are ministering spirits. On occasion God permitted them to materialize so as to be seen by the eyes of man.
2. The reaction of Zechariah (1:12): ***When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear:*** It is natural that the sudden, unexpected appearance of a strong, holy, dazzlingly brilliant angel caused the old priest to tremble.
3. The reassurance of the angel (1:13a): ***But the angel said to him: Do not be afraid, Zechariah:*** Often in the Scriptures the Lord or his agents encourage people not to be afraid. This is another way of saying, Cheer up! *Your prayer has been heard:* The angel may be referring to the priestly prayer that Zechariah was making on behalf of God's people at that altar of incense. More likely, however, is the view that Zechariah had throughout his wife been praying for his wife to have his child.

² What in this verse suggests that spiritual compatibility is essential to happiness in marriage?

³ Which is more important, reputation in the sight of men, or righteousness in the sight of God? What is the difference between the two?

⁴ Why is the offering of incense a fitting symbol of prayer? To whom does the privilege of prayer belong?

E. Shock of the Announcement (1:13b-14):

1. Mother of the child (1:13b): ***Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son....***: Even the sex of the child is foretold.
2. Name of the child (1:13c): ***and you are to give him the name John***. The naming of a child by a heavenly messenger hints at the importance of this child in the program of God.
3. Joy over the child (1:14): ***He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth***: The child would bring joy to his parents of course. His birth would be the occasion of joy among all the friends and relatives of the couple. Later on, when John became the powerful prophet of God, people would rejoice over the fact that he had been born.

F. Significance of the Announcement (1:15-17):

1. John's devoted personal life (1:15):
 - a. He would become great (1:15a): ***For he will be great in the sight of the Lord***: Jesus once said of John: "Among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist" (Matt 11:11). Years after his death, John still had followers all over the Roman empire.
 - b. He would be a Nazirite (1:15b): ***He is never to take wine or other fermented drink***: John was to be a Nazirite for life. Nazirites were never to drink wine or eat any fruit of the vine. As an outward symbol of their commitment, Nazirites did not cut their hair.
 - c. He would be filled with the Spirit (1:15c): ***And he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth***: From the very beginning of his life John would be filled with the Holy Spirit. Those who were filled with the Spirit demonstrate extraordinary courage and dedication.⁵
2. John's vital ministry (1:16): ***Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God***: The mission of John was to bring the Lord's people back to their God. This he did by strong preaching on repentance.
3. John's fulfillment of prophecy (1:17):
 - a. His model (1:17a): ***And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous***: Malachi had predicted that God would send Elijah to Israel (Mal 4:5-6). John was that "Elijah" (Matt. 11:13-14). He displayed the boldness and powerful preaching of the famous Elijah. John's mission was to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord, i.e., Jesus. John's preaching would result in the conversion of sinners. This would result in harmony between parents and their children. To obey God's Word is a manifestation of wisdom. Righteous people are those who are obedient to God's Word.
 - b. His work (1:17b): ***To make ready a people prepared for the Lord***: The end result of John's ministry would be to present to the Lord a people ready to be used by him.⁶

G. Reaction to the Announcement (1:18-20):

1. Zechariah's implicit doubt (1:18): ***Zechariah asked the angel, How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years***. Zechariah did not believe the angel. There is no excuse for his unbelief. The Old Testament is full of examples of spectacular miracles performed for barren couples.
2. The angel's implicit rebuke (1:19): ***The angel answered, I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news***: Gabriel is mentioned also in Dan. 8:16. The only other angel mentioned by name in Scripture is Michael (Dan 10:13). Gabriel seems to have had the special mission of bringing God's messages to human beings, and interpreting those messages. Gabriel knew whereof he spoke. His prediction was sure. God would cause this barren couple to have a baby.
3. Zechariah's explicit punishment (1:20): ***And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time***:

⁵ Why did God forbid Nazirites to drink wine? What was the source of John's energy and boldness?

⁶ How does true conversion remove the generation gap in a family?

Zechariah would be punished for not believing the Word of God. However, God still loved the old priest. His speech would be restored when the child was born and then named by his father.⁷

H. Aftermath of the Announcement (1:21-25):

1. In respect to the people (1:21-22a):

a. Concern of the people (1:21): ***Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple.*** The priests would normally leave the incense altar as quickly as possible, lest he commit some unholy act while at that temple. The worshipers outside in the courtyard could not understand why it was taking the priest so long to complete his work.

b. Realization of the people (1:22a): ***When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple...***

2. In respect to Zechariah (1:22b-23):

a. He tried to communicate to the people (1:22b0): ***for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.*** Gabriel's prediction about Zechariah had come to pass. By means of signs he indicated that he had seen a vision in the temple.

b. He returned home (1:23): ***When his time of service was completed, he returned home.*** Zechariah returned to his wife at the end of his week of service at the temple.

3. In respect to Elizabeth (1:24-25):

a. She became pregnant (1:24a): ***After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant...*** God's promises never fail! Like Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel, Elizabeth conceived after long years of barrenness.

b. She remained in seclusion (1:24b): ***and for five months remained in seclusion.*** The text does not say why she remained in seclusion for five months. Perhaps she was taking extra precaution against miscarriage. She rested at home rather than pursue her normal work.

c. She gave God the glory (1:25): ***The Lord has done this for me, she said. In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.*** Elizabeth openly gives God the credit for her pregnancy. She regarded this as a special manifestation of God's favor.⁸

II. Announcement of Jesus' Birth (1:26-38):

A. Circumstances (1:26-27):

1. Time and place (1:26): ***In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee:*** It was the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. Nazareth was a village in the hills of Galilee, 15 miles from the sea of Galilee to the east, and 22 miles from the Mediterranean Sea to the west.

2. Recipient (1:27): ***To a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary:*** Both Mary, and her fiancée, lived in Nazareth. Both were descendants of the great King David. For almost 600 years no one from the royal family of David had ruled over the Jews. Engagement in Bible days was taken more seriously than today. Even though the couple did not live together, the woman was already considered the wife of the man. This Mary must be distinguished from three other Marys in our text this year: (1) Mary the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12); (2) Mary of Bethany (Lk 10:42); and (3) Mary Magdalene (Lk 8:2).⁹

B. Greeting (1:28-30):

1. The angel's bold address (1:28): ***The angel went to her and said, Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you:*** The angel must have entered by the door, like a friend or relative.

⁷ Do Christians today know the promises which God's Word contains for them? Do they believe those promises?

⁸ Should we as believers merely count our blessings, or should we trace them back to the Giver? Can one experience true thanksgiving would recognizing God?

⁹ Why did God choose Mary to be the mother of Messiah? Why is it important to remain sexually pure prior to marriage?

After the traditional greetings, the angel announces Mary was highly favored, i.e., chosen above every other woman in the world. God was with her in a very special way.

2. Mary's puzzlement (1:29): ***Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be:*** It was not the sudden appearance of the stranger nor his appearance that frightened Mary; it was his words. She knew she was a woman of lowly social position, and she did not see how it was possible that she could be addressed in such lofty terms.

3. The angel's comforting assurance (1:30): ***But the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God:*** As in the case of Zechariah (v. 13) Mary was told not to be afraid. Mary's pure life had pleased God.

C. Prediction (1:31-33):

1. Prediction regarding Mary (1:31): ***You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus:*** Mary had been chosen to be mother of the Messiah. Mary was told what the child's name would be. Joseph was also given instructions by an angel concerning the naming of the child (Matt 1:21). The name Jesus means "the Lord saves." The child was given this name because he would save his people from their sins (Matt 1:21).

2. Predictions about Jesus (1:32):

a. His title (1:32a): ***He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High:*** The greatness of Jesus cannot be questioned even by those who do not believe in him as savior. Because of the unique circumstances of his birth, his life, his death and his resurrection Jesus would come to be recognized as divine. The title Most High in reference to God appears five additional times in the text (Lk 1:35,76; 6:35; 8:28; Acts 7:48).

b. His throne (1:32b): ***The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David:*** The prophecy by the prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel 7:11-13 would find its complete fulfillment in Jesus. Christ would sit on the throne once occupied by his ancestor David.

3. Prediction about Jesus' kingdom (1:33): ***And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end:*** The throne of David was in reality God's throne (1 Chron 29:23). When he ascended into heaven, Jesus was seated on God's throne. There he will sit enthroned forever. His kingdom is eternal. The New Testament house of Jacob includes Gentiles as well as Jews who have surrendered their lives to the Lord Jesus.

D. Explanation (1:34-35):

1. Mary's request (1:34): ***How will this be, Mary asked the angel, since I am a virgin?:*** Unlike Zechariah, Mary believed the angel. She simply was perplexed by his predictions. She correctly understood him to be saying that in her status as a virgin she would bear a son. A virgin woman is one who has not slept with a man. By human standards it would not be possible for such a woman to bear a child without the seed of the man within her.

2. Gabriel's response (1:35):

a. Explanation of the pregnancy (1:35a): ***The angel answered, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you:*** The angel makes clear that Mary's pregnancy will result from divine, not human, action. The Holy Spirit would bring about the miracle in Mary's womb by exerting his divine power.

b. Explanation of the child's title (1:35b): ***So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God:*** As time went on, people would come to realize that Joseph was not, nor could he have been, the father of Jesus. Jesus was the eternal Word of God who came into the world through Mary (John 1:14). The conception of the child was miraculous; his birth, however, was normal.¹⁰

E. Encouragement (1:36-37):

¹⁰ In what ways does v. 35 suggest that Jesus was qualified to be our Savior?

1. Encouragement of Elizabeth's pregnancy (1:36): ***Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month:*** In order to strengthen Mary's faith, the angel calls attention to the miracle of the conception of the barren Elizabeth. Her conception was miraculous, but it was not unique. Others in Bible history had conceived in their old age. Mary's conception, however, was unique. Jesus is the only one to have been born of a virgin. Apparently to this point the pregnancy of Elizabeth had not been made public. This verse establishes that John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus. How could Elizabeth be a relative of Mary? Mary was of the house of David, the tribe of Judah. Elizabeth was of the house of Aaron, the tribe of Levi (see. v. 5). The answer is this: Ancestry was traced through one's father. Elizabeth's mother may have been from the tribe of Judah.

2. Encouragement of God's power (1:37): ***For nothing is impossible with God:*** He was able to bring about the pregnancy of Elizabeth; He would also be able to fulfill his promises to Mary.

F. Submission (1:38): *I am the Lord's servant, Mary answered. May it be to me as you have said.* Mary knew that becoming pregnant before marriage to Joseph could cost her painful criticism, a broken engagement, and possibly even death (Deut 22:23f.). But she completely surrendered herself to the will of the Lord. *Then the angel left her:* His mission completed, Gabriel departed from Mary.

III. Celebration of Pregnancy (1:39-56):

A. Elizabeth's Blessing (1:39-45):

1. Circumstances (1:39-41):

a. Mary's visit to Elizabeth (1:39): ***At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah:*** Mary needed someone with whom she could confide. She also wished to congratulate her relative on her pregnancy. Luke does not identify the particular town in the hill country of Judah where Zechariah and Elizabeth lived. On donkey the trip would have been long and difficult. She probably traveled in the company of a caravan of locals who were making their way to the south on business or to attend some temple festival.

b. Mary's greeting to Elizabeth (1:40): ***Where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth:*** The greeting consisted of a warm embrace accompanied by a few loving words.

c. Movement of the child (1:41): ***When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was fill with the Holy Spirit:*** In the sixth month of pregnancy a sudden movement of the unborn baby would not have been considered unusual. In this case, however, the Holy Spirit revealed to Elizabeth something more. See on v. 44.

2. Elizabeth's double blessing (1:42): ***In a loud voice she exclaimed: Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!:*** Blessed means happy. Among all women on earth, Mary was the most blessed, because she had been chosen by the Lord to be mother of the Messiah. The language shows that Mary was already pregnant at the time of this visit. The child, as well as the mother, is the object of God's special delight.

3. Elizabeth's recognition (1:43-44):

a. She recognized the child as her Lord (1:43): ***But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?:*** At this point Elizabeth sees in Mary more than a mere relative. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth knew that Mary was pregnant, and that the child she would bear would be the Lord.¹¹

b. Reason she recognized the child (1:44): ***As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy:*** Elizabeth was enlightened by the Holy Spirit to interpret the baby's movement as an expression of the joy experienced by the unborn child.

¹¹ Catholics virtually worship Mary. Of course this is wrong. But do we give Mary the respect that is due her as the chosen vessel of the Lord?

4. Elizabeth's blessing on Mary (1:45): ***Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!***: Here the Holy Spirit reveals to Elizabeth what had been Mary's reaction to the visit of the angel in v. 38. At this point the unique already had taken place. Yet to be fulfilled were the promises concerning the birth, name, nature and rule of the child in her womb.¹²

B. Mary's Song (1:46-56). [Known as the Magnificat, because of the first word in the Latin version]

1. Mary's joy in her Lord (1:46-49a):

a. Affirmations of joy (1:46-47): ***And Mary said: My soul praises the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior:*** Mary's heart is filled to overflowing with thanksgiving for that which God had done for her. She enthusiastically and joyfully proclaims the greatness of the Lord. Though a pure young woman, Mary needed a Savior just like every other sinner.

b. Explanations of joy (1:48-49):

(1) God had honored Mary (1:48): ***For he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed:*** Mary was deeply conscience that she was of a poor family, engaged to the village carpenter. She was not a likely candidate to be chosen as the object of God's special favor. People of future generations would regard Mary as blessed to be used of God to bring this child into the world. She does not mean that people through the centuries would regard her as an intermediary between man and Jesus, or that people would regard her as an object of veneration. She means that all generations would praise God because of the marvelous manner in which He honored this humble maiden.

(2) God demonstrated his power to Mary (1:49a): ***For the Mighty One has done great things for me:*** Mary praises God's power. The title Mighty One recognizes God as the one who specializes in the impossible. The conception within the womb of this virgin is the latest, and perhaps greatest to date, manifestation of divine power.

2. Mary's praise for the Lord (1:49b-55):

a. Praise for God's holiness (1:49b): ***Holy is his name. Holy means set apart from the world.*** God's name is always to be honored.¹³

b. Praise for God's mercy (1:50): ***His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation:*** Having praised God's power, and holiness, Mary next extols God's mercy. The same mercy that God had shown to her individually would be available to those who fear the Lord in all future generations. To fear God is to reverence him, to believe in him, to obey him.

c. Praise for God's record (1:51-55):

(1) Scattered the proud (1:51): ***He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts:*** Mary recognized that God had a history of great deeds to his credit. The arm is a symbol of the power of God. God is a Spirit; He does not have a human body. The proud are those who do not fear God. From her knowledge of Scripture, Mary knew of many examples where God had dispersed and thus brought to nothing the designs of arrogant men.

(2) Changed rulers (1:52): ***He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.*** The Old Testament is full of examples of rulers placed on their thrones and removed there from by God. The greatest powers on earth are subject to the greater power of God! Yet Scripture furnishes many examples of how God raised up humble people to positions of power and prominence. The humble are those who fear God.

(3) Reversed human circumstances (1:53): ***He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.*** The hungry may be those physically hungry, or those who hunger after spiritual things. While the hungry are filled, the rich and powerful often lose everything they have. Basic thought: God cares for his own.¹⁴

¹² What did Mary believe? How great was her faith? How did Elizabeth know that Mary believed?

¹³ God had done great things for Mary. What great things has He done for us?

¹⁴ In what sense are the wicked rich empty even before they are dispatched into eternity?

(4) Helped Israel (1:54-55): ***He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful: 55 To Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.*** The nation Israel was God's servant. Time and again God had rendered Israel help against their enemies. He was merciful to his people, even when they were undeserving. Now he is about to help his people again, by bringing Messiah into the world. God had promised that through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all the families of the earth would be blessed. Mary views what is happening to her as the fulfillment of those promises made centuries earlier to the Patriarchs.

3. Conclusion (1:56): ***Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home:*** Mary must have stayed with Elizabeth until the birth of John, or thereabouts. Mary's home was in Nazareth. During those three months an angel had appeared to Joseph directing him to marry Mary even though she was pregnant before the marriage (Matt 1:18-24).

Births

Luke 1:57-2:40

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

A. Celebration of the Birth (1:57-59a):

1. Joy of Elizabeth (1:57): ***When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son:*** The prediction that Elizabeth would give birth to a male child has now been fulfilled.

2. Joy of Friends (1:58): ***Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy:*** Near-by neighbors and relatives from more distant places came to congratulate Zechariah and Elizabeth and share in their joy. Mercy refers to the granting of birth to a barren couple.¹⁵

B. Issue of the Name (1:59-63):

1. Circumstances (1:59a): ***On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child:*** Circumcision is a minor surgery performed on the private part of a male infant. The Law of Moses prescribed that this was to be done on the eighth day of life (Gen 17:13; Lev 12:3). Circumcision was a mark of the covenant God had made with Abraham centuries earlier. The surgery was probably performed by a rabbi or priest, the neighbors and relatives serving as witnesses.

2. Intention of the friends (1:59b): ***And they were going to name him after his father Zechariah:*** At this time Jews were assigning names to their male children at the time of their circumcision. Because of the vision he had received in the temple, Zechariah was now a celebrity. The friends assumed that the child would be named after his now famous father.¹⁶

3. Argument with Elizabeth (1:60-61):

a. Pronouncement by Elizabeth (1:60): ***But his mother spoke up and said, No! He is to be called John:*** Zechariah had communicated to his wife the instructions of the angel regarding the name of the child.

b. Protest of the friends (1:61): ***They said to her, There is no one among your relatives who has that name:*** The custom was to name a child after a relative. God's directives are always more important than man-made customs.

4. Decision of Zechariah (1:62-63):

a. The friends asked Zechariah (1:62): ***Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child:*** Was Zechariah deaf as well as unable to speak? So think so. Perhaps Zechariah's loss of hearing had nothing to do with the encounter with Gabriel. Others think that in the popular mind there was a close connection between dumbness and deafness. Because he could not speak, they assumed he could not hear. Luke simply does not make clear why the friends made signs to Zechariah.

¹⁵ Rejoicing with those who rejoice is a command to Christians. How can we do this?

¹⁶ Are Christians today more concerned about customs, or about God's commands?

b. Zechariah wrote his answer (1:63): ***He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote: his name is John:*** The writing tablet in those days was usually a little board covered with wax. With a stylus words could be impressed on the wax. The friends were astonished because of the lack of hesitancy on the part of both Elizabeth and Zechariah in giving the child this name that was not found among the ancestors of the child. Zechariah indicated, not what the name of the child would be, but that the name of the child was already John. The name John means "The Lord is gracious." Through John God would warn that generation of judgment, and announce to them that the Messiah was at hand.¹⁷

C. Sequel to the Naming (1:64-66):

1. Zechariah loosed from dumbness (1:64): ***Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God:*** This is what Gabriel had promised (1:13,20). His first words in nine months were words of praise.¹⁸

2. Friends filled with awe (1:65): ***The neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things:*** The remarkable events recorded in the preceding verses filled the minds of the people with the conviction that God was active in their midst and was carrying out his plan on earth. People tremble with excitement and awe when God is present and working in their midst. These remarkable events were the chief topic of discussion in the region for quite some time.

3. Everyone filled with questions (1:66): ***Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, What then is this child going to be? For the Lord's hand was with him:*** People pondered the meaning of these recent events. They wondered especially about the future role of the child. No doubt their hopes for John ran high.

D. Song of Zechariah (1:67-80). [often called The Benedictus, after the first Latin word]

1. The song is a prophecy (1:67): ***His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:*** Like his wife Elizabeth (v. 41), Zechariah now received a special measure of power from the Holy Spirit to foresee things which human foresight would not ordinarily be able to grasp. Zechariah's song might also be called Zechariah's prophecy because (1) it is a proclamation inspired by God, and (2) because it is a prediction.

2. Praise for God's salvation (1:68-75):

a. He has brought redemption (1:68): ***Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people:*** The song begins with praise. For prophets, the future was so certain it could be described as though the events had already taken place. Zechariah anticipated that redemption for Israel was now at hand. What kind of redemption? V. 77 suggests that it was salvation from sin which he has in view.

b. He has brought forth a Davidic Savior (1:69): ***He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David:*** Animal horns symbolized power to ancient people. By knocking down and destroying their enemies, the horn becomes a horn of salvation for God's people. Zechariah was not thinking of his son John, who was of the house of Aaron, but of Jesus who was of the house of David. In his resurrection Jesus destroyed the power of Satan, the great enemy of God's people, and thereby provided salvation from the consequences of man's sin.

c. He has fulfilled prophecy (1:70): ***(As he said through his holy prophets of long ago):*** The Old Testament prophets repeatedly predicted the coming of a descendant of David who would destroy enemies, and bring salvation. Some 73 passages in the Old Testament speak directly of the coming of Christ.

¹⁷ Zechariah and Elizabeth agreed to obey God with regard to the child's name. What will be the consequences in a home when parents and children agree together to obey God in all things?

¹⁸ Zechariah had been disciplined by God for lack of faith. Do Christians today express praise after being disciplined by God?

d. He has provided salvation from enemies (1:71): ***Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us:*** Jesus is the one who conquers Satan and his allies, sin, death, the grave, hell and all the hosts of evil. Throughout history God's people have been hated by those who follow Satan.

e. He has remembered his covenant with Israel (1:72-73): ***To show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant: 73 The oath he swore to our father Abraham:*** By providing salvation through Christ, God was showing mercy to the ancestors of Israel to whom he had made the promises of a coming Savior. God keeps his covenant promises through the work of Jesus. The holy covenant of v. 72 is explained as the oath that God made with Abraham (Gen 22:15-18). Part of that oath was that through Abraham's descendants all families of the earth would be blessed. Jesus brought that blessing to all mankind.

f. He has enabled his people to serve him (1:74-75): ***To rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear: 75 In holiness and righteousness before him all our days:*** The reason God delivered his people out of the hand of their enemies (Satan and his host) is so that they might be able to serve Him in confidence. Gratitude for salvation is the motivation for Christian service. The goal of every Christian is serve God throughout his life in these two ways. Holiness not doing what God forbids. Righteousness means doing all that God commands. The phrase before Him is a technical expression referring to priestly service. Christians are priests unto God.¹⁹

3. Predictions about his Son (1:76-79):

a. John would prepare the way for the Lord (1:76): ***And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him:*** For the first time in this prophecy Zechariah refers to his own son. He will be recognized as a prophet to prepare the way for the Lord.

b. John would give the people spiritual knowledge (1:77): ***To give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins:*** John gave people knowledge of salvation by pointing to Christ, the lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). This verse defines the salvation spoken of throughout the song of Zechariah, viz., the forgiveness of sins.²⁰

c. John would prepare for the dawn of a new day (1:78-79):

(1) The sunrise is evidence of God's mercy (1:78): ***Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven:*** Salvation or the forgiveness of sins will be possible because of the mercy of God. He would send to his people the rising sun from heaven. This is a reference to the prophecy in Malachi 4:2. Some capitalize the phrase Rising Sun for it clearly refers to the Messiah, who is the Light of the world. This Rising Sun comes to earth from heaven.

(2) The sunrise will furnish light for guidance (1:79): ***To shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death: to guide our feet into the path of peace:*** Sitting in darkness and death's shadow indicates a condition of ignorance, danger, fear and hopelessness. The Rising Sun--Chris--gives heavenly light to such people. Those who were sitting in despair before Christ came into their life, are now pictured walking in the light of the Rising Sun. They have peace--peace with God and with their fellow man.²¹

d. Conclusion (1:80): ***And the child grew and became strong in spirit; And he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel:*** Since his parents were advanced in years when he was born, John probably became an orphan at an early age. Yet he grew spiritually as well as physically. Strong in spirit refers to excellent mental, moral and spiritual qualities. For a time John lived alone in the desert until he began his public ministry to Israel when in his late twenties.

II. Birth of the Savior (2:1-20):

¹⁹ We are saved from something, and for something. In the preceding verses, what are we saved from and what are we saved for?

²⁰ What is the noblest aspiration parents can cherish for their children?

²¹ As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so believers should reflect the light of the Rising Sun. How can we reflect his light in our communities?

A. Circumstances of his Birth (2:1-5):

1. Reason for the census (2:1): ***In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world:*** The King of the Jews at the time of Jesus' birth was Herod the Great. The ruler of the Roman Empire, to whom Herod was responsible, was Caesar Augustus who ruled from 63 BC to AD 14. Herod died in 4 BC shortly after this census was ordered. By ordering this census Augustus unknowingly fulfilled prophecy, since it was announced by Micah (5:2) that Christ would be born in Bethlehem. Documents have been found indicating that the Romans took a census every fourteen years. Scholars have computed that this census was ordered, in terms of our calendar, in 8 BC. It seems that the order was not implemented by Herod in Palestine until 5 BC. That is thought by scholars to have been the year of Jesus' birth. But how could Jesus be born "BC"? When the present calendar was set up in the middle ages the monks made an error of six years in their calendar.

2. Background of the census (2:2): ***(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria):*** The system of taking periodic enrollments of the population was first put into operation when Quirinius was the Roman governor of Syria. This statement is intended to help date the birth of Jesus more precisely.

3. Result of the census (2:3): ***And everyone went to his own town to register:*** In the land of the Jews the enrollment ordered by Rome was to be by households. Families would have to return to the town of their origin.

4. Significance of the census (2:4-6):

a. Joseph required to travel to Bethlehem (2:4): ***So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David:*** According to 1 Samuel 20:6, Bethlehem is "David's city." He was born there. Here the family records were kept. Since both Mary and Joseph were from David's family, both would be required to be present in person for the registration.

b. Joseph accompanied by Mary (2:5): ***He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him: And [she] was expecting a child:*** In one respect Joseph and Mary were already husband and wife (Matt. 1:20,24). But Joseph continued to treat Mary as his fiancée in that he did not have sexual relations with her until after Jesus was born (Matt. 1:24-25). For that reason Luke describes their relationship as still an engagement. For Mary the trip to Bethlehem must have been very difficult. If the couple took the usual route across the Jordan in order to by-pass Samaria, the distance would have been about 90 miles.²²

B. Details of the Birth (2:6-7):

1. Time (2:6): ***While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born:*** The text does not indicate how long they had been in Bethlehem before the baby was born.

2. Place (2:7): ***And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn:*** After the birth of Jesus, Mary continued to bear children fathered by Joseph (Luke 8:19-20). Matthew gives the names of Jesus' brothers and even mentions his sisters (Matt 13:55-56). The custom of the time was to wrap a newborn tightly with cloths. The manger from which animals ate was located in a cave beneath the inn. In ancient times a church was built over the presumed location of this cave. The owner of the inn was doing the best he could, under the circumstances, for the pregnant woman. Though the infant king was born in a stable, he was surrounded by love. That is an advantage that many babies do not experience today.²³

C. Announcement of his Birth (2:8-14):

²² Joseph and Mary never thought about refusing to obey the emperor's order. In what ways should Christians demonstrate good citizenship?

²³ How do some people treat Jesus like the inn keeper of Bethlehem?

1. Time and place (2:8): ***And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night:*** Shepherds were a despised group in Jesus' day. Because of the nature of their occupation, they could not always keep all the fine points of the Law of Moses as interpreted by the Pharisees. From the earliest times December 25 has been celebrated as the date of birth of Jesus. There is nothing in the text to either prove or disprove this date. Shepherds might be out in the fields tending the flock at any time of the year, especially if those sheep were intended to be used for sacrifice in the Jerusalem temple.

2. Messenger (2:9): ***An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified:*** There is no way to know whether or not this is the same angel who appeared earlier to Zechariah and to Mary. The glory symbolized the presence of God. Jews called it the Shekinah glory. The suddenness of the whole experience, and the wonder of it accounts for their fear.

3. Message (2:10-12):

a. Good news (2:10): ***But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid: I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people:*** This is now the third time that an angel has instructed terrified believers not to be afraid. It is good news that the long-promised Savior has been born. That news is joyous because through Messiah sinners can have forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. The good news is not for the Jews only, but for people of all nationalities.²⁴

b. Birth announcement (2:11): ***Today in the town of David: Bethlehem. A Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord:*** The most important work of the Messiah is that he would save people from their sins and from Satan's power. This is the only time in the text this year where Jesus is called Savior. Christ is the Greek name equivalent to Messiah. Both words mean, the anointed one. Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit to be his people's Prophet, Priest and King. The term Lord connotes deity. Messiah is God in the flesh.²⁵

c. A sign (2:12): ***This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger":*** There may have been other new born babies wrapped in cloth that night in Bethlehem. The Christ child would be found, however, lying in a cattle manger. The angel does not direct the shepherds to seek out the child. He only hints that if they seek the child, they will find him.

4. Celebration of the message (2:13-14):

a. Appearance of a heavenly host (2:13): ***Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying:*** Surprise follows surprise, and each one greater than the one preceding. Just as the shepherds were adjusting to the presence of the first angel, he is joined by an army of heavenly beings. Did they look like the angels which are depicted on Christmas cards? There is no way to know. Note that the text does not say that the angels actually sang. However, the word saying may include singing, and the words of the angels have the structure of an ancient song. This much is certain: those angels were thrilled over the birth of Jesus! They knew that God's plan of redemption was well underway.

b. Praise of the heavenly host (2:14): ***"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests:"*** The angels desired that all creation praise God for what he had done. They realized that by accomplishing his mission, Jesus would bring peace. The peace is reconciliation with God. God chooses to bestow this peace on those who accept his Son Jesus. God's grace or favor rests upon believers.

D. Adoration of his Birth (2:15-17):

1. Decision of the shepherds (2:15): ***When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which***

²⁴ How does the great joy experienced by believers differ from the "fun" and hilarity of the non-believers?

²⁵ Why do the humble seem to embrace Christ before the rich and the powerful? Can there be a true celebration of Christmas if Jesus is not received as Savior, Christ, and Lord?

the Lord has told us about." Their decision to go and seek out the baby indicates that these shepherds were spiritual men. They had heard the word of God. They were excited. They wanted to show their devotion to the new-born King. Nothing is said about what became of the sheep.

2. Discovery of the shepherds (2:16): **So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger:** They found the child just as the angel had indicated. They knew this was the Messiah.²⁶

3. Declaration of the shepherds (2:17): **When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child:** The shepherds were confident in their testimony. They risked ridicule to share with any who would listen to the account of the appearance of the heavenly host, and the words of the angels.²⁷

E. Reaction to his Birth (2:18-20):

1. Reaction of the people (2:18): **And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them:** Truly the shepherds had an amazing story to tell! But the story is even more amazing to those who know the full the significance of what happened that night in Bethlehem!

2. Reaction of Mary (2:19): **But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart:** Mary knew things that perhaps no other knew, not even Joseph. The testimony of the shepherds was treasured up in her heart along with those things she had experienced in Nazareth and at the house of Elizabeth. At some point Mary became a believer. She watched her Jesus die on the cross. She was with the disciples in the upper room after he ascended into heaven (Acts 1:14).

3. Reaction of the shepherds (2:20): **The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told:** The shepherds were not ashamed to acknowledge the baby in the manger as the Messiah. Their faith was strengthened by the fact that they found everything to be as the angel had indicated.

III. Postnatal Events (2:21-2:40):

A. Naming of the Child (2:21): On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived: God had ordained that Jewish male babies should be circumcised on the eighth day after birth (Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3). Jesus bore on his body the mark of being a true son of Abraham. The text does not indicate who performed this minor surgery. Perhaps a local rabbi or priest might do the job. The emphasis here, however, is on the naming of the child.²⁸

B. Purification Obligation (2:22-24):

1. Required a trip to the temple (2:22): **When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord:** For forty days following the birth of a male child a Jewish woman was considered ceremonially impure. She was not permitted to enter the temple during that period (Lev. 12:1-4). At the end of forty days the new mother would offer sacrifices of gratitude to the Lord. She would then be restored to full fellowship with the worshipping community. As head of the family, Joseph would be responsible to provide the sacrifices for his wife to offer. Following the purification ceremonies, the baby was presented to the priests. Since Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, he had to be "redeemed" from the responsibility of priestly service in the temple. The "redemption" was accomplished by the payment of five shekels of silver (Num. 3:26). Five silver shekels would be equivalent to about \$3.20.²⁹

²⁶ Why is it important to obey God quickly when we learn his will?

²⁷ What is a witness? Why should we be witnesses? What difficulties might we encounter when we share our faith in Christ with others?

²⁸ Why is the name Jesus so precious to believers?

²⁹ In what ways can new parents show their appreciation to the Lord for the birth of their sons and daughters?

2. Required by the law of Moses (2:23): (*As it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"*): The presentation was also an opportunity to consecrate the child to the Lord. The idea that the firstborn son belonged to the Lord in a special sense goes back to Exod. 12:29 where God spared the firstborn of Israel when the death angel passed through the land of Egypt.

3. Required a sacrifice (2:24): *And to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons"*: The normal purification offering was a lamb, and a young pigeon and a turtle dove (Lev. 12:6). The same law, however, provided that if the woman could not afford the lamb, she would offer two doves or two pigeons. From this it is fair to conclude that Joseph and Mary could not afford the more expensive offering. After all, Joseph had now been away from his carpentry work for well over a month. This also indicates that the wise men, with their rich gifts, had not yet arrived even forty days after the birth of Jesus.

C. Praise of Simeon (2:23-33):

1. Source of praise (2:25-26):

a. Simeon's character (2:25a): *Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout.* Little is known about Simeon. There is no indication that he was a priest. He was righteous, i.e., he obeyed the commands of God. He was devout, i.e., conscientious in his commitment to God.

b. Simeon's faith (2:25b): *He was waiting for the consolation of Israel:* The reference is to the coming of Messiah, who would console God's people by bringing salvation to them.

c. Simeon's gift (2:25c): *And the Holy Spirit was upon him:* He was constantly guided and influenced by God's Spirit.³⁰

d. Simeon's revelation (2:26): *It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ:* This statement suggests that Simeon was an old man. To him it had been revealed that Messiah's appearance was very near, within his lifetime.

2. Occasion of praise (2:27-28):

a. Simeon's impulse (2:27a): *Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.* On a particular day Simeon felt strongly led by the Holy Spirit to visit the temple courts.

b. Simeon's privilege (2:27b-28a): *When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required: 28 Simeon took him in his arms...:* Simeon's mind was flooded with God-given thoughts of thanksgiving and praise when he saw Joseph and Mary entering the temple with the baby. The custom of the Law refers to the formal presentation of the child and payment of the redemption money as explained above. The term parents does not deny the virgin birth. Joseph was the legal father of Jesus.³¹

c. Simeon's outburst (2:28b): *and praised God, saying:* When the Holy Spirit made clear to him that this very child was the Messiah, Simeon's heart overflowed with gratitude. In his "song" which follows, he thanked God for what this child meant to him personally and for what it meant to the world of both Jews and Gentiles. Simeon now offers up to God the fourth of the four birthday songs associated with the birth of Jesus. The three previous songs were: (1) that of Mary (1:46-53), (2) Zechariah (1:68-79), and (3) the angels (2:14).

3. Content of his praise (2:29-32):

a. He praised God for fulfilling his promise (2:29): *Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace:* The title Sovereign acknowledges God's absolute right to rule over

³⁰ Simeon took seriously the Old Testament promises of a coming Savior. Do believers today take seriously the promises of the return of Christ to earth?

³¹ While he was in the house of God, Simeon received the blessing of holding in his arms the Messiah. What blessings might we miss if he choose to be absent from the assembly of God's people?

human beings. Simeon is now ready to die, since God is dismissing him from this life in peace. God has done for Simeon what he promised to do.³²

b. He praised God for coming salvation (2:30-31): ***For my eyes have seen your salvation: 31 Which you have prepared in the sight of all people:*** Simeon realizes that he is holding in his arms, not just an infant boy, but salvation, i.e., the one through whom God would save his people.³³ The birth of Jesus had significance, not just for the Jews, but for all peoples of the earth. God had been preparing for that day ever since Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden.³⁴

c. He praised God universal salvation (2:32): ***A light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel:*** For the Gentiles salvation is light, i.e., the true knowledge of God and the ways of God. For Israel salvation is glory. The crowning glory of the people of Israel was to be the channel through whom the Savior of all mankind would enter the world.

4. Reaction to his praise (2:33): ***The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him:*** Wonderful things about the Christ child had been said by Gabriel (1:31-33), and by the shepherds (2:8-14). The utterance of Simeon went beyond these earlier statements by including the Gentiles as beneficiaries of Christ's salvation. Thus Mary and Joseph continue to be amazed about the revelations concerning the child.

D. Prophecy of Simeon (2:34-35):

1. Blessing on the parents (2:34a): ***Then Simeon blessed them:*** Having completed his prophecy concerning the child, Simeon pronounced a blessing on his parents. He then added some hint of the trouble that Jesus would experience.

2. Prophecy about the child (2:34b-35a):

a. He would occasion division (2:34b): ***And said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against:*** Jesus would become a divider of men. A person's relationship to Jesus would be absolutely decisive in respect to his eternal destiny. Some would reject him; others would accept him. Those who rejected him would fall, i.e., they would be excluded from his kingdom. Those who accepted him would rise, i.e., they would be invited to the heavenly wedding feast (Luke 13:28-29). Even in Israel, a nation prepared for centuries for his coming, there would be this sharp division over Jesus and because of Jesus. The rulers and majority of Jews would reject him. Thousands, like Simeon, would embrace him.³⁵

b. He would reveal hearts (2:35a): ***So that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed:*** By means of their attitude about Jesus, people would be constantly revealing the thoughts of their hearts. They would show whether they were "for" him or "against" him. Neutrality is never possible with regard to Jesus.

3. Prophecy regarding Mary (2:35b): ***And a sword will pierce your own soul too:*** Simeon has this personal warning for Mary. Her Son would bring her great pain. When she watched him die on the cross, Mary experienced this piercing of her soul with agony and anguish (John 19:25-27).

E. Excitement of Anna (2:36-38):

1. Facts about Anna (2:36-37):

a. She was a prophetess (2:36a): ***There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel:*** Anna is just as remarkable as Simeon. A prophetess one who received direct revelation from God.

b. She was ***of the tribe of Asher*** (2:36b): The so-called lost tribes were not completely lost. The fact that Luke knows to which tribe Anna belonged indicates that the Jews were keeping their family registers or genealogies up to date.

³² Why is it important for Christians to recognize God as Sovereign Lord of their lives?

³³ What do you see when you look at Jesus?

³⁴ Should we regard salvation as something we work up, or something God provides for us?

³⁵ Why is Jesus still such a controversial figure even after all these years? Why do people reject his claims? What facts support our faith in him?

c. She was an elderly widow (2:36c-37a): **she was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage 37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.** This good woman had been a widow most of her life. Her husband had died after seven years of marriage.

d. **She never left the temple** (2:37b): Some take this to mean that Anna lived in one of the many apartments that surrounded the temple. Others think the meaning is that she was in the temple every time the gates were opened. From the earliest times single women were found serving in many ways at the temple.

e. She was devoted to worship (2:37c): **But worshiped night and day, fasting and praying:** Anna devoted herself to worship, especially fasting and praying for the needs of the worshipers who came to the temple. Fasting is going without food for a period of time so as to focus exclusively on spiritual things.

2. Faith of Anna (2:38):

a. Her thanksgiving to God (2:38a): **Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God...:** Having heard the prophetic words of Simeon, Anna was moved to add her prophetic insight regarding the child. She too was convinced that the child was God's Messiah. She publicly thanked God for the child and all he represented.

b. Her testimony to others (2:38b): **and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem:** Then she began to speak to all the devout worshipers who were anxiously awaiting Jerusalem's redemption. This is the same as Israel's consolation in v. 25. Both terms refer to the deliverance from sin through the Messiah and Savior, even Jesus.³⁶

F. Settling in Nazareth (2:39-40):

1. Return to Nazareth (2:39): **When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth:** This would include the purification ceremonies for Mary and the circumcision and presentation ("redemption") ceremonies for the baby. Joseph and Mary were serious about their faith. They did all that God expected of them as new parents. Luke does not say that they returned to Galilee immediately after the temple ceremonies were completed. Luke omits these details that are related by Matthew: Joseph and Mary returned for a time to Bethlehem where they moved into a house. There the wise men from the east came to visit the child. Warned that the child's life was in danger, Joseph took Mary and the child to Egypt where they remained until after the death of Herod. At that point they returned to Nazareth (Matt. 2:1-21).³⁷

2. Childhood of Jesus (2:40): **And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him:** The development of Jesus resembled that of any other child. He matured physically and mentally. The term wisdom refers to the ability and the desire to use knowledge to the best advantage. In the Scripture wisdom has a spiritual dimension. In a noticeable manner God manifested his favor and love for the lad at each step of his personal development.

Introduction of the Savior

Luke 2:41-4:13

I. Assertion of Sonship: Temple Visit (2:41-52):

A. Pilgrimage of his Family (2:41-42):

1. An annual pilgrimage (2:41): **Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover:** For his parents, see on 2:27. The Law of Moses obligated all male Jews of mature age to go to Jerusalem three times a year to attend the great feasts of Passover and Pentecost in the Spring, and

³⁶ What ministry is there for aged people in the church today? How can we encourage the aged in their Christian walk?

³⁷ Nazareth had a bad reputation as a town (John 1:46). Yet here it was where Jesus grew to maturity. How can we overcome the bad influences of the sinful environment in which we live?

Tabernacles in the Fall (Deut. 16:16). Because of great distance, many found it difficult to comply literally with this command. Joseph, however, did attend, at least the Passover every year. Though women were not required to attend, those who could go did attend with their husbands. The Feast of Passover celebrated the time when God brought Israel out of Egypt some 1400 years before Christ.

2. A special pilgrimage (2:42): ***When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom.*** A Jewish boy became a "bar mitzvah" (son of the Law) when he reached the age of 13. Thereafter, he was expected to observe all the commands of God's Law. To prepare for that, parents would take their sons to the temple the preceding year so they could "learn the ropes" of what would be expected of them the following year. Probably this was Jesus' first trip to Jerusalem and the temple since he was a baby.³⁸

B. Error of his Parents (2:43-45):

1. They left without Jesus (2:43): ***After the Feast was over while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it:*** Passover proper lasted but one day. But the Feast of Unleavened bread followed immediately, and was usually considered part of the Passover celebration. Thus the family would have remained in Jerusalem for an entire week. A caravan of friends and relatives bound for Galilee would set out immediately after the seven days. The women and children normally traveled in front, the men and young men came on behind. At the age of 12 Jesus could have traveled with either group. Joseph assumed Jesus was with Mary, and vice versa.³⁹

2. They assumed the whereabouts of Jesus (2:44): ***Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends:*** On the evening of each day the entire group would gather at a previously named rendezvous. It was at that point that Joseph and Mary discovered that Jesus was missing.

3. They returned to look for Jesus (2:45): ***When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him:*** The next day Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem.

C. Discovery of Jesus (2:46-47):

1. They found him in the temple courts (2:46a): ***After three days they found him in the temple courts:*** As the Jews counted time, anything that happened on the third day would be described as happening after three days. Thus the three days were: (1) one day traveling north from Jerusalem; (2) one day returning to Jerusalem; (3) and locating Jesus on the third day.

2. They found him discussing Scripture (2:46b): ***Sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions:*** Jerusalem was the headquarters for the Jewish faith. Several great teachers lived there, and others came there for the Passover holidays. A favorite method of teaching among the Jews is asking and answering questions.⁴⁰

3. They found him amazing the scholars (2:47): ***Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers:*** What was unusual here was the kind of questions Jesus asked and the kind of answers he gave. Both the questions and the answers revealed amazing insight into complex issues. Soon everyone's attention was fixed on him.

D. Declaration of Jesus (2:48-49):

1. A mild rebuke from his parents (2:48): ***When his parents saw him, they were astonished. his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you":*** Joseph was Jesus' father only in a legal sense. This is the last reference to Joseph in the text for this year. It is natural for the mother, who was worried sick about her son, to speak first

³⁸ What can adults do to encourage young people to start assuming responsibilities withIn the church of Christ?

³⁹ What can be done to make young people so enthused about their faith that the church becomes the most important thing in their lives?

⁴⁰ What teaching methods can be used to help youth learn the great truths of the Scriptures?

here. Her words suggest surprise, reproach and anguish. In her concern, and perhaps shame for failing to keep an eye on him while in the big city, Mary momentarily forgot what the angel had told her about the lad.

2. A mild rebuke for his parents (2:49): **"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?":** Mary referred to your father. Jesus refers to my Father. Even at the age of 12 Jesus was deeply conscious of unique relationship with the heavenly Father. Jesus' words are a mild rebuke to his mother. Joseph and Mary (the pronoun you is plural) should have known exactly where the boy was. Jesus had to be there. He felt a compulsion to learn all he could from the eminent teachers of the Law about the Scriptures.

3. Failure to communicate (2:50): **But they did not understand what he was saying to them:** Often during his life Jesus' closest friends did not understand what he was saying to them. His parents did not yet perceive that this boy was truly God's Son.

E. Growing up years (2:51-52):

1. A model son (2:51): **Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart:** From the elevation of Jerusalem people are always said to go down to other locations in Palestine. Though he realized his parents did not truly understand him, yet he rendered to them unquestioning obedience. Twelve years earlier Mary also treasured things in her heart (Luke 2:19). Later she was able to "put it all together" and come to complete faith in Jesus as her Savior. Her memory of these early events also enabled her to share this information with Luke the author.⁴¹

2. A maturing son (2:52): **And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men:** On wisdom, see v. 40. Stature refers to physical growth. The last phrase means that Jesus continued to experience the special manifestation of the Father's love, and also the friendliness of the people round him. As a youth he was pleasing to both God and man.

II. Verification of Sonship: Baptism (3:1-22):

A. Ministry of the Forerunner (3:1-5):

1. Chronology of his ministry (3:1-2):

a. Emperor (3:1a): **In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar:** The ministry of John was such an important event that Luke provides several pieces of information which help to nail down the date. Tiberius began to share the throne with his father about two years before the death of Augustus in AD 14. Counting from AD 12, the ministry of John would have begun in AD 26.

b. Governor (3:1b): **When Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea:** Pilate was the fifth Roman governor to rule in Judea. his governorship lasted from AD 26-36.

c. Tetrarchs (3:1c): **Herod tetrarch of Galilee:** Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, was appointed tetrarch of Galilee in 4 BC. He continued in that position until AD 39. Finally he was deposed by the Romans and sent into exile. Tetrarch was a title for a ruler of a semi-independent region upon whom the Romans did not wish to bestow the title "king." **His brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis:** Another son of Herod the Great ruled two territories east of the Jordan River. He ruled from 4 BC until his death in AD 34. **And Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene:** Abilene is the region north of Palestine near Damascus. An inscription has been found confirming Lysanias' rule in this region.

d. High priests (3:2a): **During the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas:** Annas was deposed as high priest by the Roman governor in AD 15. Still for many years he remained the dominant spirit in the Jewish governing body known as the Sanhedrin. Many regarded him as the legitimate high priest. Caiaphas was the son-in-law of Annas. He held the high priestly office AD 18-36.

2. Location of his ministry (3:2b-3a):

⁴¹ How does Jesus here set an example for all Christian young people?

- a. His call came in the desert (3:2b): ***The word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert.*** This language is used nowhere else in the New Testament, but frequently appears in the Old Testament to indicate that God had dispatched a prophet to his people. Thus Luke is affirming that John was a prophet equal to all the great Old Testament prophets. God gave him a message. This compelled him to begin a public preaching ministry. The desert indicates an uninhabited area, not a sandy, hot area. This wilderness area of Judea consists of rough and barren cliffs and canyons.⁴²
- b. His ministry was in the Jordan area (3:3a): ***He went into all the country around the Jordan:*** John's ministry was located in the flat region on both sides of the Jordan River. At various spots the waters were shallow enough to allow people to cross on foot. Traffic back and forth to Galilee passed along the east side of the river. Hundreds of people would be crossing the river every day.
3. Focus on his ministry (3:3b): ***Preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins:*** Repentance is a radical change of heart and mind which leads a person to change his conduct. Essentially, repentance is saying to God, Not my will, but your will be done in my life. John's baptism marked the break with the old life. This forgiveness was not fully effected until Jesus died on the cross (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:27,28). Thus the preaching and baptism of John anticipated the complete forgiveness that is possible through faith in Christ.⁴³
4. Significance of his ministry (3:4-5): ***As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: 'A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him: 5 Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth:*** The reference is to Isaiah 40:3-4. Luke regards John as the fulfillment of the prophecy that a voice would prepare in the wilderness the way of the Lord. The prophecy assumes that the Messiah will be the Lord, i.e., God. By preaching repentance John prepared the way for Christ's ministry. John's preaching straightened out what was crooked in the life of God's people. He smoothed the road for the arrival of the King of Kings by pointing his followers to Christ.⁴⁴

B. Message of the Forerunner (3:6-9):

1. Announced God's salvation (3:6): ***And all mankind will see God's salvation:***" John announced the beginning of a new age when Gentiles as well as Jews would experience God's salvation.⁴⁵
2. Warned of God's judgment (3:7): ***John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him: You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?:*** John knew that many of those coming out to be baptized by him were not sincere. The crowd included a large number of Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 3:7). John compared these hypocrites to desert vipers (snakes). Though small in size, these reptiles were deceptive. They were often mistaken for dead branches. Suddenly they would strike their victim and cling to them (Acts 28:3). Without conversion men are unprepared to face any judgment of God. In fact, without repentance men are actually under the wrath of God already! Whoever told these hypocrites that they, in their current sinful state, could escape the wrath of God had told them wrong!⁴⁶
3. Urged repentance (3:8a): ***Produce fruit in keeping with repentance:*** Repentance, if it is genuine, must be accompanied by fruit-bearing. Only through such repentance can one escape God's wrath. These hypocrites needed to change their ways.
4. Demolished false security (3:8b): ***And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham:*** These

⁴² Why is it most important for a preacher to know the Word of God? Is it possible to know God's Word, but not be committed to it?

⁴³ What is the difference between reformation and transformation? Which does God expect of us?

⁴⁴ How can we, like John, remove all obstacles that stand in the way of people finding Jesus? What are some of those obstacles?

⁴⁵ Is Christianity an American religion? Have we done our best to see that all men everywhere have heard about Jesus?

⁴⁶ Do you agree with the observation that before any person can be saved, he must first realize how lost he is? Do we really help people find the Lord by soft-pedaling sin?

hypocrites believed that because they were descended from Abraham, they were therefore God's people, secure in their salvation. Biological descent from Abraham did not make one a true son of that great man of faith. God can create new sons of Abraham from desert stones. By this John means that God changes hearts of stone into obedient hearts, regardless of the nationality of those stony hearts. Here is a hint, of what the New Testament later will make clear, that God now regards Gentiles who believe in Christ as sons of Abraham.

5. Threatened imminent condemnation (3:9): ***The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire***: This figure means that judgment was at hand. God is ready to pick up the ax and chop down those unfruitful trees. The fire into which the unfruitful trees will be cast represents the outpouring of God's wrath upon the wicked. John prophesied about 40 years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. But every sinner faces the wrath of God should he pass from this world without seeking God's pardon through Christ.

C. Direction of the Forerunner (3:10-14):

1. To the crowd (3:10-11): ***What should we do then?*** *the crowd asked. 11 John answered, "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same:* People from the crowd were moved by John's preaching to ask this question. They want to know how to get right with the Lord.⁴⁷ The tunic was a garment which was worn by both sexes next to the skin, hence under the outer garment or robe. Those who were fortunate enough to have more than one tunic were urged to share with those who had none. The same is true with food. Those who have turned to the Lord will share their abundance with those who are in poverty.

2. To the tax collectors (3:12-13): ***Tax collectors also came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?" 13 "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them:* Tax collectors paid the Roman government for the privilege of collecting taxes on exports and imports as well as upon whatever merchandise passed through the region. The main tax offices were located at Caesarea, Capernaum, and Jericho. These tax collectors often overcharged. They were hated by the general population. Local tax collectors reported to regional tax collectors. Those who came to hear John were probably the "publicans" who were at the bottom of the chain of command. Tax collectors would manifest their repentance by never requiring the people to pay more taxes than were required.**

3. To soldiers (3:14): ***Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely; be content with your pay."* These soldiers were probably Jewish soldiers serving in the small army of one of the tetrarchs. They were more like policemen. Such men were often overbearing and used excessive force. In essence the soldiers were told not to abuse their authority, nor to try to enrich themselves at the expense of civilians.**

D. Prediction of the Forerunner (3:15-17):

1. Occasion of the prediction (3:15): ***The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ:* Clearly at that time there was a rising tide of expectation that the Messiah was about to appear. John's sudden appearance, his rigorous self-denial, his stern call for repentance, and especially his baptizing, caused some to begin to think that he himself was the Messiah.**

2. Focus of the prediction (3:16-17):

a. A more powerful person (3:16a): ***John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.* John declared to his followers that the Messiah would be far greater than he. John did not feel he would even be worthy to perform the lowliest service of unlatching the sandals of Messiah feet.**

b. A superior baptism (3:16b): ***He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire:* While John baptized with water, the Messiah would baptize his followers with the Holy Spirit. Those who were not his followers he would baptize with fire or judgment. No mere mortal could baptize either with the**

⁴⁷ How do you think John's preaching would go over in a modern church?

Spirit or with fire. Acts 2 and Acts 10 record the fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit.⁴⁸

c. A final separation (3:17): ***His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire:*** Farmers used a winnowing fork to separate the wheat from the worthless chaff. They would toss the grain into the air. The wind would blow away the chaff, but the heavier kernels of grain would fall to the ground. So Christ will separate the saved from the unsaved at the final judgment. The wheat--the saved--he will gather into the barn, i.e., heaven. The worthless chaff--non-believers--will face the fire of his wrath mentioned in the preceding verse.

E. Demise of the Forerunner (3:18-19):

1. Tone of his ministry (3:18): ***And with many other words John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them:*** Luke has here given his readers only a sample of the many kinds of exhortation that John gave to his audience. The good news that John preached was that the kingdom of God was at hand.

2. Trouble in his ministry (3:19-20):

a. Condemnation of Herod (3:19): ***But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done:*** Fearlessly John denounced Herod the tetrarch for entering into marriage with the wife of his half-brother Herod Philip. According the Law of Moses, such a marriage was incestuous (Lev. 18:16; 20:21) and adulterous (Romans 7:2-3). John did not hesitate to publicly denounce all the other evil deeds of this wicked king.

b. Arrest of John (3:20): ***Herod added this to them all: he locked John up in prison:*** At the urging of Herodias, John was finally arrested and beheaded. John's ministry began in the middle of AD 26. He was imprisoned at the close of the year of AD 27 and put to death at the beginning of AD 29. The ministries of Jesus and John overlapped for about a year.

F. Baptism by the Forerunner (3:21-22):

1. Fact of the baptism (3:21a): ***When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too:*** At the very height of John's baptizing activity Jesus was also baptized. About eighteen years of Jesus' life are passed over in silence. But if Jesus was sinless, why was he baptized? Several reasons may have motivated him. (1) to put his stamp of approval on the ministry of John; (2) to set an example for others; (3) to symbolize the beginning of his ministry, since priests were washed before beginning their ministry; and (4) to demonstrate his perfect obedience to the will of his Father. Perhaps there were other reasons as well.

2. Prayer at his baptism (3:21b): ***And as he was praying, heaven was opened:*** Jesus considered prayer very important. Candidates for baptism should pray before, during and after their baptism. One can only speculate concerning the subject matter of his prayer. Perhaps he was seeking the guidance of his Father in his forthcoming ministry.⁴⁹

3. Spirit at his baptism (3:22a): ***And the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove:*** What was seen physically was the bodily form resembling a dove. Because of its gentleness and purity the dove is a beautiful symbol of the Holy Spirit.

4. Voice at his baptism (3:22b):

a. Identification (3:22b): ***And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son..."*** Thus far the text has mentioned the humble obedience of the Son, and the descent of the Spirit. Now God the Father expresses his approval of the proceedings. Jesus is acknowledged as God's unique Son, and thus Israel's Messiah.

b. Affection (3:22c): ***whom I love:*** He is called the beloved because no greater love is possible than the love that the Father cherishes toward his Son.

⁴⁸ Do you agree with this statement: John was truly great in God's sight because he was small in his own sight?

⁴⁹ Jesus taught his disciples much about prayer. Why is it important for a teacher to model that which he teaches others to do?

c. Approval (3:22d): *with you I am well pleased*. The Father was pleased with the willingness of the Son to undertake his messianic ministry. He was pleased with his life up to this point, with his present actions and with his future plans.⁵⁰

III. Roots of Sonship: Genealogy (3:23-38):

A. Jesus' Age (3:23a): *Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry*. In the Old Testament, Levites and presumably priests as well, began their public ministry at the age of thirty. Since Jesus was born in 5 BC, the date of his baptism would be AD 26.

B. Jesus' Legal Father (3:23b): *He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli*: To all outward appearances Jesus was the son of Joseph. Most scholars think that this genealogy traces the ancestry of Mary, Jesus' mother. Matthew's genealogy traces the ancestry of Joseph, Jesus' legal father. If this is true, then Heli in v. 23 would be Mary's father. Indeed in ancient Jewish writings Mary is identified as the daughter of Heli. The term son would be used in this verse, as it often is used in Scripture, to indicate grandson. Matthew's genealogy and that of Luke make clear that Jesus was descended from King David both on his mother's side and on his father's.

C. Jesus' Forefathers (3:24-38):

1. During the intertestamental period (3:24-27a): *the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melki, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, 25 the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, 26 the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, 27 the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa,*

2. During the post-Davidic period (3:27b-31): *the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, 28 the son of Melki, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, 29 the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, 30 the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, 31 the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David...*

3. During the pre-Davidic period (3:32-34a): *the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, 33 the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, 34 the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham,*

4. During the pre-Abrahamic period (3:34b-38): *the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, 35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, 36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, 37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Kenan, 38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God*. The genealogy works its way backward from Heli to Adam. Luke is thereby stressing that Jesus had significance for all of Adam's descendants, not just the Jews. Luke is concerned that his audience see the human side of Jesus, and this too accounts for the line being traced back to Adam.

IV. Assault on Sonship: Temptation (4:1-13):

A. Circumstances (4:1-2):

1. Location (4:1): *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert*: The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism. He was now full of the Spirit, prepared for his ministry. As he departed from the Jordan River, the Spirit led him into the Judean desert or wilderness that was infested with outlaws and wild beasts. Jesus needed to prove right at the outset of his ministry his superiority to Satan and his ability to resist the Tempter.

⁵⁰ Why is baptism important? How does our baptism differ from that of Jesus?

2. Duration (4:2a): **Where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.** Apparently Jesus was tempted throughout the forty days. The three temptations presented here were the climax of this spiritual warfare.

3. Preparation (4:2b): **He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.** This was a complete rather than a partial fast. Before undertaking serious spiritual business it was not uncommon for Jews to fast so as to focus all their energy on the task at hand. At the end of this period he was very hungry and hence vulnerable to temptation.⁵¹

B. First Assault (4:3-8):

1. Devil's suggestion (4:3): **The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread":** At his baptism Jesus had been declared by heaven to be God's Son. The devil mocks that very idea. If he really was God's Son, let him use his divine power to turn this stone (the devil probably pointed to one) into bread in order to satisfy his raging hunger. The devil was attempting to get Jesus to use his power for selfish purposes.

2. Jesus' response (4:4): **Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone':** Jesus responded to the devil's temptation by quoting Scripture (Deut. 8:3). Food may sustain physical life, but not spiritual life. There is more to man than physical existence. The Word of God is essential to spiritual life. Thus Jesus' answer demonstrated complete trust in the Father. The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, just as ancient Israel had been led into the wilderness by Moses. God would care for him, just as God supplied manna to Israel during their forty years in the wilderness.⁵²

C. Second Assault (4:5-6):

1. Devil's suggestion (4:5-7):

a. Devil's show (4:5): **The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world:** This second temptation may have taken place in a vision, for it is hard to imagine any mountain in proximity to the wilderness of Judea where one could view all the kingdoms of the earth. But some think that Jesus actually stood on one of the elevations of the region and watched the caravans from various nations making their way across one of the commercial highways that crossed Palestine.

b. Devil's claim (4:6): **And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to:** here the devil is boasting to the point of lying. Jesus knew that. So how was this a temptation to him? Satan was attempting to get Jesus to take a shortcut to his crown of glory, a shortcut that would by-pass ministry, suffering and death. This was a real temptation to Jesus. In the Garden he would pray, Let this cup pass from me. But there was no other way to fulfill God's plan.

c. Devil's challenge (4:7): **So if you worship me, it will all be yours:** Satan promised to deliver to Christ the glories of this world if he would acknowledge Satan's claims over the world. Satan is a usurper. Whatever territories on earth he controls he has stolen from God. What glory he can bestow is false glory.

2. Jesus' response (4:8): **Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'":** Again Jesus quotes Scripture (Deut. 6:13). Only God is worthy of worship and service. Though obedience to God may not yield the glamour and glory which following Satan yields, only in worshipping the Lord can one find true satisfaction and eternal life.

D. Third Assault (4:9-12):

1. Challenge of the devil (4:9): **The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here:** The third

⁵¹ Jesus withstood the temptation of the devil. How can his strength under temptation be an encouragement to his followers?

⁵² What practical lesson can we learn from this verse about how to deal with the Devil in temptation?

temptation has its setting in Jerusalem in the temple. One wall of the temple complex overlooked the Kidron Valley that was nearly 450 feet below. From this point later James, the half-brother of Jesus, was thrown to his death because he was a Christian.

2. Challenge supported by Scripture (4:10-11): ***For it is written: "he will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully: 11: They will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."*** The Devil here is quoting Scripture (Ps. 91:11-12) in an attempt to get Jesus to do something terribly reckless and senseless. He suggested that jumping from the pinnacle of the temple would demonstrate Jesus' faith in Scripture. If he did not jump, it would prove that he really did not believe the promises of Scripture. The Psalmist envisioned God intervening to rescue his people from danger. The purpose of the Psalmist was to encourage humble trust in God.

3. Jesus' response (4:12): ***Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"*** Jesus responded to the third temptation as he did the previous two, with Scripture. A believer was never to put God to the test. This means challenging God to do something for us to prove that he is real. God honors simple faith in his Word, but he will not respond to those who demand that he act in certain ways. He will not rescue those who deliberately act in foolish ways just to demonstrate how much they trust in God.

E. Conclusion (4:13): ***When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.*** Satan suffered defeat in the wilderness battle of temptation. He had failed in his attempt to corrupt the perfection of Jesus. But this does not mean that he was through trying. Time and again during the ministry of Jesus, right up to the eve of his death, Satan tempted him to turn away from his mission.

Further information on the first year of Jesus' ministry is found in John 2-4.

MINISTRY OF THE SAVIOR

Luke 4:14-9:50

Beginning of Public Ministry

Luke 4:14-44

I. Introduction (4:14-15): The general picture.

A. Empowerment of Jesus (4:14): ***Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. And news about him spread through the whole countryside.*** Jesus returned to Galilee in order to avoid premature confrontation with the Jewish officials who resided in the Jerusalem area. He needed time to get his message out, and time to train his apostles. Since the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism his movements were directed by the Spirit, his words were inspired by the Spirit, and his deeds were empowered by the Spirit. Luke omits reference to his brief ministry in Judea, and his earliest miracle at Cana of Galilee. This accounts for the wide-spread interest in him in Galilee.

B. Teaching of Jesus (4:15): ***He taught in their synagogues; and everyone praised him.*** A synagogue is a religious gathering of Jews. Wherever ten heads of families lived, a synagogue could be established. The synagogue served as a kind of community center where the people could gather when it was not in use for formal worship services. His reputation as a miracle worker is matched by his reputation as an insightful and compassionate teacher.⁵³

II. Christ at Nazareth (4:16-30):

⁵³ Jesus was a popular teacher. He had the attention of the masses. What can Bible teachers do today to make the Word more interesting to modern people?

A. Announcement of Purpose (4:16-19):

1. Setting (4:16): ***He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom; and he stood up to read.*** Jesus knew the people of Nazareth, and they knew him. He had spent the better part of thirty years in this village, presumably working as a carpenter. Jesus had gone to worship services since he was but a lad. Members of this synagogue had heard him read Scripture and pray on many occasions. Now he had become a celebrity throughout the land. No doubt the building was packed for his homecoming. Apparently the custom was to stand up to read the Scripture, and sit down to explain it. Certain Scriptures from the Law and the Prophets were appointed to be read each Sabbath. The reading would be in the Hebrew language as it still is to this day in Jewish synagogues.⁵⁴

2. Reading (4:17-19):

a. Preparation (4:17): ***The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:*** The Scripture scheduled for that Sabbath came from the Book of Isaiah (61:1-2). He would have been reading from a scroll.

b. Anointing (4:18a): ***The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me:*** In Isaiah 61 the Messiah is pictured as speaking about his ministry. Jesus found in this text an allusion to himself. He wished to make the great announcement of his true identity in his hometown synagogue. In Old Testament days prophets, priests and kings were anointed with oil. In Messiah all three of these offices were combined. The word Messiah means anointed one.

c. Preaching (4:18b-19): ***To preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners:*** Jesus had special words of encouragement for the poor, especially those who were poor in spirit, i.e. humble. The good news taught by Jesus was that those in the bondage of sin could be delivered. They could find spiritual freedom in Christ. Jesus was known throughout his ministry as the friend of sinners.

d. Enlightenment (4:18c): ***And recovery of sight for the blind:*** Jesus did heal those who were physically blind; but here the term also includes the spiritually blind. Jesus opened their eyes through the insights that he shared in his teaching.

e. Liberation (4:18d): ***To release the oppressed:*** All the Jews of Jesus' day were oppressed by the Romans. But here again Isaiah's words have a spiritual meaning. The oppressed are those who have been beaten down by the circumstances of life, beaten down by the Devil, beaten down by sin.

f. Announcement (4:19): ***To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor":*** Isaiah is still being read. The year here is not a calendar year, but an indefinite period of time. The year of the Lord's favor would be the entire period of the Christian age. Under the Old Testament Law every fiftieth year was called a Jubilee. In that year debts were canceled and slaves were set free, and property reverted to original owners. The Jubilee year was an Old Testament symbol for the Christian age.⁵⁵

B. Demand for Evidence (4:20-23):

1. They fixed their gaze (4:20): ***Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him:*** The scroll of Isaiah was returned to the "ark" where it was stored when not in use. Everyone wondered what Jesus would say about this great passage from the prophet Isaiah.

2. He made a shocking announcement (4:21): ***And he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*** Jesus was saying in effect, I am the Messiah, and this passage from Isaiah describes my ministry.

3. They were amazed at his words (4:22): ***All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.*** The people admired the way he read the text and the confidence with which he explained it. But their skepticism won out. They had

⁵⁴ Why is it good to establish the custom of being in the house of God at the appointed times of worship? What might we miss if we choose to be absent?

⁵⁵ What obligations do we as Christian have toward the poor and needy?

known Jesus as a boy. He had lived among them as Joseph's son. They could not believe that he was the Messiah.

4. He exposed their thoughts (4:23): ***Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'***" Jesus here exposed the reason this crowd refused to embrace his claim to be Messiah. He was not putting on any spectacular display of miraculous power in their midst such as he was rumored to have done in other villages of Galilee. The difference was this: In other places Jesus had been greeted with faith and commitment; here in Nazareth he was greeted with unbelief and rejection.

C. Explanation of Rejection (4:24-27):

1. General principle of rejection (4:24): ***"I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown."*** This expression appears six times in Luke. This expression was a way of introducing an authoritative truth, one that could not be questioned. Jesus here states a general principle to which many famous people would attest. In one's hometown the greatness of a person often is not appreciated.⁵⁶

2. Illustrations of rejection (4:25-27):

a. Elijah and a Gentile woman (4:25-26): ***I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon.*** Jesus proves the principle he just stated with two examples from Old Testament history. During the days of Elijah God sent a severe famine on the land of Israel. Elijah could have worked miracles for the people of Israel. But he was sent by God during the famine to the Gentile village of Zarephath where he performed wondrous miracles for a widow (1 Kgs.17:7-24).

b. Elisha and a Gentile man (4:27): ***And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed--only Naaman the Syrian.***" Here is the second example of a prophet not being honored in his own country. Elisha could have cured any of the lepers of Israel. But his miraculous healing power was exercised only on a Gentile who was obedient to his directive (2 Kgs. 5).⁵⁷

D. Attempt on Jesus' Life (4:28-30):

1. Their furious anger (4:28): ***All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this.*** Jesus' point is that pagan Gentiles often had more faith than stubborn Israelites. This infuriated the crowd. Their initial curiosity about Jesus turned first to amazement, then to unbelief, and now to hostility. They could not refute him, they would not accept him, so now they thought they must destroy him.

2. Their murderous intention (4:29): ***They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff.*** These former friends and neighbors were so furious that they wanted to kill Jesus. They planned to force him off the side of a steep cliff.

3. His miraculous escape (4:30): ***But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.*** Jesus did not do acts of healing in Nazareth because the town was filled with unbelief. But here he demonstrates his power and authority. His miraculous power rendered this murderous mob harmless, and Jesus simply walked through their midst.

II. Christ at Capernaum (4:31-44):

A. Reception in Capernaum (4:31-32):

⁵⁶ The people in Nazareth took Jesus for granted. Why do we sometimes overlook talented workers in our own church?

⁵⁷ What do these last two verses reveal about the love of God?

1. They permitted him to teach (4:31): ***Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people.*** For the Jews Capernaum, on the edge of the Sea of Galilee, was the hub of the region. Again he attended the synagogue on the Sabbath day.
2. They were amazed at his teachings (4:32): ***They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.*** Jesus did not teach like the Pharisees and teachers of the Law. Their method was to recite an endless series of quotes from scholars of earlier ages in order to establish their positions. Jesus needed no higher authority. He made authoritative statements about the Law and life. He demonstrated authority in his preaching, authority in his healing, and authority to forgive sin.⁵⁸

B. Deliverance in the Synagogue (4:33-37):

1. Demon interrupted Jesus' teaching (4:33): ***In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice:*** The presence of this miserable soul provided Jesus an opportunity to demonstrate his power over the forces of evil. Of all the miracles performed by Jesus and his disciples, the casting out of demons was considered among the greatest. Demons or evil spirits are agents of Satan. The presence of demons had different effects on people. Sometimes they brought with them physical symptoms such as blindness (Matt.12:22) or epilepsy (Matt. 17:15). The possession might be manifested constantly, or intermittently. God has provided people with a natural barrier against the invasion by the alien beings. That barrier is called the will. But activities which break down the will (e.g., drugs, alcohol, the occult) open the door for oppression or possession by demonic spirits. The demons which possessed this man cried out through his vocal cords.⁵⁹
2. Demon revealed Jesus' identity (4:34): ***"Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God!"*** The demons were threatened by the power of Jesus. They recognized the authority of Jesus over them. The demons intend here either to embarrass Jesus, or to thwart his plans by prematurely blurting out Jesus' true identity. The title Holy One of God is a prophetic designation for the Messiah (Ps. 16:10).
3. Demon was cast out by Jesus (4:35): ***"Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.*** Jesus did not debate with this Satanic spirit, nor put up any longer with his insolence. He commanded him to shut up, and come out of the man. This he did, but not before he threw the man down to demonstrate his own power. The man, however, was not injured.
4. Reaction of the observers (4:36-37):
 - a. They recognized the power of Jesus (4:36): ***All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!"*** Luke records this incident, not just to illustrate Jesus' compassion on a miserable man, but to show his power over the unseen forces of the universe. The people recognized that the gospel preached by Jesus had power behind it.⁶⁰
 - b. They spread the news about Jesus (4:37): ***And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.*** Each miracle enhanced Jesus reputation in Galilee.⁶¹

C. Healing in the House (4:38-39):

1. Circumstances (4:38): ***Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her:*** Scholars believe that they have excavated the house where Peter lived in Capernaum. Today a Roman Catholic church

⁵⁸ They were astonished at the teaching of Jesus. Is that the response that God wants from the teaching of the Word?

⁵⁹ The demon was in the synagogue. In what ways does the Devil make himself manifest in church services today?

⁶⁰ How does Jesus reveal his greatness in this account?

⁶¹ How can we spread the news about Jesus where we live?

has been built over the excavation, but one can still see the foundations of the original house. At this time Jesus himself and his family were living in Capernaum (John 2:12; Matt. 4:13). Simon Peter was married (1 Cor. 9:5). his mother-in-law lived with him in Capernaum. She was suffering with a high fever that day. They--probably Peter and Andrew his brother--asked Jesus to help her.

2. Healing of the woman (4:39): ***So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.*** Jesus rebuked the fever just like he rebuked the demon. Perhaps this suggests that this particular fever was caused by a demon. In any case, the fever left the woman. This is mentioned so as to demonstrate that the healing was complete. She did not gradually improve. As hostess of the house, she immediately began to set food before them.

D. Expanding Ministry (4:40-44):

1. Increasing demonstrations of power (4:40-41):

a. Healing of sickness (4:40): ***When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness: And laying his hands on each one, he healed them.*** By the end of the day the word had spread about the two miracles performed by Jesus on that Sabbath day. Jews were not allowed to travel any great distance from their homes on the Sabbath, nor were they permitted to carry burdens. At sunset the Sabbath ended. The people came in droves with their sick for Jesus to heal. The touch conveyed compassion and power. No one went away still sick.

b. Expulsion of demons (4:41): ***Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!":*** This is one of the Old Testament titles for the Messiah. *But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.* Jesus silenced the demons precisely because they knew who he was. Probably the reason is that the revelation of his identity at this time and this place was premature. Public acknowledgment of his messiahship might trigger a massive rebellion against the Romans in which many innocent people would be killed. Jesus needed time to present his teaching, to make clear that he was not the kind of Messiah they were expecting.

2. Growing popularity (4:42): ***At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them.*** It is not clear whether Jesus had spent the night at his own house, or that of Peter. Mark explains the reason for his action in leaving early in the morning. He wanted solitude for personal prayer. According to Mark 1:36 Simon Peter led the search for Jesus. They were so happy to find him, that they tried to prevent him from leaving them. These people from Capernaum wanted him all to themselves.⁶²

3. Firm declaration of intention (4:43): ***But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent":*** Jesus was not about to let the crowds, or even his own disciples for that matter, dictate to him what he should do or where he should go. Because of his great love for all people, he wanted to share his blessings with as many as possible. After his preaching tours he would return to Capernaum. That town became his headquarter for evangelizing the northern part of the country. This is the first time the term kingdom of God appears in Luke. Luke uses that phrase at least 30 times in the Gospel and another 7 times in Acts. Matthew preferred the terminology kingdom of heaven. The two phrases mean the same thing. The church is the kingdom of God on earth; but God's kingdom also embraces all of the saints who have gone to be with the Lord as well as the angels. The good news is that those who have been saved are part of God's kingdom.

4. Continued synagogue preaching (4:44): ***And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.*** Jesus continued to preach the glad tidings that the kingdom of God, with all its blessings, is God's free gift to those who embrace his Son. At this stage of his ministry the synagogues continued to provide Jesus with ready-made opportunities to preach to groups of devout people. The term Judea here is used in the broadest sense to include all the territory in which the Jews lived. In this case, it was in the Galilee region of Judea in which Jesus was focusing his preaching (Mark 1:39).

⁶² Do we enjoy God's gifts most when we keep them for ourselves, or when we share them with others?

Manifestation of Authority

Luke 5:1-7:10

I. Christ and the Authorities (1) (5:1-26):

A. Testimony to his Disciples (5:1-11):

1. Circumstances (5:1-3):

a. Lakeside teaching (5:1): ***One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret: With the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God:*** This is another name for the Sea of Galilee. The fertile plain along the western shore of the lake was called the plain of Gennesaret. The crowds now were too large for the synagogue to accommodate. Jesus has been forced into an outdoors ministry.⁶³

b. Off shore teaching (5:2-3): ***He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.*** The crowd was pressing closer and closer so as not to miss a word Jesus said. He observed two empty fishing boats. To avoid the press of the crowd, Jesus decided to use one of those boats for a pulpit. Jesus asked Simon to push his boat out a little from shore, just far enough to keep the people from crowding too close to him. Sitting down was the usual speaking position of teachers in those days. Here is an example of Jesus improvising in his teaching. This is the first time Jesus has asked Simon to do something for him. Jesus was using the philosophy of getting people involved in the work of the kingdom.

2. Preparation for the miracle (5:4-5):

a. Directive to Peter (5:4): ***When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch":*** Now Jesus wants to give a blessing to Simon. He asked that the boat put out from shore into deeper water. He asked Simon and his helpers [the original text says, your (plural) nets] to put down their nets into the water for a catch of fish. It took more than one man to handle the heavy fishing nets.

b. Protest of Peter (5:5): ***Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets":*** What did a carpenter know about fishing! He was ordering these professional fishermen to attempt a catch at an unlikely place (deep water) and an unlikely time (broad daylight). Simon's expertise told him that Jesus' order was foolish and useless. He had been up all night fishing the lake with no success, and night was the most opportune time to make large catches. Nevertheless, just because Jesus gave the order, Simon agreed to have the nets lowered.⁶⁴

3. Magnitude of the miracle (5:6-7): ***When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink:*** Since Jesus was the Son of God, he knew the exact spot where those schools of fish were located. Those skeptical fishermen found themselves wrestling with such a quantity of fish that their nets could not hold them all. Reinforcements had to be called in from the second boat to help pull in the overflowing nets. They signaled because the other boat was still lying ashore, or at least was so far removed that they could not communicate by shouting. Probably the men in the second boat were James and John, who were business associates in the fishing business with Peter and his brother Andrew. Recently when the Sea of Galilee was low because of drought, some locals found a fishing boat from the time of Christ buried

⁶³ Why are we not as eager to hear the Word of God as were these Galileans?

⁶⁴ Peter was willing to trust and obey Jesus. How can we bring our experience and knowledge into submission to the Jesus?

in the sand. The boat now gives a better picture of the kind of boats used in that time on the lake. The boat is on display near the Sea of Galilee today.⁶⁵

4. Reaction to the miracle (5:8-11):

a. Peter's personal response (5:8): ***When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"***: The complete name of this man is here used to signal that when a person confesses faith in Christ he is truly strong like a "rock" (the meaning of the name Peter). Jesus was sitting down, hence when Peter knelt before him, he was at the knees of Jesus. Peter did not mean for Jesus literally to depart from him. He only meant that he was unworthy to be in the presence of one so wise and so powerful. He recognized that he was in the presence of a holy prophet. Perhaps he was starting to realize that Jesus was God in the flesh.

b. Astonishment of the others (5:9-10a): ***For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken. 10 And so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.*** In the light of this recent miracle, Peter knew that his Master and his Teacher was at the same time his Lord.

c. Promise to Peter (5:10b): ***Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men."*** James and John were just as astonished as Peter about the catch of fish at such an unlikely time and place. While Peter's fear is understandable, it was unnecessary. Jesus reveals to Peter that his life is about to take a dramatic turn. From this day forward his vocation will change. Heretofore Simon had been catching fish; now he will catch men for the Lord and for eternal life. The gospel is the net with which Simon would catch men for Christ.⁶⁶

d. Decision of the fisherman (5:11): ***So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.*** The promise about catching men was given to Peter personally, but the others recognized that what Jesus said to Simon applied to them as well. This time Peter, James and John leave everything to follow Jesus. Never before had they done this. They had accepted Jesus as Messiah long before (John 1:35-51). They had accepted a call to become his traveling companions earlier (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20). Now they "burn their bridges behind them." One who could cause such a great catch of fish could be trusted to provide for those who left everything to follow him.⁶⁷

B. Testimony to the Priests (5:12-16):

1. Circumstances (5:12a): ***While Jesus was in one of the towns. A man came along who was covered with leprosy.*** Lepers were required to stay outside villages, so this incident may have occurred on the edge of the city limits. Probably the city was in the region of Galilee. The leprosy of the man must have reached an advanced stage. Leprosy attacks the skin. In advanced stages it causes fingers, toes, ears etc. to drop from the body.

2. Faith of the leper (5:12b): ***When he saw Jesus he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean!"***: The man asks for help in the most humble manner. Bowing the face to the ground indicates the greatest humility. He does not know whether or not Jesus will help him, but he believes that Jesus can help him if he choose to do so. That is why he gave Jesus the title Lord.

3. Healing of the leper (5:13): ***Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.***: In order to transmit healing power to the man, Jesus touched him. The Law of Moses did not allow one to touch a leper for fear of contamination. Yet here, Jesus touched the man, because he knew that the result would be healing of the afflicted, not infection of the healthy. Jesus responded to the man's If you are willing with the affirmation, I am willing. As Jesus touched the man, he ordered the man to be clean, i.e., to have the leprosy removed from his skin. As is always the case, the healing miracle occurred immediately.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Are we too proud to signal our brothers when we need help in spiritual things?

⁶⁶ How can we do a better job of catching people for Christ?

⁶⁷ Is Jesus first in my life? Would I have left everything to follow him? What things must I leave behind to be his disciple?

⁶⁸ Jesus reached out to touch the leper. Are we afraid to touch those who may need the help and healing

4. Directive to the leper (5:14): ***Then Jesus ordered him, "Don't tell anyone: But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them"***: Why this command? Jesus did not want to trigger a premature crisis in his ministry in which people would try to make him an earthly kind of king. He needed more time to teach them about the true nature of the kingdom of God. Those who had experienced some skin defilement had to have a priest at the temple declare them to be totally rid of the malady before they could be readmitted to society. Under the Law of Moses the priests served as health officers. A cleansed leper was to offer two clean, living birds. One bird had to be killed. In its blood the other bird had to be dipped and then released. The blood of the slain bird was also sprinkled over the healed man seven times. He was then officially pronounced to be clean (Lev. 14:1-7). The cleansed leper was to bear testimony to the priests down in Jerusalem as to the source of his cleansing after they had officially pronounced him cleansed. This would be proof that (1) Jesus had the power to heal; and (2) that Jesus encouraged his followers to obey the Law of Moses. In Galilee Jesus did not want this man to tell his story lest the people become uncontrollable in their enthusiasm; in the south, in the capital, he wanted the man to tell his story so as to render the religious leaders there without excuse for opposing him.

5. Result of the healing (5:15-16):

a. Increasing fame (5:15): ***Yet the news about him spread all the more so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses***: The request of Jesus was ignored by the man (Mark 1:45). Some news is just too good to keep to ourselves. Perhaps he at first told only a few close relatives, but the news spread like wild fire. Note the two reasons people gathered to Jesus: (1) to hear his teaching; and (2) to be healed of their diseases.

b. Increasing need for solitude (5:16): ***But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed***. From time to time the Lord would slip away from the crowds. These hours of solitude served the twin purpose of keeping the Galilean enthusiasm in check, and providing Jesus the opportunity to spend time with his Father in prayer. Luke says more about the prayer life of Jesus than any of the other Gospels.⁶⁹

C. Testimony to the Theologians (5:17-26):

1. Setting (5:17):

a. Presence of his critics (5:17a): ***One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there***: Jesus was teaching in a house in Capernaum (Mark 2:1), but there is no indication whose house, his own or that of one of his disciples. No doubt many of Jesus' friends and disciples were present, anxious to hear what the Lord had to say. But Luke focuses on the enemies who had gathered in a show of force. Here is the first reference in Luke to the Pharisees. This was a party among the Jews which stressed obedience to an unwritten tradition that they thought was equally authoritative with the actual words of Scripture. The Pharisees were very popular with the ordinary people. The teachers of the law were Pharisees who had advanced training under the great rabbis of the day. Some of these religious leaders had traveled all the way from Jerusalem in Judea to "check out" Jesus.

b. Power to heal (5:17b): ***And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick***. In spite of the presence of these prominent critics, Jesus had the power to heal the sick. The faith of the masses outweighed the skepticism of the critics.

2. Arrival of a paralytic (5:18-19):

a. Brought by friends (5:18): ***Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus***. Four (Mark 2:3) friends brought a paralyzed man to the house where Jesus was teaching. They used the man's mat like a stretcher, carrying it by the four corners. The man was unable to move about by his own strength.

of the Lord?

⁶⁹ How important is prayer in our lives? What things do we sometimes allow to stand between us and our times of talk with the Father?

b. Lowered through the roof (5:19): **When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus:** So many people were crowded around Jesus in the house that the friends could not find a way to get the paralyzed man inside. The roofs of houses were flat in Bible days, and could easily be reached by outside steps. The friends pulled some of the roof tiles apart. By ropes they lowered the mat with the paralyzed man down from the roof right in front of Jesus.⁷⁰

3. Forgiveness of sins (5:20): **When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven.** The actions of the four friends and the determination of the paralyzed man to reach Jesus, impressed the Master. He commended them on their faith. Jesus did something for this man that was totally unexpected. He forgave him of his sins. The burden of sin is a far greater burden than that of being paralyzed in the limbs. This act of forgiveness should not be taken to mean that the man's paralysis was due to sin. Jesus was simply trying to teach the audience that the cleansing of the soul is more important than the healing of the body.

4. Reaction of the critics (5:21): **The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?":** The religious leaders thought Jesus was totally out of line to pronounce a man's sins to be forgiven. Only God can forgive sins. For a mere human being to pronounce sins forgiven is blasphemy, i.e., speaking against God. Blasphemy was punished by death under the Law of Moses.

5. Response of Jesus (5:22-23):

a. He read their minds (5:22): **Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?":** The inner thoughts of the religious leaders were not concealed from the Son of God. He sharply reprimands them by means of this question.⁷¹

b. He asked them a question (5:23): **Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?** Both actions require divine power. Only God can forgive sins, but only God can command one who was totally paralyzed to get up and walk.

6. He healed the paralytic (5:24):

a. Reason for the healing (5:24a): **But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...** A miracle that they could see in the physical realm would prove that Jesus had the authority on earth to forgive sin in the spiritual realm that they could not see. Here for the first time in Luke the title Son of Man is used. It will occur some 24 more times in this Gospel. This title emphasizes the human nature of Jesus. So here in this account Jesus reveals at the same time his human nature (by the title he takes for himself) and his divine authority (by forgiving and healing the man).

b. Manner of the healing (5:24b): **he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home":** Jesus told the paralyzed man to pick up his little bed and go home.

7. Result of the healing (5:25-26):

a. Praise of the healed man (5:25): **Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God:** The man had enough faith to obey the command of Jesus. He went home in high spirits, giving God the glory for his healing.

b. Amazement of the crowd (5:26): **Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today":** The people joined the healed man in praising God. In all their past experience they had never witnessed anything like what they had just seen in that Capernaum house.

II. Christ's Principles: Spiritual Discipline (5:27-39):

⁷⁰ The four friends were willing to put forth a great effort to bring the paralyzed man to Jesus. To what extent are we willing to go beyond the call of duty to bring our friends to the presence of the Lord? What things do we allow to stop us from bringing them?

⁷¹ Would we be proud for others to know what we are thinking? Would we be ashamed for Jesus to know?

A. Attitude towards Tax Collectors (5:27-28):

1. Invitation to Levi (5:27): **After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth "Follow me," Jesus said to him:** Jesus left the crowded house at this point for a walk along the nearby shores of the Sea of Galilee (Mark 2:13-14). The man apparently had two names. More frequently he is called Matthew. It is possible that he changed his name (or Jesus changed his name) after he became a disciple. His tax booth was like a toll booth on an expressway. He was located on the main road that lead from Syria to Egypt. At this booth merchants had to pay taxes (tariff) on the goods they were transporting north or south. Jesus could see in this tax collector, a man hated by the people because he worked for Romans, a potential leader in his kingdom.

2. Response of Levi (5:28): **And Levi got up, left everything and followed him.** The tax collecting business was quite lucrative. Levi immediately left everything to follow Jesus. In one respect his sacrifice for the Lord was greater than that of Peter, James and John. The fisherman could perhaps return to their business if things did not work out with Jesus. But Matthew would never again be able to work as a tax collector. What great faith he shows here!⁷²

B. Attitude towards Sinners (5:29-32):

1. Setting (5:29): **Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.** After surrendering everything for Jesus, Levi was the happiest man in the world. He immediately arranged this feast in honor of the one he now considered his Master and Teacher. He wanted to bear public testimony to his faith in Jesus. Levi invited many prominent people of the community to his banquet. The crowd, however, was dominated by tax-collectors, who were friends of Levi.

2. Criticism (5:30): **But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners' ?":** This grumbling probably took place as the banquet was breaking up and the guests were departing. Apparently several from the Pharisee sect were following Jesus around spying on his private activities. They were trying to get "ammunition" to use against him with the masses. Tax collectors were considered ruffraff, scum and sinners. They were considered unclean by the standards of the Law of Moses. A Pharisee would never enter the house of a tax collector lest he be spiritually contaminated. The Pharisees picked on Jesus' disciples with their criticism of the Master. Apparently they did not have the courage to hurl their charges directly at the Lord.⁷³

3. Jesus' response (5:31-32):

a. He responded with a proverb (5:31): **Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.** The disciples convey the criticism they have heard to Jesus. Jesus uses a popular proverb to defend his actions. When Jesus associates with people of low character it was not to just to "hang out" with them as one of their buddies. He was not agreeing with, nor participating in their wrong-doing. His purpose was to heal them of their sin, like a doctor hangs around sick people so as to make them better. The Pharisees thought of themselves as being spiritually healthy, and all others as spiritually sick. If these tax collectors and sinners were so very sick (in the eyes of the Pharisees) did they not need his special attention?

b. He responded with a declaration (5:32): **I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance":** The gospel invitation to salvation is not extended to those who think they have no need for it, but to those who recognize that they are indeed sinners. Jesus cannot save persons who will not admit that they are lost. Repentance is sorrow for sin, a determination to turn from sin, which leads to a new direction in life. It is turning from sin. Jesus did not come to encourage sinners in their sin, but to turn their lives around to a new direction.⁷⁴

⁷² Jesus was like a magnet who drew people to himself. Are we like magnets, or do we repel people?

⁷³ Why do we have so many grumblers in the church? How prevalent is the Pharisaic spirit in the church?

⁷⁴ Are we fulfilling the mission of Jesus in our churches? in our youth groups?

C. Attitude towards Fasting (5:33-35):

1. A question (5:33): ***They said to him: "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees; but yours go on eating and drinking."*** According to Matt. 9:14, the questioners were disciples of John the Baptist. Since the issue was one that also touched the Pharisees, they may have encouraged John's disciples to ask the question. John's disciples may have fasted often as an expression of their sorrow over sin. There is no indication, however, that John himself actually encouraged such fasting. Some of the Pharisees were teachers of the law who had disciples or students who studied under them. The Law of Moses stipulated only one day of fasting each year, the Day of Atonement. The Pharisees stipulated, however, that true believers should fast twice each week. They made a real show of their fasting (Matt. 6:16). Jesus' life was joyous. The gospel that he preached was something to be celebrated. Jesus and his disciples attended feasts and banquets. They knew how to have a good time. People with a sour religion like the Pharisees cannot stand for others to enjoy their faith, to be happy in the Lord.⁷⁵
2. A counter-question (5:34): ***Jesus answered, "Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?":*** A wedding is a time of celebration, not mourning, of feasting, not fasting. Weddings are happy times, not sad times. What Jesus is suggesting is that his ministry is like a wedding. It is a time of celebration. God with us spells great joy (Luke 2:10); God within us, even greater joy. Jesus came to bring joy, not sadness.⁷⁶
3. A prediction (5:35): ***But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast":*** This is an early and veiled prediction of the death of Christ. The disciples of Jesus would be very sad when he was taken away from them by the death of the cross.

D. Threefold Parable (5:36-39):

1. Patch (5:36): ***he told them this parable: "No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old."*** Jesus gives an illustration to support his position on fasting. If a piece torn from a new garment is used to patch an old one, both are ruined: the new one because it has now been torn, the old one because it has received a patch that does not match it. The point is that Jesus did not come to "patch up" the Jewish faith. He came to introduce something brand new. Therefore, the customs of other disciples, either John's or the Pharisees', should not be used as a standard to judge the devotion of Jesus' disciples.
2. Wineskin (5:37-38): ***And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. 38 No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins*** A wineskin was made from the skin of a goat or a sheep. After being removed from the animal it was tanned, and after the hair had been cut close the skin was turned inside out. The neck opening became the mouth of the "bottle." The other openings at the feet and tail, were closed with cords. When wine ferments, it expands. Such wine would burst the old skins, which had already been stretched to the limit, ruining both the skins and the wine. New wineskins have "stretch," i.e., they will expand when the wine ferments. Again Jesus' point is that people dare not attempt to fit his brand new message of salvation into the old forms, rituals and requirements of the Jewish faith. The old attitudes must go! The old concepts of what religion is and does must go!
3. Old wine (5:39): ***And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, 'The old is better'"***: Jesus is explaining why the Pharisees and even John's disciples were being critical of the celebrations which he and his disciples enjoyed. They were accustomed to the old concepts of religion. They could not bring themselves to taste the new wine, i.e., the new ideas of Jesus. They had the "We always did it that way" attitude. It should be emphasized that what Jesus offered his disciples was not totally new. He was not rebelling against the essentials of the faith of God as it was revealed in the Old

⁷⁵ Has the modern church lost the spirit of the message of Jesus?

⁷⁶ How many of us need an attitude adjustment in the light of what Jesus says here?

Testament. But traditions of men had come along through the years that had become more important than the basic message of God. These traditions of men are the "old wine" which the people of his generation preferred. Many just could not embrace the new ideas that Jesus preached and lived.⁷⁷

III. Christ and the Authorities (2) (6:1-19):

A. He Defends his Disciples (6:1-5):

1. Circumstances (6:1): ***One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels:*** One of the main areas of conflict between Jesus and his critics was over the proper observance of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week (Saturday). Under the Law of Moses people were commanded to rest on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees had drawn up a list of 39 principal works, each subdivided into six minor categories of work. None of this "work" was to be done on the Sabbath. The grain was ripening, but had not yet been harvested. This was not stealing, for the Law allowed people to "harvest" what they could from the fields as long as they did not leave the public path which went through the fields. The disciples were hungry (Matt. 12:1) They would rub off the husks, to eat the grain.

2. Challenge by the Pharisees (6:20: ***Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"***: Apparently the Pharisees followed Jesus about to spy on him. Immediately they charged Jesus' disciples with doing what was not lawful on the Sabbath. The Law of Moses did not permit work on the Sabbath (Exod 20:8-11). According to the Pharisees, Jesus' disciples had violated two of the rules on their man-made list of Sabbath prohibitions: They had reaped the grain and threshed it. As the leader of this group of disciples, they held Jesus accountable for this abuse (as they saw it) of the Law.

3. Response by Jesus (6:3-5):

a. He challenged their knowledge of Scripture (6:3): ***Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?"*** Jesus knew the Old Testament Scriptures thoroughly. He calls the attention of his critics to a story about David in 1 Samuel. David's traveling companions were hungry one day.

b. He reminded them how David violated ritual law (6:4): ***He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions***": On a table in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle twelve loaves of unleavened bread were displayed. Each Sabbath the priests would eat those loaves, and replace them with new bread. David entered the courtyard of that Tabernacle, asked for and received that consecrated bread, and shared it with his companions. The point is that David and the priests at the Tabernacle ignored a ceremonial provision of the Law when necessity required. The physical well-being of people was more important than a ritual requirement.

c. He declared his authority over the Sabbath (6:5): ***Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath"***": The Son of Man, who is one with the Father (John 10:30), is greater than David. He has the authority to establish the principles by which the Sabbath should be observed. If he permits his disciples to meet their human needs on the Sabbath day, then that is the standard intended by God in the Sabbath Law. Thus by an example from Scripture, and by asserting his own authority, Jesus indicated that human needs take priority over Sabbath day requirements.⁷⁸

B. He Heals a Withered Hand (6:6-11):

1. Circumstances (6:6-7):

⁷⁷ How can we create within people a desire to taste the truth about Jesus?

⁷⁸ The Lord's Day--Sunday--is not the Sabbath. Nonetheless, in the New Testament the first day of the week is the appointed time of public worship. How best can we show respect for this special day?

a. A Sabbath service (6:6a): ***On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching...*** The conflict between Jesus and his adversaries is beginning to intensify. In the preceding verses they attacked Jesus' disciples; now they attack Jesus directly. The synagogue is probably the one in Capernaum.

b. A service attended by a handicapped man (6:6b): ***and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled:*** A man happened to be present that day with a deformed or perhaps paralyzed right hand.

c. A service attended by critics (6:7): ***The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath:*** It may have been that the man with the bad arm was a "plant" brought to the services just to see what Jesus would do with him. To heal on the Sabbath would be a violation of those Sabbath rules that the Pharisees had drawn up.

2. Actions of Jesus (6:8-10):

a. Jesus singled out the handicapped man (6:8): ***But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand in front of everyone." So he got up and stood there:*** Jesus read their minds as in 5:4-5. Here Jesus is performing a miracle right under the noses of his most severe critics. There could be no doubt about the genuineness of the healing he was about to perform.

b. Jesus asked an embarrassing question (6:9): ***Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?"***: The Pharisees claimed that they always knew what was right or wrong to do on the Sabbath day, so the question is appropriate. Let them now give their expert opinion. Of course the answer to the question is obvious. If good deeds are appropriate on an ordinary day of the week, how much more on the Sabbath? Certainly it was improper to do harm and to destroy life on the other six days of the week, would it not be doubly wrong on a day set aside for honoring God? Nevertheless, these Pharisees were there in the synagogue that day to do harm to Jesus, and to destroy him, i.e., to seek an occasion against him whereby they could kill him. Jesus was about to heal a man; these Pharisees were there with murderous intent in their hearts!

c. Jesus healed the man (6:10): ***He looked around at them all and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored:*** Jesus looked around at his opponents with a mixture of anger and sorrow (Mark 3:5). He was giving these men an opportunity to answer his question. They would not. To answer Jesus' question would have revealed how bankrupt their whole philosophy of religion was. The cure was instantaneous and complete.

3. Reaction of the critics (6:11): ***But they were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus:*** The Pharisees were beside themselves with anger. Not one thought did they give to the joyous fact that a handicapped man had been restored. They were not concerned with people; they only wanted to get Jesus. They had been shown up publicly, exposed as men who cared more about hairsplitting rules and human tradition than about the real needs of people.

II. Authority to Delegate (6:12-16):

A. Preparing for the Selection (6:12): ***One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God:*** The mountain to which Jesus went to pray is not identified. The most prominent mountain near Capernaum was the twin peaks of a mountain called today the Horns of Hattin. For what was Jesus praying? Probably for wisdom as He made the selection of his Twelve apostles.⁷⁹

B. Designation of Apostles (6:13): ***When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:*** Jesus knew that his opponents were plotting

⁷⁹ How important is prayer? How much time do we spend in prayer? How can we make our prayer life more meaningful?

against his life, not only in Jerusalem, but now in Galilee. Yet he knew that it was God's will for the gospel to continue to be preached even after he departed from this world. For that reason, Jesus was about to surround himself with a band of witnesses, so that through their testimony the mission to reach the world might be accomplished. A disciple is a learner or student, a follower. An apostle is a person who has been sent out as an official representative. An apostle is one to whom certain authority has been delegated. Some of Jesus' disciples had already proved their worthiness for being chosen as apostles by leaving everything to follow him. From among his many disciples, Jesus chose twelve, probably to correspond to the twelve great Patriarchs--the sons of Jacob--from whom the Old Testament Israel sprang. From the preaching and teaching of Jesus' twelve apostles (Judas with be replaced by Matthias), the New Testament Israel was born.

C. Names of the Twelve (6:14-16):

1. Fishermen four (6:14a):

a. **Simon (whom he named Peter):** Four times in the New Testament the names of the apostles of Jesus are listed. They are not always listed in the same order, but Peter is always named first. For the details on how Jesus gave Simon the name Peter, see John 1:42. Peter wrote two books in the New Testament, and according to tradition gave Mark much of the information for the second Gospel.

b. **His brother Andrew:** The first two brothers were fishermen by trade. They came from the village of Bethsaida (John 1:44), but later moved to Capernaum. It was Andrew who brought his brother Simon Peter to Christ (John 1:41-42).

c. **James [and] John:** These two brothers had fiery tempers. Jesus nicknamed them Boanerges, *sons of thunder* (Mark 3:17). James was the first apostle to die for the faith, and John was the last of the original Twelve to die.

2. Middle four (6:14b-15a):

a. **Philip:** He was a friend of Peter and Andrew as he too was from Bethsaida. He brought his friend Nathaniel to the Lord (John 1:45).

b. **Bartholomew:** This name means *son of Tolmai*. Elsewhere in Scripture he is called Nathaniel.

c. **Matthew:** Also known as Levi. He was a tax collector. Later he would write the first book of the New Testament.

d. **Thomas:** He was ready to go to Jerusalem to die for Jesus, though he with the other apostles forsook the Lord in the Garden. After the resurrection he refused to believe until he touched the prints of the nails in Jesus' body.

3. Last four (6:15b-16):

a. **James son of Alphaeus:** Called by Mark, James the Less which could mean he was shorter in stature, or younger in age than the other James.

b. **Simon who was called the Zealot:** The Zealots were the most radical anti-Roman Jews in Palestine. They were constantly stirring up rebellion against the Romans. What a change in attitude this man had to undergo in order to become Jesus' apostle.

c. **Judas son of James:** He is also called Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus.

d. **And Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor:** His name means *Judas who came from Kerioth*, a place in southern Judea. He served as the treasurer of the Twelve.

III. Authority to Heal (6:17-19).

A. Press of People (6:17-18a):

1. Location (6:17a): ***He went down with them and stood on a level place:*** Jesus and the Twelve came down from the mountain to a lower, flat area.

2. Gathering of a crowd (6:17b): ***A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon...*** A large crowd of disciples joined Jesus in that large field for an open air teaching session. They came from as far as Tyre and Sidon to the north, and Jerusalem to the south.

3. Reason for the gathering (1:18a): *who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases:* Here are the two reasons the great crowds gathered to Jesus.

B. Demonstration of Power (6:18b-19): *Those troubled by evil spirits were cured. 19 And the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all:* Demons are evil spirits, agents of the Devil. They trouble people in their minds and souls, and sometimes even in their bodies.⁸⁰ Sometimes Jesus touched the sick; sometimes they touched him. A healing power proceeded from his body. Faith was present on the part of those who reached forth to touch him.

IV. Authority in Standards (6:20-45).

A. Fourfold Blessing (6:20-23):

1. The poor (6:20): *Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.* Jesus looked his disciples straight in the eye as he uttered the following words. Blessed means happy. Jesus was not saying that all poor people are happy. His comments are limited to that particular group of disciples, people who had committed their lives to him. Though they were poor in the things of this world, they had spiritual riches because of their relationship to Jesus. Those who have humbled themselves and trust in Jesus will become the citizens of the kingdom over which Jesus reigns.

2. The hungry (6:21a): *Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied:* The hunger is a spiritual hunger, a hunger to know more about God. Such will find all they are looking for in Jesus.

3. The penitent (6:21b): *Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh:* Jesus is referring to those who weep over sin in their lives, who are genuinely sorry that they have offended God. Such will find joy to the point of laughter in the forgiveness that is theirs in Christ.

4. The persecuted (6:22-23):

a. Description of persecution (6:22): *Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man:* Those who line up with Jesus face hatred, exclusion from the synagogue, insult and social rejection. Relatives of a believer in Jesus might vow to never utter the name of that believer again. The believer's name might be erased from the records in the synagogues. The Son of Man is Jesus.⁸¹

b. Instruction for persecution (6:23): *Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven:* Believers who suffer persecution for the cause of Christ can rejoice over the heavenly reward which will be theirs. *For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.* The Old Testament prophets were mistreated during their lifetime by the ancestors of the present generation. When Jesus' followers are persecuted they are in good company.

B. Fourfold Woe (6:24-26):

1. The rich (6:24): *But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort:* The word woe signals trouble, heartache, judgment. Those who are rich in worldly things are often praised and envied. This is their comfort or reward. They get it all here and now. There is nothing for them in heaven because they were too proud to put their faith in Jesus.⁸²

2. The full (6:25a): *Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry:* Those who have plenty of food in this world, will go hungry in the spiritual realm. They will never find satisfaction because they have not surrendered their lives to Jesus.

⁸⁰ What are our reasons for coming to hear the words of Jesus through the preaching of the Word?

⁸¹ Do your classmates know you are a Christian? Do they look down on you because you love Jesus? How do you deal with those who despise your Christian faith?

⁸² Jesus never condemned wealth, but he warned of its dangers. Why do the wealthy find it hard to embrace Jesus as Savior?

3. The jolly (6:25b): ***Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep:*** Those who appear to be having all the fun, who laugh in silly merriment in the empty activities of this world, will come to a time when they will weep bitterly as they face a Christless eternity.
4. The respected (6:26): ***Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets:*** False prophets would change the message of God so as not to offend anyone. All men spoke well of those false prophets. But they faced the wrath of God for having changed his message. Believers always face the temptation to water down the message so as to appeal to a wider audience. Such are false prophets.⁸³

C. Directives about Love (6:27-35):

1. General principle (6:27): ***But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you:*** The current teaching of the Pharisees was "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." The Old Testament required Israelites to assist their enemies (Exod. 23:4-5). Jesus set a higher standard. Love within the heart must express itself in concrete deeds.⁸⁴
2. Specific applications (6:28-30):
 - a. Applied to verbal abuse (6:28): ***Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you:*** Believers are required by Jesus' higher standards to ask the Lord to bless those who verbally or otherwise mistreat them. Believers are to intercede with the Father on behalf of those who are non-believers and enemies of the faith.
 - b. Applied to physical abuse (6:29a): ***If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also:*** Jesus never meant these words to be taken literally, for later when he was smitten on the face, he did not literally turn the other cheek (John 18:22-23). What Jesus is condemning is the hunger for revenge against enemies. A believer should show in attitude, word, and deed that he is not filled with the spirit of revenge, but with the spirit of love.
 - c. Applied to personal possessions (6:29b-30): ***If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic: 30 Give to everyone who asks you; and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back:*** Instead of being filled with bitterness and the lust for retaliation, show the very opposite attitude.⁸⁵ Those who ask for hand outs most likely would be a poor person who asks for help. Jesus' disciples must generous even with those who are mistreating you.
3. Memorable command (6:31): ***Do to others as you would have them do to you:*** This statement is known as the Golden Rule. The kernel of this rule is found already in Lev. 19:18. One who loves his neighbor as himself is not in danger of violating any of the Ten Commandments. Jesus' rule is positive. Do positive things for people, just like you would hope they would do for you in similar circumstances.⁸⁶
4. Pertinent reasoning (6:32-35):
 - a. Love greater than sinners (6:32): ***"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them:*** The rule of the world is to treat others as they treat you. Anyone--even the worst sinner--can love someone who treats him right. Jesus' standard is higher than that!
 - b. Kindness greater than sinners (6:33): ***And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that:*** It takes no religion to do something nice for someone who has done something nice for you. Jesus' standard is higher than that!
 - c. Generosity greater than sinners (6:34): ***And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full:*** What Jesus is saying is that believers should not lend money to those in need; they should give them help, not expecting to ever receive it back. The Old Testament forbade lending money to brothers in need. Jesus' standard is higher. Any person in need should be the object of the generosity of the believer.

⁸³ Should modern preachers specialize in blessed or in woe? What can we learn from the preaching of Jesus?

⁸⁴ Jesus did not say Like your enemies. What is the difference in liking and loving your enemies?

⁸⁵ How can we overcome the spirit of revenge in our lives?

⁸⁶ Do we want others to be strict with us, or lenient?

5. A high standard (6:35a): ***But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back:*** Now Jesus gives two consequences of following the higher standards which he has just set forth.

6. An appropriate promise (6:35b):

a. Promise of great reward (6:35b): ***Then your reward will be great:*** Believers receive their reward in heaven.

b. Promise of family honor (6:35c): ***and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked:*** When believers are generous, kind, forgiving, etc. they are acting like their heavenly Father. That is how he treats the ungrateful and the wicked.

D. Directive about Criticism (6:35-36):

1. Be merciful in criticism (6:36): ***Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful:*** To be merciful is to be compassionate; to be filled with the kind of sympathy that expresses itself in words and deeds. This kind of mercy God demonstrated when he sent his only begotten Son into the world.

2. Dangers in criticism (6:37a): ***"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.*** Those who are critical of others will find themselves criticized. Certainly it is not the believer's job to pass eternal judgment on any other person. Eternal judgment is God's business. This verse does not mean that sins that are condemned in the Scripture should not be exposed and rejected.

3. Promise of merciful judgment (6:37b-38):

a. Stated in a principle (6:37b): ***Forgive, and you will be forgiven.***

b. Stated in a picture (6:38): ***Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you":*** The person who gives generously will also receive back generously. A measure is like a bushel basket of grain, fruits, or vegetables. A good measure is one in which the merchant has pressed down, shaken down the contents. The contents were overflowing the container. This is a picture of the maximum amount of blessings. That is what God will pour out into the lap of the generous person.

E. Fourfold Parable (6:39-45):

1. Good and bad teachers (6:39-40):

a. The student follows his teacher (6:39): ***He also told them this parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?":*** Palestine's rugged terrain was full of pits, holes into which people might fall. Certainly if a blind man were leading a blind man through that treacherous terrain, both would be seriously injured. The blind guides in this little parable are the Pharisees and teachers of the law. People should not follow such leaders.

b. The student is like his teacher (6:40): ***A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher:*** The uneducated apostles would never be greater than Jesus, or even the teachers of the law for that matter. But these disciples should not let their lack of formal education intimidate them. Jesus was in the process of fully training them to teach like he taught, to be like him. People would see Jesus in them.

2. Good and bad eye sight (6:41-42):

a. Inconsistency in finding fault (6:41): ***Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?:*** These disciples would need humility as well as confidence as they served Christ. The speck represents minor offenses; the plank represents major sins. It is always easier to spot the faults in someone else, than to recognize the spiritual problems in one's own life.

b. Hypocrisy in finding fault (6:42): ***How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye:*** Leaders in Christ's kingdom must avoid being like the Pharisees who were hypocrites, pretending to be

more righteous than they really were. Each believer must deal with that plank or major sin in his/her own life before presuming to help others with their spiritual problems.

3. Good and bad trees (6:43-44):

a. General principle (6:43): **"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit:** Like the two previous verses, this verse addresses the sin of self-righteousness. Self-righteousness is a serious fault, and must be removed from one's life. Self-righteousness marks a person as spiritually unhealthy. Such a person, like an unhealthy fruit tree, cannot bear good fruit.

b. Specific illustration (6:44): **Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars:** Each tree yields the type of fruit for which it was planned by the Creator, fruit not produced by any other tree or plant. The same holds true for people, as the next verse shows.

4. Good and bad storage (6:45): **The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart, for out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks:** The heart is a storehouse. What a person brings forth out of that storehouse depends on what he has put into that storehouse. The thoughts of the heart overflow into the mouth. What a person thinks about will come out in his/her speech. If the heart is good, then good things will come out of the mouth and vice versa.⁸⁷

V. Authority for Life (6:46-49).

A. Stimulating Question (4:46): **"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?:** Too many do not put their professed religious principles into practice. They accept Jesus as Lord in theory, but do not obey him, except when it suits them.⁸⁸

B. Stimulating Pictures (6:47-49):

1. Introduction (6:47): **I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice:** The importance of obeying Jesus is set forth in the following parable.

2. Wise builder (6:48): **He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built:** Here is a cautious builder. He realizes that the fair, cloudless skies will not last forever. The rainy season would come, bringing floods of water. So he puts the foundation of his house deep into the ground, on the bedrock. The floods cannot move this well-built house. So the person who obeys Jesus is building his life to withstand the trials of life and death.⁸⁹

3. Foolish builder (6:49): **But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete":** The second builder builds his house without foundations. That house is destined for destruction when the rainy season comes. The point is that those who ignore the teaching of Jesus, may get by for awhile. But eventually they meet with disaster, if not in this life, then certainly in the life to come.⁹⁰

VI. Authority Illustrated (7:1-10).

A. Introduction (7:1): **When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum:** Jesus' Sermon on the Mount was briefly summarized in Luke 6:20-49. That Mount was near Capernaum, where Jesus now had his home.

⁸⁷ What kind of good things should we be storing up in our hearts?

⁸⁸ Is it easier to accept Christ as our Savior, or Christ as our Lord (Boss)?

⁸⁹ All of us are builders, for to live means to build. How many types of builders are there in life? Which are you?

⁹⁰ What kind of floods test the structure of our life?

B. Desperate Request (7:2-5):

1. A sick servant (7:2): ***There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die:*** A centurion commanded a hundred men. This man was an officer who served King Herod (Antipas) who ruled Galilee. He certainly was a foreigner, probably a Roman. The servant of this man was sick, according to Matthew 8:6, paralyzed and suffering greatly. He was near death.

2. An urgent mission (7:3): ***The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant:*** The centurion had heard about what the Great Physician had done for others. Some of the prominent Jews of the city were sent to ask Jesus to intervene on behalf of the servant.

3. An earnest appeal (7:4-5): ***When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this: 5 Because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue":*** The elders did not just transmit the message of the centurion; they actually pled on his behalf. They urged Jesus to go to the man's house. There was a good reason why the elders wanted Jesus to intervene. The centurion was sympathetic with the Jewish people. He even financed the building of the local synagogue in Capernaum, the very synagogue in which Jesus had performed miracles earlier.

4. An immediate response (7:6a): ***So Jesus went with them:*** Jesus did not go because the centurion was a rich man who had built the local synagogue, but because there was a person in desperate need of his help.

B. A Humble Faith (7:6b-8):

1. The centurion's humility (7:6b-7a): ***He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof: 7 That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you:*** People must have run ahead to inform the centurion that Jesus was on his way. This Gentile was suddenly overcome with a sense of his unworthiness to have Jesus enter his house.⁹¹ It was this Gentile's sense of unworthiness that caused him to send the elders to Jesus, rather than go himself.

2. The centurion's faith (7:7b-8): ***But say the word, and my servant will be healed: 8 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it":*** The centurion had enough faith to believe that Jesus' personal presence would not be required for the healing. This army officer knew the principle of authority. He was a man of great power.

3. The centurion's commendation (7:9): ***When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel":*** Jesus wanted the crowd, including the representatives of the centurion, to hear what he had to say. This Gentile's faith exceeded anything Jesus had found among the Jews, in spite of their special privileges.⁹²

C. A Spectacular Miracle (7:10): ***Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well:*** Matthew adds that from that very moment the boy was cured. Thus, when the centurion and his friends returned to the house they found the servant cured.

Ministry of Compassion

Luke 7:11-9:17

I. Salvation from Death: A Son (7:11-17).

⁹¹ Jesus had no trace of racial prejudice. Are we as concerned to render assistance to those of other races and language groups as we are to our own?

⁹² How was this man's faith great? Why was his faith greater than that which Jesus had found in Israel?

A. Setting (7:11): *Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him:* Nain is a town not far from Nazareth in the hills of Galilee. At this point in his ministry Jesus is followed by great crowds of people as well as his disciples.

B. Encounter (7:12-13):

1. Procession of mourners (7:12): *As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out--the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a large crowd from the town was with her:* As he was about to enter the village, a funeral procession was leaving for the cemetery. The deceased was the only son of a widow. When this son died, this poor woman lost her last source of protection and support. In her grief the widow had the support of a host of friends and relatives.

2. Compassion of the Lord (7:13): *When the Lord saw her. His heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry":* This is the first passage where Luke himself calls Jesus the Lord. Here Jesus will show himself Lord and Master even over death itself. Jesus was touched by this woman's sorrow. His instructions to the woman not to cry must have sounded strange to the crowd. Normally Jews have the philosophy that at the loss of a loved one a person should express the sorrow in tears.⁹³

B. Resurrection (7:14-15):

1. Jesus stopped the procession (7:14a): *Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still:* No one asked Jesus to do anything. Jesus touched the coffin so as to stop the procession. The coffin was not like the coffins used today. It was more like a stretcher. The corpse would have been covered over with a sheet.

2. Jesus addressed the dead man (7:14b): *He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!":* On three occasions Jesus addressed commands to the dead. His word of power spelled victory over death.

3. Jesus gave the live man to his mother (7:15): *The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother:* The resurrection of this dead man is at the same time a restoration of family ties. By gesture or word Jesus signaled the shocked mother to embrace her son.

D. Reaction (7:16-17):

1. A wondrous praise (7:16a): *They were all filled with awe and praised God.* Those who witnessed this miracle were amazed. They recognized that only God can raise the dead. So they properly gave the glory to God.

2. A biblical praise (7:16b): *"A great prophet has appeared among us":* The miracle convinced the crowd that Jesus was a great prophet, like Elijah and Elisha, both of whom had been involved in bringing dead children back to life. They recognized Jesus as God's agent in bringing the dead man back to life.

3. A glad conclusion (7:16c): *They said. "God has come to help his people:* The people recognized the miracle as a demonstration of God's loving concern as well as a manifestation of power.

4. A growing reputation (7:17): *This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country:* Without newspaper, radio, or TV the report concerning this miracle circulated throughout Galilee and surrounding areas as far south as Judea.

II. Salvation Expectations (7:18-35).

A. John's Question (7:18-20):

1. Background of the question (7:18): *John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them:* The news of the resurrection at Nain had spread throughout the land, even reaching the ears of John who was languishing in a prison on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. John may have been wondering, If Jesus is powerful enough to raise the dead, why does he not deliver me from this miserable dungeon?

⁹³ Do we have the heart of the Master when it comes to widows, orphans and unfortunate people?

2. Focus of the question (7:19): ***He sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"*** John sent two representatives to ask Jesus directly if he was the Coming One who would punish and destroy the wicked (Matt. 3:7,10), or should believers look for another? John was discouraged with his circumstances. He could not understand why Jesus did not "make his move" against wicked rulers like Herod.⁹⁴

3. Delivery of the question (7:20): ***When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?'"***: The arrival and question of John's two disciples is reported so as to underscore how important their question was.

B. Jesus' Response (7:21-23):

1. His actions (7:21): ***At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind:*** John's disciples arrived just at the right time. Jesus was in the process of demonstrating his healing love and power. Jesus healed many people that day of various kinds of diseases. He was casting out evil spirits or demons. The opening of blind eyes was particularly spectacular. Perhaps Jesus delayed answering the question of John's disciples until he had put on this demonstration of his power.

2. His message (7:22-23):

a. A reminder of the words of Scripture (7:22): ***So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor:*** John's disciples are told to report back with their own observations of what Jesus was doing on a routine basis. Even the dead had been raised, a reference back to what happened at Nain. Furthermore, in accord with the prophetic Scriptures, good news was being preached to the poor of the land. What John needed to realize was that, while the miracles were part of the program, this was the time for the preaching of the good news, not judgment on the wicked.

b. A mild rebuke (7:23): ***Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me"***: This is a mild rebuke. Jesus does not scold John for asking the question. Rather he reminds John of the blessing which comes to all who have patience with God's program, who do not lose heart when Jesus does not perform as one might think that he should.

C. Jesus' Opinion about John (7:24-30):

1. Attraction of John (7:24-26):

a. John was not a reed (7:24): ***After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind?":*** Some might have concluded that John had changed his mind about Jesus, that John was a weak and indecisive person. So Jesus preaches a mini sermon about John. During his preaching days in the wilderness, John had made a tremendous impact on the people of the land. John had been like a great oak tree, not a shaking weed blowing in the wind. His preaching was stern, certain, uncompromising. That is why people traveled out to the Jordan to hear him.

b. John was not opulent (7:25): ***If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces:*** They certainly did not travel miles to see John because he wore gorgeous garments! Fancy clothes are for people who live the life of ease, who have no backbone.

c. John was a prophet (7:26): ***But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet:*** People traveled miles to hear John because they considered him to be a prophet. But John was even more than a prophet.

2. Greatness of John (7:27-29):

⁹⁴ John asked, Should we look for someone else? What have some people substituted for Jesus and the salvation he offers?

- a. John was a special messenger (7:27): ***This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you":*** John was the special messenger sent by God to prepare the way for the Messiah. Jesus is quoting and interpreting Malachi 3:1.
 - b. John was the greatest of men (7:28a): ***I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John:*** John had fulfilled his role as the herald of Messiah in a marvelous way. John had demonstrated the most marvelous humility as he pointed his disciples to Jesus as the Lamb of God. John was the greatest born of woman because (1) he was himself the fulfillment of prophecy; (2) he performed his task in the most humble manner; and (3) he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb.
 - c. John inferior to a kingdom citizen (7:28b): ***Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he":*** Those who are part of Jesus kingdom had seen things, heard things and experienced things that John was not privileged to experience. He never got to see the tremendous power of the Son of God unleashed, never got to hear any of his magnificent messages.
3. Reaction to Jesus' opinion (7:29-30):
- a. Reaction of the people (7:29): ***(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John:*** John's ministry had impacted thousands of people, even those like the tax collectors who were considered social outcasts. They had recognized John as God's messenger by submitting to his baptism.
 - b. Reaction of the leaders (7:30): ***But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.):*** The religious leaders attended John's preaching services out of curiosity. But they did not believe his message or submit to his baptism. By rejecting John, they were in fact rejecting God's will for their lives.

D. Jesus' Analysis of his Audience (7:31-35):

1. Accusation of childishness (7:31-32): ***To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? 32 They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other: "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry":*** Some of those who had formerly been enthusiastic supporters of John had now allowed their religious leaders to turn their minds against John. Jesus uses a parable to rebuke these disloyal disciples. He accuses that generation of being childish. He paints a picture of children playing in the open spaces of an empty marketplace. Some started playing their flutes, perhaps imitating a wedding feast. Other children did not want to play that game. So they put their flutes away and began to pretend to mourn with moans and cries like they had seen their parents do at funerals. That game too was rejected by the other children. The point is, that like children in a bad mood, nobody wanted to play what the others wanted to play.
2. Proof of the accusation (7:33-34):
 - a. They had rejected John (7:33): ***For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon':*** Here is the application of the parable. These people were never satisfied. Some rejected John because he had strange personal habits. He did not attend banquets and social events. He ate locusts and wild honey, and refused to touch the fruit of the vine. His message was so stern. They thought he must be possessed by a demon!
 - b. They had rejected Jesus (7:34): ***The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners"':*** Now the same crowd points their finger at Jesus and brush him aside as being a socialite. Why, he attended one party after another! A glutton is one who overeats. They accused Jesus of being a drunkard merely because he attended banquets. It was a false accusation, of course. But it was true that he befriended tax collectors and "sinners," not to share in their sins, but to transform their lives.
3. Ultimate consideration (7:35): ***But wisdom is proved right by all her children":*** This proverb is the equivalent of the modern proverb that the proof is in the pudding. John showed wisdom by insisting on repentance. Jesus showed his wisdom by offering the hope of salvation to those who had been brushed aside by the rest of society. The wisdom of both approaches was evident in the hearts and lives of "all

her children," i.e., all of the people who allowed themselves to be guided by that wisdom. Men and women were being salvaged and transformed. Ordinary people were becoming students of the Word.

III. Salvation of Sinful Women (7:36-8:3).

A. Setting (7:36): *Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him. So he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table:* We are not told why Simon the Pharisee extended this invitation to Jesus. The following verses indicate that he did not do so out of love for Jesus, or even admiration. Perhaps he was motivated by curiosity. Or maybe he thought he could get some inside information as to what Jesus' plans for his ministry might be. Jesus loved sinful Pharisees as well as crooked tax collectors. He hoped that he might be able to soften the heart of this Pharisee.⁹⁵

B. Devotion of a Sinful Woman (7:37-38):

1. She learned of Jesus' visit (7:37a): *When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house:* This woman with a bad reputation heard that Jesus was coming to her town. It seems clear from this account that whatever she had been, she is no more. Somewhere along the way she had heard Jesus' words, and received his pardon.

2. She brought her most cherished possession (7:37b): *She brought an alabaster jar of perfume:* Alabaster was very precious. The jar would have a long neck that would have to be broken in order to pour out the contents. This perfume was intended to be a thanksgiving present to Jesus.

3. She wept in Jesus' presence (7:38a): *And as she stood behind him at his feet weeping she began to wet his feet with her tears:* It is not clear how this woman with a bad reputation was able to enter the house of a strict Pharisee. She must have burst in before Simon's servants could restrain her. Those eating at this house were reclining on cushions on the floor, leaning on the left elbow, eating from a very low table with the right hand. The woman stood behind him, at his extended feet. The woman was overcome with emotion in the presence of her Savior.

4. She showed gratitude to Jesus (7:38b): *Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them:* The perfume was very expensive. Nothing was too good for Jesus. Washing of the feet was the mark of a servant. She is declaring herself to be Jesus' servant.

C. Criticism of a Proud Host (7:39-40):

1. Thoughts of Simon (7:39): *When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner":* Simon was offended by what the woman was doing. If Simon had entertained the idea that Jesus might have been a prophet, he no longer had any doubts in his mind. A true prophet would not have allowed such a sinful woman to touch him at all.

2. Response of Jesus (7:40): *Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said:* Jesus knew what Simon was thinking. He now addresses the concerns of this Pharisee.

D. A Parable (7:41-43):

1. Two men with debt (7:41): *Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty:* Jesus uses a parable to get his point across. Denarii is the plural of denarius. A laboring man would receive one denarius for a day's labor. Two men had borrowed large sums from a moneylender.

2. Two men forgiven of debt (7:42): *Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?":* The moneylender could have had both debtors thrown into prison for failing to pay back their loans. He decided instead to cancel both debts.

⁹⁵ Jesus was not intimidated by the wealthy and powerful. How can we do a better job reaching the wealthy and powerful for the Lord today?

Jesus then asked Simon which of the two debtors would be most grateful for what the moneylender had done.

3. Judgment of Simon (7:43): ***Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled": "You have judged correctly," Jesus said:*** Simon seems a bit indifferent to the question. Jesus limits his comment on Simon's reply to the statement that the Pharisee had judged correctly.

E. Disposition of the Woman (7:44):

1. She had washed Jesus' feet (7:44): ***Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet; but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair:*** Jesus directs Simon's attention to the woman. Had he really understood the significance of what this woman had just done? Jesus had received shabby treatment from his wealthy host. Simon had not provided the basic act of hospitality, offering a bowl of water and a towel for the washing of dusty feet when one enters a house. From this woman, however, Jesus had received exactly the opposite treatment. Instead of water for washing, she had provided her tears, which indicated her repentance.

2. She had welcomed Jesus with kisses (7:45): ***You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet:*** Instead of a kiss upon the cheek such as a host would use to greet a guest, she had planted many kisses on his feet, symbol of humble gratitude.

3. She had anointed him with perfume (7:46): ***You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet:*** Instead of cheap olive oil, which would normally be poured on the head of a guest to provide refreshment from the heat, she had poured precious perfume over his feet.⁹⁶

F. Forgiveness of the Woman (7:47-49):

1. Public announcement (7:47): ***Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little":*** Jesus explains the reason for the woman's actions. She was grateful for Jesus' forgiveness of her many sins, whatever they may have been. Pharisees like Simon thought they needed little if any forgiveness. Therefore they had little love for God or his Son.

2. Personal announcement (7:48): ***Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven":*** What the woman knew in her heart is not publicly affirmed by Jesus. Those who have sinned much need reassurance from time to time. Forgiveness is so wonderful people sometimes have a hard time grasping the truth that Jesus has blotted out those sins. Jesus was also making this statement so as to provoke thought in the minds of the Pharisees present.

3. The guests' criticism (7:49): ***The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?":*** Only God can forgive sin. The guests, who were probably mostly Pharisees, were shocked when Jesus assumed the authority to forgive the woman's sin.

4. Jesus' explanation (7:50): ***Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace":*** This woman's humble trust in committing herself totally to him constituted the basis on which she was granted forgiveness. She had been saved from the consequences of her sins by her faith. Jesus dismisses her from the hostile guests by wishing her God's peace.

IV. Salvation Service (8:1-3).

A. Service of the Twelve (8:1): ***After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him:*** Apparently Jesus and the apostles are still in the Galilee region evangelizing. The burden of his message was on the kingdom or reign of God, which starts in the heart of those who embrace Christ. The good news

⁹⁶ Are we careful to extend to others hospitality? Does Jesus expect his disciples to reflect good manners?

was that people could be free from bondage to sin and to man-made regulations. By God's grace they could have forgiveness and hope of everlasting life.

B. Service of the Grateful Women (8:2-3):

1. Gratitude of the women (8:2a): ***And also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases:*** Dr. Luke carefully distinguishes between oppression by evil spirits and physical diseases. The women who had most benefited from the ministry of Jesus traveled with his party on the preaching tours. Most of the Greek and Jewish intellectuals of that day held women in contempt. Not so Jesus. Women were a very prominent part of his ministry. Luke, more than the other three Gospels, emphasizes Jesus' appreciation for women.

2. Identity of the women (8:2b-3):

a. Mary Magdalene (8:2a): ***Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out:*** This Mary was from the village of Magdala on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. She was at the cross with Jesus. She was the first person to see Jesus alive on Resurrection Day. The seven demons must have tormented Mary both mentally and physically. The fact that seven demons were cast from her does not necessarily mean that she was an immoral woman when Jesus first met her.⁹⁷

b. Joanna (8:3a): ***Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household:*** She also was among the women who first learned from angels at the empty tomb that Jesus had arisen. She must have been a prominent and wealthy woman.

c. ***Susanna*** (8:3b): Nothing further is known about this woman.

d. ***And many others*** (8:3c).

3. Ministry of the women (8:3d): ***These women were helping to support them out of their own means:*** They were sharing their wealth and talent to support the group of thirteen men who traveled about preaching.

V. Salvation Mysteries (8:4-21):

A. Introduction (8:4): ***While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable:*** Jesus' unique style of teaching, his miracles, and the rumors that he had raised the dead attracted people from many towns. According to Matt. 13:2 this parable was part of a series delivered from a boat just off the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

B. Parable of the Sower (8:5-20):

1. Seed on the hard soil (8:5): ***"A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up.*** The picture Jesus paints must have been familiar to all in his audience. It was customary for wheat, barley, etc., to be sown by hand. It was unavoidable that a portion of the farmer's seed would fall on or along the path which he was treading. Human footsteps had hardened this part of the ground, so that it was impossible for the seed to actually enter into the soil. Soon it would be devoured by the birds.

2. Seed on rocky soil (8:6): ***Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture:*** Often in Palestine the underlying rock comes so close to the surface that there is virtually no depth to the soil at all. The seed could not become firmly rooted. The plant could not draw moisture from the soil, so it withered and died.

3. Seed among the thorns (8:7): ***Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants:*** The unwanted thorns grew faster than the good seed, and choked out the life of the beneficial plant.

⁹⁷ Why did these women dedicate their lives to serving Jesus? What do we owe Jesus for what he has done for us?

4. Seed on the good soil (8:8a): ***Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown***: Good soil is that which is entirely suitable for healthy plant growth. Some of those plants yielded a hundred grains of seed to replace the one seed that was planted.
5. Concluding admonition (8:8b): ***When he said this, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear"***: Jesus fully expected his audience to listen to what he said, meditate on it, and apply the lessons to their individual lives.

C. Interpretation of the Parable (8:9-15):

1. Setting (8:9-10):

a. Question of the disciples (8:9): ***His disciples asked him what this parable meant***: Jesus' disciples did not grasp the point Jesus was making.

b. Response of Jesus (8:10): ***He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, "though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand."*** To his disciples Jesus communicated the secrets of the kingdom of God. The secrets are the things God was doing in the hearts and lives of people. To the true followers of Jesus, then, the fact that he speaks in parables is not hurtful. In fact, the homely stories Jesus told served to fix spiritual truths in the minds of the disciples. Parables were designed to hide the truth from those who really did not want to hear it. This is a quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10. The Pharisees had hardened their hearts so as not to see the truth, nor to understand what they were hearing. Those who have hardened themselves, God will allow to be hardened still more. Parables make people think, and people who don't really want to believe won't invest the time to think about them.⁹⁸

2. Specifics of the parable (8:11-15):

a. Seed (8:11): ***This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God***. Jesus is the Sower who had been dispensing the Word of God (cf. Matt. 13:37) in his preaching and teaching.

b. Seed on the path (8:12): ***Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved***: The different types of soil represent different types of hearers. Some are unresponsive to the message. They are easily distracted. They treat the Word of God lightly, and in so doing, they are cooperating with Satan. He therefore removes the word from their hearts, i.e., he gets their minds on other things. Thus they never believe so as to be saved from the consequences of their sins.

c. Seed on rocky soil (8:13): ***Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away***: The second group of hearers are those who are very emotional and impulsive. They do not put forth the effort over time to sink their roots deep into the Word. Hence the first difficulty that comes their way discourages them, and they fall away from the Lord.

d. Seed on thorny soil (8:14): ***The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature***: Others are too preoccupied to give careful attention to the Word. Jesus mentions three thorns which may spring up to choke out what little life may have been derived from the Word: (1) the cares and worries of life; (2) the pursuit and management of riches; and (3) pleasures. Such people never mature in the faith.

e. Seed on the good soil (8:15): ***But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop***: The good soil represents responsive hearts. They receive the Word with open and unprejudiced minds. They cling to the precious message of Christ regardless. They bear fruit for the Master in their lives.⁹⁹

D. Follow-up Warnings (8:16-18):

⁹⁸ How does Christ reveal the mystery of the kingdom of God to us? Do we truly regard it as a privilege to know the mystery of the kingdom of God?

⁹⁹ Which kind of soil in this passage is a description of your heart?

1. Warning about revealing light (8:16-17):

a. Illustration (8:16): ***No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light:*** The bed was a kind of mattress, which when not in use was rolled up like a sleeping bag. No one would light a lamp and then cover over the light. Only if the lamp is put on the lampstand can it fulfill its purpose. The lampstand was a simple shelf, or a stone extending from the wall. The point is that believers must let the light of their witness shine for Jesus.¹⁰⁰

b. Application (8:17): ***For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open:*** Men may try to conceal certain aspects of their life, but they will be unsuccessful. God brings everything out into the open. Evil thoughts, plans, words and actions will eventually be exposed.

2. Warning about careful listening (8:18): ***Therefore consider carefully how you listen: Whoever has will be given more. Whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him":*** Since all men will be held responsible for their most private conduct, they should be very careful to listen to Jesus for guidance as to what is right and wrong. Those who give due attention to the Word, and obey what they hear, will receive all the blessings of salvation. The more one learns of the Word, the greater the blessing. Those who do not continue to have an intimate acquaintance with the Word will lose even what little bit they once had or thought they had. It is like someone who takes lessons on a musical instrument, but never goes far enough to master it. If he stops practicing altogether, he will soon forget even what little bit he once knew. You cannot stand still in your relationship to Christ. You are either advancing or falling backward.

E. Family Problems (8:19-21):

1. Family members arrive (8:19): ***Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him: But they were not able to get near him because of the crowd:*** Why they came, Luke does not say. Mark 3:21-22 suggests that they were trying to get him out of the public eye since so many vicious rumors were being circulated about him by his enemies. His brothers were his half-brothers, sons of Joseph and Mary. The huge crowd made access to Jesus difficult.

2. Jesus is informed (8:20): ***Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you":*** The relatives asked members of the crowd to relay the news to those closest to the Jesus.

3. Jesus' response (8:21): ***He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice":*** Spiritual ties are stronger than physical ties. Jesus is not saying that family ties are not important. Jesus had a very close relationship with his mother (John 19:25-27). After the resurrection both his mother and his brothers came to believe on Jesus as their Savior (Acts 1:14). The point is this: Nothing must interfere with his work of spreading the Word. Jesus considers those who obey that Word as his family.¹⁰¹

VI. Salvation from Impending Calamity (8:22-25).

A. Circumstances (8:22-23):

1. Travel proposal (8:22): ***One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out.*** Jesus needed to get away from the throngs of people who pressed upon him daily. The lake is the Sea of Galilee. It is about seven miles wide.

2. Sleeping Master (8:23): ***As they sailed, he fell asleep:*** A fishing boat from the time of Christ has been found intact buried in the sand of the lake. The boat had a small cabin area in the bow. That is probably where Jesus went to rest. Because he was so weary, he fell asleep immediately.

¹⁰⁰ When we became Christians we were enlightened. Have we let others see that light?

¹⁰¹ Do we truly regard fellow believers as part of our spiritual family?

3. Sudden squall (8:23b): *A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger:* A squall is a howling wind. The geographical location of this lake made it subject to sudden and unpredictable wind storms of the most violent sort. Here the winds whipped up the water, and waves came crashing into the boat. The boat was about to go under. All on board were in jeopardy.

B. Calming of the Sea (8:24): *The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters. The storm subsided, and all was calm:* The tough and experienced fishermen among the apostles were frightened by this storm. Jesus slept through it all, totally exhausted from his labors. With great urgency they alerted their Master of their peril. In 4:39 Jesus rebuked a fever. Here he rebuked the storm. This is a figurative way of saying that Jesus asserted his authority over the storm. At the word of Jesus the winds immediately ceased, and the water immediately became calm. Normally after winds subside, some time elapses before the waters calm down. Here the wind and water are calm instantaneously. What a miracle!

C. Aftermath of the Miracle (8:25):

1. Jesus' question (8:25a): *Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples:* Their panic during the storm indicated that they had forgotten to put child-like trust in their Master. Their faith needed to increase.
2. Disciples' question (8:25b): *In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him":* They now realized that Jesus was greater than any of them had dared to imagine. What mere man can control the weather and the water?¹⁰²

VII. Salvation from Satanic Powers (8:26-39):

A. Encounter with a Demoniac (8:26-29):

1. Location of the demoniac (8:26): *They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee:* This was a region of tombs cut out of the cliffs on the eastern shore of the lake.
2. Description of the demoniac (8:27): *When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs:* Here Jesus encounters a second "storm," a wild man who lived in some of the tombs of the area. This man had once lived in a near-by town, but now the demons had driven him crazy. He was fierce (Matt. 8:29) and miserable.¹⁰³
3. Petition of the demoniac (8:28): *When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!":* The wild man approached Jesus and his men to attack them. But when the demon recognized Jesus, he caused the man to fall at Jesus' feet. The demon knew Jesus' identity as the Son of God, something even the disciples at this time had not fully grasped. The evil spirit was terrified in the presence of Jesus.¹⁰⁴
4. Further explanation (8:29): *For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places:* It was Jesus' command for the demons to come out of the man that triggered the outcry and plea of the preceding verse. The demon imparted to this man supernatural strength. The local residents regarded him as a danger and so they tried to restrain him with chains. He snapped them like they were made of paper. He would slash his naked body with sharp rocks (Mark 5:3-5). The demon would drive the man out to the lonely area of the tombs from whence he would emerge only when he was in need of food.

¹⁰² The disciples sometimes showed a lack of faith in Jesus. How can we increase our trust in the Lord?

¹⁰³ How does the Devil destroy people? Should we, as Christians, fear the Devil?

¹⁰⁴ The demons believed in Jesus. Why are they not saved? See James 2:19-20.

B. Conversation with the Demoniac (8:30-32):

1. Jesus asked for his name (8:30): ***Jesus asked him, "What is your name?": Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him:*** Jesus wanted to help the man begin to see himself as a person again. The demons had so dominated him that his own personality was no longer evident. He is under the control, not just of one demon--the one who had already spoken out--but of an entire host. A Legion had as many as 6,000 soldiers. Probably here, however, the word is figurative for a large number.

2. Request of the demons (8:31-32):

a. They did not want to enter the Abyss (8:31): ***And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss:*** Now all the demons pled with Jesus concerning their fate. The demons know that one day they face the final judgment of God. Meanwhile, they have a degree of freedom to roam the earth and sky. These demons realize they are standing in the presence of the One who would send them to their final destiny in the Abyss or Hell where Satan and his crowd will spend eternity. They are afraid that Jesus might hurl them even at that moment into that Abyss before the appointed time of final judgment.

b. They requested to enter swine (8:32): ***A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into them, and he gave them permission:*** According to Mark 5:13, about 2,000 pigs were on that hillside. The demons requested that they be sent into the pigs rather than into the Abyss. Perhaps such spirits crave to inhabit bodies, preferably of humans, but also of animals. Jesus gave them permission. Without his permission, the demons could not have carried out their plan. Everything, even the realm of the demons, is under the control of Christ.

C. Liberation of the Demoniac (8:33-37):

1. Destruction of the swine (8:33): ***When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned:*** Why did Jesus grant their request? Perhaps because pigs, being unclean according to the Law, were the proper place for unclean spirits. Also, Jesus knew what the demons did not, viz., that the pigs would all be killed. Scripture does not relate what happened to the demons after the pigs drown.

2. Report of the swineherds (8:34): ***When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside:*** Having seen and possibly overheard all that transpired between Jesus and the demon-possessed man, the pig tenders knew that Jesus was responsible for the loss of the herd.

3. Discovery of the locals (8:35): ***And the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid:*** How long it took the people to check out the reports of the pig tenders is not indicated. Perhaps they waited until the next morning. The wild man, known to all in that area, was no longer wild. He was sitting at Jesus' feet learning from the Master. The realization of what had happened on that hillside filled those people with fear.¹⁰⁵

4. Report of the eye witnesses (8:36): ***Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured:*** Again there on the very spot where the miracle had occurred, the witnesses reviewed the details, probably pointing with their fingers to the position of the pigs and the route they had taken into the sea.

D. Aftermath of the Event (8:37-39):

1. Locals made a request (8:37): ***Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear:*** Fear can drive a person to Jesus, or away from him. These people wanted nothing more to do with a person of such power as Jesus had just

¹⁰⁵ How does Jesus change lives?

demonstrated. Perhaps they feared further economic loss. *So he got into the boat and left.* Jesus will force himself on no one.¹⁰⁶

2. Liberated man made a request (8:38): ***The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying:*** This man owes his life to Jesus. He wants to travel with him, and learn from him. But that was not to be. Jesus had a mission for him.

3. The Lord made a request (8:39): ***"Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him:*** Jesus wanted this man to spread the word about him throughout that region east of the Sea of Galilee. Liberated as he was from those demonic forces, he had an amazing story to tell! And that is exactly what he set out to do.¹⁰⁷

VIII. Salvation from Defilement (8:40-48):

A. Circumstances (8:40-42):

1. Welcome of enthusiastic crowds (8:40): ***Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him:*** Jesus returned to Capernaum (Mark 5:21). The people of this town expected him to drop in from time to time. He was also welcome there.

2. Appeal of a desperate father (8:41-42a): ***Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house 42 because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.*** Jairus was a prominent member of the community, a leader in the synagogue. He had probably heard Jesus teach often, and probably had seen some of his miracles in the Capernaum area. Now he needs Jesus' help.

3. Crush of a great crowd (8:42b): ***As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him:*** Jesus set out immediately for the house of Jairus. The crowds about him were so large that He had a difficult time moving along the street.¹⁰⁸

B. A Desperate Woman (8:43-44):

1. Her persistent condition (8:43): ***And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her:*** This desperate woman was in the crowd that pressed in around Jesus. The physicians had tried all sorts of cures for her bleeding problem, but nothing worked. She had lost her wealth as well as her health (Mark 5:26).

2. Her bold action (8:44): ***She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak; and immediately her bleeding stopped:*** Under the Law of Moses, this woman would be considered unclean, and anyone she touched would be unclean. Therefore she did not intend to come into physical contact with Jesus himself. She planned to merely touch his garment, and even then only one of the four wool tassels that every Israelite was ordered to wear on the corners of his outer robe. Jesus would never even notice, so she thought, what she was doing. This woman had faith enough to believe that merely touching Jesus' garments would convey to her the power to heal her of a problem that no medical doctor had been able to help. Jesus rewarded her faith. Health and vigor began to surge through her body.¹⁰⁹

C. A Perceptive Savior (8:45-46):

1. Jesus' question (8:45a): ***"Who touched me?" Jesus asked:*** Jesus knew that someone had touched him. He could feel the healing power surge from his body.

¹⁰⁶ Why did these people ask Jesus to leave their region? Is he welcome in your community? in your home? in your church?

¹⁰⁷ Do we have a testimony to give about what Jesus has done for us?

¹⁰⁸ Why can we encourage people to turn to Jesus in the time of crisis and death?

¹⁰⁹ Along with her faith, what other qualities did this woman possess that we should cultivate in our own lives?

2. Peter's observation (8:45b): ***When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you"***: No one would step forward to acknowledge having touched Jesus. Peter pointed out that many people were jostling to be near him. He had probably been touched by many.
3. Jesus' assertion (8:46): ***But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me"***: Jesus was not talking about someone who accidentally had brushed up against him. He knew that someone had touched him in faith, and that faith had accessed his miraculous power. Jesus wanted the woman to step forward (1) to bear her testimony to the crowd; and (2) so that the crowd would know that she was no longer a person to be avoided as unclean.

D. A Commendation of Faith (8:47-48):

1. The woman identified herself (8:47a): ***Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet***: Apparently the woman already had started to leave. Her plan to slip away unnoticed had failed. Therefore, she came back to Jesus and revealed herself. She was trembling because she thought that Jesus was angry with her, that he might publicly rebuke her.
2. The woman explained her action (8:47b): ***In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed***: She bore testimony that immediately upon touching Jesus, her ailment was healed.
3. The woman was commended (8:48): ***Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace"***: Jesus speaks kindly to her, as a father might speak to his daughter even though she may not have been any younger than he was. Her faith in Jesus had brought her to him. Her faith caused her to risk rejection by the crowds and perhaps physical abuse, since one in her condition was never to mix with people. Now she could go home in peace. She could rejoin society.

IX. Salvation from Death: A Daughter (8:49-56):

A. Need for the Miracle (8:49-50):

1. Notice to Jairus (8:49): ***While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher any more"***: The messenger from Jairus' house was not very diplomatic in telling him about the death of his daughter. The friends at Jairus' house now thought that it was useless to ask Jesus to continue to hurry to the house. While the girl was sick there was hope; now there was none. The interruption along the way with the woman who was cured had delayed the Master too long.
2. Challenge of Jesus (8:50): ***Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed"***: Jesus paid no attention to the words of the messenger. Jairus was trembling at the news about his daughter. Jesus gave to the man a word of encouragement. He must continue to believe in the power of Jesus. To the Lord, death is no stronger an enemy than disease. The girl would be healed.

B. Preparation for the Miracle (8:51-52):

1. Witnesses carefully chosen (8:51): ***When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother***. Jesus ordered those in the house who were loudly mourning and crying to go outside. He took three disciples with him into the house as witnesses. These three were the "inner circle" of Jesus' disciples. From time to time they were permitted to witness things the others were not allowed to witness. Peter was the natural leader among the disciples. James would be the first of the apostles to die for his faith. John outlived all the other apostles. Perhaps these were the reasons that these three formed this special group within the Twelve.
2. Jesus' shocking announcement (8:52): ***Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep"***: No wonder Jesus ordered the people to leave the house. The scene was one of mass confusion. Jesus ordered them to stop the clamor. The

girl was not permanently dead. Her death was just like a momentary nap to Jesus. The girl would awake from death, just like one awakes after a night's sleep.

3. Mourners' mocking response (8:53): ***They laughed at him knowing that she was dead:*** The fact that these mourners could switch so quickly from weeping to laughing probably indicates that they were not sincere. In those days professional mourners would show up at funerals to display their "talents." Here their laughter probably was intended to humiliate Jesus. Their certainty that the girl was dead makes the miracle about to be performed all the more wondrous.

C. Description of the Miracle (8:54-55):

1. Action of Jesus (8:54): ***But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!"***: Jesus took the child by the hand and commanded her to get up, just like a parent might encourage a child to wake up in the morning.

2. Response of the girl (8:55a): ***Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up:*** At death the spirit departs from the body. Here death gives up the child, and the spirit returns. The child stood up and walked around (Mark 5:42).

3. Command of Jesus (8:55b): ***Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat:*** It may have been that, because the girl had been sick for some time before she died, she had not eaten in some time. She was in need of food. Perhaps the parents were so excited about seeing her alive, they overlooked this need. So Jesus told them to give the child food.

D. Reaction to the Miracle (8:56): ***Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened:*** In the region of Galilee Jesus did not want to stir up any premature confrontation with his enemies. The parents should concentrate on being good parents to their daughter, but not share with others what they had witnessed in that room. The crowd of mourners probably would conclude that they had been mistaken about the death of the child. Jesus was constantly trying to "keep the lid" on the excitement over his ministry in Galilee. It was not yet time to provoke his enemies to make their move against him.

PREPARATION FOR THE KINGDOM

Luke 9:1-50

Kingdom Viewed from Earth

Luke 9:1-27

I. Dispatching Kingdom Heralds (9:1-6).

A. Empowerment of the Twelve (9:1-2):

1. Jesus gave them power and authority (9:1): ***When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases:*** Luke clearly distinguishes between demon possession and sickness. The Twelve apostles are given power over both. Up to this time the Twelve had been mostly students of Jesus or his assistants.

2. Jesus gave them a mission (9:2): ***And he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick:*** The Galilean phase of Jesus' ministry is rapidly coming to an end. The apostles are sent out to spread the message of Christ one last time throughout the region. The primary emphasis is on their preaching. The kingdom of God on earth is the church over which Christ reigns as king.¹¹⁰

B. Instructions for the Twelve (8:3-5):

1. What they were not to take (8:3): ***He told them: "Take nothing for the journey--no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic:*** The staff was a walking stick. The bag was a kind of knapsack

¹¹⁰ Have you made Christ the absolute king of your life?

filled with supplies for the journey. The money would be in the form of small silver coins. The tunic was an undershirt worn next to the skin. It reached almost to the feet. On this particular trip they were not to take more than was absolutely necessary.

2. Accepting hospitality (9:4): ***Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town:*** The apostles were to stay wherever someone offered hospitality (Matt. 10:11). They were to be content with the provisions wherever they were lodging. They should not shift around from house to house in order to upgrade their accommodations.

3. Coping with rejection (9:5): ***If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them"***: Shaking dust off feet and garments was a custom among Jews whenever they left heathen territory to reenter the Holy Land. They did not want one particle of heathen soil to contaminate the land of Israel. Thus, what Jesus is saying is that any community that does not receive them is to be regarded as unclean. The people who did not receive the gospel were to be regarded as no better than Gentiles. Shaking the dust off is a symbolic way of saying that God was displeased with that town. The action amounted to a testimony against the place. The purpose was to jar the people who lived there into repentance.

C. Mission of the Twelve (9:6): ***So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere:*** The Twelve carried out their instructions. They must have been able to cover a considerable territory in Galilee. Their message was backed up with miraculous power demonstrated in the healing of the sick.

II. Disciples Tested (9:7-17).

A. Tested by Opinions about Jesus (9:7-9):

1. Perplexity of Herod (9:7a): ***Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on: And he was perplexed...*** Luke uses Herod's official title, tetrarch. Among the common people he was known as king. After the death of his father, Herod the Great, this son had been assigned to rule the territories of Galilee or Perea that was east of the Jordan river. This is the ruler who executed John the Baptist. Herod did not know what to make of the various reports he kept hearing about Jesus.

2. Popular explanations of Jesus (9:7b-8):

a. John returned from the grave (9:7b): ***because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead:*** One explanation of the miracles was that John the Baptist had returned from the dead. This first explanation is strange in that no miracles are every mentioned in connection with John.

b. Elijah had appeared (9:8a): ***Others that Elijah had appeared:*** This idea was based on Malachi 4:5 where Elijah's return as the forerunner of Christ is predicted.

c. One of the prophets (9:8b): ***And still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life:*** Others were not convinced that Jesus was John or Elijah; but to them he must have been one of the other Old Testament prophets returned from the dead. Such were the popular explanations of Jesus.

3. Desire of Herod to see Jesus (9:9): ***But Herod said, "I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?" And he tried to see him:*** Herod himself adopted the first explanation of Jesus mentioned in v. 7, viz., that he was John (Matt. 14:2). His conscience must have bothered him a great deal for what he had done to John. He wished to confront Jesus so as to confirm his belief and to satisfy his curiosity.¹¹¹

B. Tested by a Command of Jesus (9:10-17):

1. Circumstances (9:10-11):

a. Withdrawal of the apostles (9:10): ***When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done: Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida:*** The apostles were tired after their period of missionary service which may have lasted several weeks.

¹¹¹ Can a person truly be happy who is plagued by a guilty conscience?

A great crowd pressed in on them at Capernaum (Mark 6:31). Jesus wanted time alone with these key leaders. Bethsaida is on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee.

b. Pursuit by the crowds (9:11): ***But the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing:*** The crowds could see Jesus' boat from the shore. On foot they hurried around the northern edge of the Sea and rejoined Jesus. Jesus did not turn the people who needed him away. His message concerning God's kingdom or reign was so different from what they were used to hearing from the Pharisees. He spoke to them of love, grace, freedom, happiness, and allegiance only to God! He backed up this message with constant miracles of healing.

2. Emerging problem (9:12): ***Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here":*** Jesus' message and miracles so captivated the crowd that even now, late in the afternoon, they were not departing. They would need to get to the nearest villages before nightfall so they could find food and lodging, since it was too late in the day to make the long trip back to Capernaum. So the disciples approached Jesus, probably in a group, to request that he send the people away.

3. Challenge of Jesus (9:13-14a): ***He replied, "You give them something to eat." They answered, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all this crowd"14 (About five thousand men were there.)*** Jesus wanted the apostles to reflect further on the situation, perhaps to survey the available resources. Probably the apostles surveyed the crowd to see what might be available in the way of food. Andrew (John 6:8-9) reported back that the total amount of food available was five little bread cakes (like our pancakes) and two small fish. Earlier in the day Jesus had asked Philip about the possibility of purchasing food for the crowd (John 6:5). Philip, who was from that area, had all day to reflect upon the problem of buying food for the crowd. It would be difficult to find stores close enough to that remote area to purchase enough food for that crowd even if they had the money to do so. The problem here with the apostles is that they were focusing on the size of the crowd not the power of the Savior.¹¹²

4. Miracle of the feeding (9:14b-17):

a. Organization (9:14b-15): ***But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each."15 The disciples did so, and everybody sat down:*** The apostles were told to organize the crowd into small groups of about fifty, and have them sit down on the green grass (Mark 6:39). The purpose here is to make the distribution of the food easier. It would also help in getting a more accurate count of those present.

b. Multiplication (9:16): ***Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people.*** Here is the example of expressing thanks for food before it is eaten. Jesus then broke off fragments of edible size from that which was placed before him, i.e., the five loaves and two fishes. The more Jesus broke off fragments, the more food there was to be distributed by the apostles.

c. Satisfaction (9:17): ***They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over:*** Jesus produced more than enough food for everyone present. He ordered the leftovers to be collected. This he did (1) to show the tremendous supply of food that he had produced; and (2) to teach the conservation of the things with which God blesses his people.

III. Confession of Jesus as Messiah (9:18-27).

A. Verbal Confession (9:18-21):

1. Jesus' question to his disciples (9:18): ***Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?":*** The other Gospels relate that this

¹¹² Do we sometimes look to Jesus to solve our problems when the responsibility is ours? Jesus can do much with the little we have available. Have we asked Jesus to multiply our loaves and fish?

incident took place near Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13; Mark 8:27). The moment had come for Jesus to reveal the big picture to his apostles. This first question merely prepared the way for the big question that follows.¹¹³

2. Reply of the disciples (9:19): ***They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life":*** The crowds hold to the same opinions which were reported to Herod in vv. 7-8. Among the general population, apparently, few even considered the possibility that Jesus might be the Messiah. The few who held him to be the Messiah thought in terms of an earthly king (John 6:14).

3. Peter's great confession (9:20): ***But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God":*** Jesus wants his apostles to make a confession of faith in him. Peter was voicing the opinion of the Twelve. True believers often must speak out in opposition to the opinions held by the majority of people. Peter here acknowledges Jesus as the long awaited Messiah. Yet, at this point, even he did not realize what kind of Messiah Jesus would be.¹¹⁴

4. Jesus' warning (9:21): ***Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone:*** The people would have interpreted Messiah in a political sense. This would have fanned the flames of enthusiasm about him as a military leader, a deliverer from the Romans. Thus for the time being the apostles were to keep their opinion about him to themselves.

B. A Living Confession (9:22-27):

1. Christ's suffering in death (9:22): ***And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life":*** This is the first of three clear predictions regarding the death and resurrection of Jesus. It was necessary for Jesus immediately to shape the apostles' understanding of what it meant to be Messiah. That the Messiah be killed by the religious leaders was shocking. Probably the announcement of his death was so shocking that they did not even hear him say that he would rise again on the third day.

2. Our suffering in life (9:23-27):

a. Obligation (9:23): ***Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*** Mark points out that these words were addressed to the multitude. To come after Jesus means to follow him as Master and Messiah. To be a follower of Jesus one must deny himself, i.e., turn away from selfishness, sin, and any material thing which stands between him and God. He must take up his cross daily, i.e., willingly accept the pain, persecution and humiliation that may come to him as a follower of Jesus. This figure is based on the practice of making condemned criminals carry their crosses to the place of execution. The figures of speech in this verse point to true conversion.¹¹⁵

b. Explanation (9:24): ***For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it:*** The person who clings to his old sinful, selfish life will lose it, i.e., he will never really experience life in the fullest sense of the word. Material possessions, fame, prestige can never bring inner peace. The person who loses his life for Christ is one who devotes himself to the cause of the gospel, who dedicates his life to the goal of fulfilling the will of Christ on earth. That person will find a more abundant life here, and life eternal in the world to come.¹¹⁶

c. Evaluation (9:25): ***What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?:*** This verse explains the one preceding. If one should have all the riches of the world, and yet lose or forfeit the hope of life eternal, he has gained nothing.

d. Warning (9:26): ***If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels:*** To be

¹¹³ Who do the crowds think Jesus is today?

¹¹⁴ How does what we believe about Jesus differ from the opinions about him in the world?

¹¹⁵ How can we learn daily to take up our cross?

¹¹⁶ Why is it so difficult to say to Jesus, Not my will, but your will be done in my life?

ashamed of Jesus means to be so proud that one wants to have nothing to do with him and with his teaching. At the Second Coming Jesus will reject and condemn such people. By going to the cross and coming back from the grave (v. 22), the Son of Man achieves glory. He will come in that heavenly glory to be the Judge of all mankind.

e. Promise (9:27): ***I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God***": On the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection, the Holy Spirit came in power upon the Twelve. On that day the reign of Christ in heaven over his kingdom began. This was the beginning of the kingdom of God about which Jesus had been teaching throughout his ministry. Some of those who heard Jesus say these words died before that great event. Others in that crowd in Galilee were not present in Jerusalem when the mighty demonstration that Jesus had been enthroned took place.

Kingdom Viewed from Heaven

Luke 9:28-50

I. Jesus Acknowledged as Son of God (9:28-36):

A. Setting (9:28): ***About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray.*** As noted before, Peter, James and John were the inner circle among the Twelve. Peter was the natural leader, James was the first apostle to die for his faith, and John would live longer than any other apostle. Jesus gave special opportunities to these three to learn more about him because their testimony would be especially important to the early church. The mountain to which Jesus took them is not identified. Different sites have been proposed. Probably the mountain was Mt. Hermon not far from Caesarea Philippi where Peter's confession took place.

B. Vision (9:29-32):

1. Transfiguration of Jesus (9:29): ***As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning:*** For a few moments Christ reflected the heavenly glory which he gave up when he came into this world. It was important for these apostles to realize that Christ was God in the flesh. When Jesus died on the cross their faith would be shaken. So these three apostles would be able to testify about what they saw that night in the mountain.

2. Companions with Jesus (9:30-31): ***Two men, Moses and Elijah 31 appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem:*** Moses and Elijah represented all of the Old Testament saints. They were permitted to return from the dead to join Jesus in the mount of Transfiguration. Moses and Elijah were also dazzling in appearance. The topic of conversation was Jesus' departure, i.e., his death, resurrection and ascension. Moses represented the Old Testament Law, and Elijah represented the Old Testament prophets. Both the Law and the Prophets predicted the death and resurrection of Messiah. Moses and Elijah no doubt were giving Jesus encouragement regarding the ordeal which he must experience in Jerusalem.

3. Observation by the disciples (9:32): ***Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him:*** The actual Transfiguration had occurred when the apostles were asleep. When they woke up they saw the scene that has been described in the previous three verses. The text does not indicate how the apostles recognized Moses and Elijah. Perhaps they introduced themselves. Or perhaps their names were used in the conversation between the three.

C. Voice (9:33-36):

1. Ignorant suggestion (9:33): ***As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.):*** Peter too often spoke without thinking, but his heart was right. He

wanted to make shelters to shield the three men from the elements. Apparently Peter wanted to prolong the glory scene. Jesus did not even answer this foolish proposal of Peter.¹¹⁷

2. Glorious demonstration (9:34): ***While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud:*** In Scripture the presence of God is indicated by a cloud. This cloud probably formed some kind of celestial chariot to remove Moses and Elijah from the scene and to take them back to Paradise. The apostles were afraid as they watched Moses and Elijah enter the cloud.

3. Dramatic announcement (9:35): ***A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him":*** From the cloud God spoke to the three apostles. The voice identified Jesus as God's Son and the Chosen One. The words listen to him come from a prophecy concerning Christ in Deut. 18:15. The title My Son comes from a prophecy in Psalms 2:7. The idea of Christ being the Chosen One comes from Isa. 42:1.

4. Wonderful secret (9:36): ***When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen.*** When the apostles heard the voice they fell on their faces in fear. Then Jesus approached them and touched them and told them not to be afraid (Matt. 17:6-8). By keeping this scene quiet the apostles were obeying Jesus (Mark 9:9). The time for the public disclosure of Jesus' glory had not yet arrived. After the resurrection the apostles published far and wide what they had seen on the mount.

II. Limitations of the Disciples (9:37-43).

A. Setting (9:37): ***The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him:*** Jesus and the three apostles spent the night in the mount, then came down the next day. A large group had found the other nine apostles and were waiting for them as they came down.

B. Plea of a Father (9:38-39):

1. Petition regarding the son (9:38): ***A man in the crowd called out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child:*** Jesus was frequently addressed as Teacher. The man wants Jesus to look upon his son with compassion.

2. Description of the son (9:39): ***A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him:*** The son appears to have been an epileptic who experienced seizures, convulsions and foaming at the mouth. This affliction came upon the lad when an evil spirit seized him. According to Mark 9:17,25 the boy was also a deaf-mute.¹¹⁸

3. Failure regarding the son (9:40): ***I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not":*** The man had asked the nine apostles at the foot of the mount to heal his child. On previous occasions disciples had cast out demons (Luke 9:1,6,7,10). In the present case they had failed. In the other Gospels Jesus explains why they had failed (Matt. 17:20; Mark 9:29).¹¹⁹

C. Power of Jesus (9:41-43):

1. Rebuke of unbelief (9:41): ***O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here":*** Jesus was sorely disappointed with the people of his day. Certainly the leaders of the Jews lacked any faith in Jesus and lack any pity for their fellow man. He was disappointed with the crowds that were far more concerned about themselves than about others. He was also disappointed with the nine apostles because of their failure to exercise

¹¹⁷ Is it always necessary for us to respond to the foolish remarks of others?

¹¹⁸ How does this verse illustrate the difference between the Devil's intentions towards us and God's intentions toward us?

¹¹⁹ In this passage we see the apostles as slumberers (v. 32) and bumblerers. By way of contrast, how does Jesus appear in this passage?

their faith by putting their whole heart into prayer (Mark 9:29). Jesus would need to demonstrate again his power to heal.

2. Rebuke of the evil spirit (9:42): ***Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion; but Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father:*** The boy's physical problems were caused by the indwelling demon. In this case it seems that the demon was challenging Jesus' power over him. In the record so far Jesus has rebuked demons (4:35,41), a fever (4:39), and a storm (8:24). Here again he asserts his authority over the evil spirit. The spirit had no choice but to surrender control over the lad. Thus the boy was healed, and Jesus gave him back to his father whole at last.

3. Amazement of the people (9:43): ***And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples:*** It is wonderful that the people noticed that Jesus had triumphed over this evil and corrupt demon. But there is no indication that any in the crowd were willing to put their faith in him as the Messiah yet. Jesus did not allow the universal acclaim and astonishment of the crowd to divert his attention from the teaching of his disciples about what was about to unfold in Jerusalem.

III. Instructions for the Twelve (9:44-50):

A. Perplexity of the Disciples (9:44-45):

1. Fortright announcement (9:44): ***Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men"***: This is now the second direct announcement of what would take place when they next entered Jerusalem. In the first announcement Jesus identified the men into whose hands he would be betrayed (see v. 22).

2. Failure to understand (9:45): ***But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.*** Even this plain announcement of Jesus perplexed the disciples because they still had worldly expectations concerning the Messiah. That Jesus would die and rise again was hidden from these men because of their preconceived notions. When men harden their hearts to the truth, God permits the truth to be hidden from them, i.e., he does nothing to show the truth to those who do not want to know it. The disciples did not want to know the truth. That is why they were afraid to ask him to say more on the subject.¹²⁰

B. Pride of the Disciples (9:46-48):

1. An improper argument (9:46): ***An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest:*** Jesus had just announced that his life would be taken from him. He was about to make the most marvelous act of self-sacrifice that the world has ever seen. The disciples, however, were still thinking in selfish ways. According to Matthew, this discussion took place as they were in Capernaum (Matt. 17:24). After they entered the house, Jesus asked them about what they had been discussing. They were too ashamed to tell him (Mark 9:33-34).

2. A visual aid (9:47): ***Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him:*** They did not have to tell Jesus. He knew their minds. He used a little child as an object lesson for them.

3. A new attitude (9:48): ***Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all--he is the greatest"***: In effect, Jesus was telling the apostles to forget about themselves and to concentrate on the child who was beside him. They should not only "become like" this child (Matt. 18:1-4), but should welcome such a child in Christ's name. This means they should treat the child with the same love and compassion which Jesus would extend. Because Jesus is especially close in spirit to little children, those who welcome children welcome Jesus. By the same token, there is a closeness

¹²⁰ Is your heart open to all the truth of God's Word, or do you just look at the Bible for confirmation of the things you already believe?

between the Son and the Father. Therefore whoever receives the child welcomes the Father who sent Jesus into the world. Those who work with little children may be considered by many the least in the kingdom. In Jesus' view, such deserve the greatest honor.¹²¹

C. Exclusiveness of the Disciples (9:49-50):

1. Attitude of the disciples (9:49): "**Master," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us"**: John tries to change the subject. The apostles had seen a man casting out demons in Jesus' name. The disciples tried to stop him because he was not one of their group. There is no information about who this man was. He probably was a disciple of Jesus to whom the Lord had given miraculous power, perhaps while the Twelve had been on one of their missionary tours. Apparently the Twelve had not succeeded in stopping the man from doing his work. The Twelve were acting out of love for their Master, but also out of jealousy. They did not want anyone else displaying the same powers that they had received from the Lord.

2. Attitude of Jesus (9:50): "**Do not stop him," Jesus said, "for whoever is not against you is for you"**: Neutrality is impossible in regard to Jesus. One is either for him, or against him. Jesus is warning the apostles against intolerance. God is not restricted in his work to what one group might be doing. He is working in areas of which we have no knowledge.¹²²

EN ROUTE TO JERUSALEM

Luke 9:51-19:28

Costs and Sorrows

Luke 9:51-10:16

I. Cost of Rejection (9:51-56):

A. Resolution of Jesus (9:51): *As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem:* Everything in Jesus' life happened according to a divine plan. Jesus was aware of this plan and was in agreement with it. Writing long after the cross, Luke does not mention the fact that Jesus was heading to his death. He realized that the cross was but a steppingstone to the crown and the throne in heaven. The term resolutely indicates that Jesus was determined to make that trip even though he knew of the agony which it would cause for him and for his disciples.¹²³

B. Rejection of Jesus (9:52-54):

1. Setting for the rejection (9:52): ***And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him:*** The group of thirteen (Jesus + the Twelve) would need food and lodging.¹²⁴

2. Reason for the rejection (9:53): ***But the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem:*** The Samaritans generally did not extend hospitality to pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. There had been a feud between Jews and Samaritans extending back through the centuries.

3. Response to the rejection (9:54): ***When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?"***: James and John were among the earliest disciples of Jesus. Because of their fiery nature Jesus called them "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17). Having recently seen Elijah on the mountain, the two were reminded of the time when Elijah

¹²¹ Jesus wants his servants to render humble service to the weak and needy. How can we do that in our community and church?

¹²² How can we overcome jealousy over what others may be doing for the Lord?

¹²³ How well do we carry out our resolutions, especially at the beginning of each new year? Are such resolutions good or bad?

¹²⁴ What lesson for life can we learn from this verse?

called down fire from heaven to consume the enemies who were about to arrest him. Their question demonstrates loyalty to Jesus, and faith in the power to do as they proposed should Jesus desire it.

C. Rebuke by Jesus (9:55): *But Jesus turned and rebuked them, 56 and they went to another village:* This was not the day of judgment, but the day of God's grace. This was not the time to be destroying enemies. That is what Christ will do when he returns to earth in glory. For now God's people are to be engaged in saving souls, not harming them.¹²⁵ Perhaps they went on to a Jewish village near the Galilee-Samaria border. There they could expect a more hospitable reception.

II. Cost of Commitment (9:57-62):

A. Cost in Worldly Comfort (9:57-58):

1. The man's boast (9:57): *As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go":* Luke here relates another travel incident, not necessarily immediately connected with the incident just mentioned. Matthew identifies this man as a teacher of the Law (Matt. 8:19). He openly expressed his desire to have Jesus as his own Teacher. Unfortunately he failed to understand the sacrifice that would be necessary to be Christ's disciple.¹²⁶

2. Jesus' response (9:58): *Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head":* Following Jesus meant traveling about from place to place, totally depending on others to provide a place of rest each night. What had just happened in Samaria is an example of the kind of thing that may have happened frequently to Jesus and his men.

B. Cost in Social Expectation (9:59-60):

1. The man's excuse (9:59): *He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father":* Here is a man who gave promise of being a committed disciple. He loved to hear Jesus preach, and to be around him and his disciples. Yet he was not ready to make the commitment to be a full-time follower of Jesus, to travel with him. According to customs of that time, giving an honorable burial to one's parents was considered a major responsibility. What the man was really proposing is that he would become Jesus' full-time follower after his father had died. That might be years in the future.¹²⁷

2. Jesus' response (9:60): *Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God":* Jesus is saying, Let the spiritually dead attend to such business as burying the physically dead. The preaching of the kingdom of God was more urgent. Following Jesus means that we do not put any qualifications on our devotion to him.

C. Cost in Family Relationships (9:61-62):

1. The man's profession and excuse (9:61): *Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family":* Another man, like the teacher of the Law, volunteers to become Jesus' disciple. Maybe he was sincere; but he was not yet ready to follow Jesus. This man also wishes to procrastinate. While the request seems reasonable, Jesus was able to see into the heart of this man. Jesus knew that if this man went home first, he would not have the willpower to break family ties to come and be a full-time follower of Jesus.

2. Jesus' response (9:62): *Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God":* A farmer knows he cannot plow a straight furrow while looking over his shoulder instead of straight ahead. This man's heart was divided. Part of him wanted to follow

¹²⁵ How should we respond to those who propose violence in order to advance the cause of Christ?

¹²⁶ Why do some who desire to be Christians have no idea about the sacrifice which that commitment might involve?

¹²⁷ What excuses do some put forward today for not immediately committing their lives to Christ?

Jesus, and part want to remain with family. Such a man would be of little use in leadership in God's kingdom.

III. Cost of Labor (10:1-16):

A. Appointment of Messengers (10:1-3):

1. Purpose of the appointment (10:1): ***After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go:*** After he had started his journey to Jerusalem, Jesus dispatched 72 of his disciples to evangelize the area east of the Jordan River. They went out in teams of two. Why two? One disciple could encourage the other in difficult circumstances. Two would be more likely to be invited into homes than a larger group. The time was short. Jesus was trying to reach as many people in this area as possible before he went to his death.

2. Necessity of the appointment (10:2): ***He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field:*** The harvest field is the world of people who need salvation. Those available to devote themselves full time to the effort of bringing people to Christ have always been few. Christ is the Lord of the harvest. Disciples should be praying that the Lord will stir up many to enter the most important work in the world, viz., winning souls to eternal life through Christ.¹²⁸

3. Danger in the appointment (10:3): ***Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves:*** The mission of the 72 will not be easy. Wolves represent their enemies. They will be helpless, like lambs. But still, it is Jesus who is sending them out. He will be with them. He will protect these lambs from those who would do them harm.

B. Instructions for Messengers (10:4-7):

1. Regarding urgency (10:4):

a. Don't wait to pack (10:4a): ***Do not take a purse or bag or sandals:*** As in the case of the Twelve who evangelized Galilee, their mission was urgent. They were to take no purse or money bag; no traveler's bag packed with such things as those going on a journey might carry along with them for personal comfort. They were to take no extra pair of sandals besides the ones they had on their feet.

b. Don't stop to greet (10:4b): ***And do not greet anyone on the road:*** Greetings in that region are often lengthy and time-consuming. They would have no time for that along the way.

2. Regarding courtesy (10:5-7):

a. Blessing a house (10:5-6): ***When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house': 6 If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you:*** They were to bring the peace of Christ upon whatever house might invite them in for rest and food. The special blessing of Christ is for those who prove themselves worthy of it by their hospitality. If the members of the house prove to be unworthy, their blessing of peace would return to them, i.e., the blessing would be canceled.

b. Lodging in a house (10:7): ***Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages: Do not move around from house to house.*** The disciples should remain in whatever house extended to them a warm welcome. The same rule was laid down for the Twelve in 9:4. The disciples should not feel embarrassed to accept the free lodging and food. By being in that house they would be bringing a great spiritual blessing. As the Lord's full time workers, they were entitled to their wages just like any other working person. They should not move about from house to house in an attempt to find better accommodations.¹²⁹

C. Message of the Messengers (10:8-11):

1. To a town where they are welcome (10:8-9):

¹²⁸ Are the harvest fields still plentiful? Does the Lord yet have enough workers?

¹²⁹ In the light of this verse, should the church expect her ministers and missionaries to work for nothing or for inadequate wages?

a. Don't give a negative message by your actions (10:8): ***When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you.*** These disciples would be entering the region beyond the Jordan, a region heavily populated with Gentiles. Since most, if not all, of these disciples were Jews, some of the Gentile towns might not receive them at all. In Gentile villages some of the food set before them might not be fully in accord with the Law. They are to eat it without question.

b. Announce the nearness of the kingdom (10:9): ***Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you':*** Jesus empowered this larger group with power to perform healing miracles just as he had earlier empowered the Twelve. Their miracle working, however, was also to be accompanied by proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom of God, i.e., God's reign. This kingdom came on earth when Christ was enthroned at the right hand of the Father. Those in whose hearts God reigns can have assurance of complete salvation here and hereafter.

2. To a town where they are not welcome (10:10-11):

a. They were to preach in the streets (10:10): ***But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say...*** Some towns in the area east of Jordan would not welcome them. The disciples were to have a different message for such towns.

b. They should denounce that town (10:11a): ***'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you:*** The shaking of dust from the feet was a gesture which declared divine displeasure. Those who refuse the gospel are spiritually unclean, and thus are under the wrath of God.

c. They should testify to that town (10:11b): ***Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near:*** These stubborn towns must realize that by rejecting Christ's messengers, they were rejecting Christ himself. Denying that God's kingdom was near would not stop what God was about to do. They are shutting themselves out of his kingdom.

D. Assurance for Messengers (10:12-16):

1. General principle (10:12): ***I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town:*** There are degrees of punishment in the hereafter. Sodom was a terrible city that was instantly destroyed by God with fire and brimstone. But the towns that rejected Jesus' ambassadors had sinned worse than Sodom. They had rejected the golden opportunity to embrace the gospel. Rejecting the gospel is the worst sin mankind can commit. The disciples needed to realize that the message they were bringing had eternal consequences.

2. Application to two cities (10:13-14):

a. Pronouncement (10:13a): ***Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida:*** Korazin and Bethsaida were cities in Galilee not far from the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The apostle Philip came from Bethsaida; it was also the original home of Peter and Andrew. Christ had done many miracles in these towns, yet they had not accepted his claims.

b. Explanation (10:13b): ***For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes:*** Tyre and Sidon were Gentile cities on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea just north of Palestine. These Gentile cities, which are condemned several times in the Old Testament for their sins, would have repented and turned to God had they been able to witness the kind of miracles which Korazin and Bethsaida had witnessed. People who were deeply ashamed of their sin would sometimes throw ashes or dust over their bodies. They would dress in sackcloth, a rough cloth like burlap. To dress this way demonstrated repentance in the ancient world.

c. Warning (10:14): ***But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you:*** The Gentile towns would receive less of a punishment than the Galilean towns who had rejected the presence of the Son of God.¹³⁰

2. Message to Capernaum (10:15): ***And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths:*** Jesus had spent much time in Capernaum. There he had performed many

¹³⁰ Greater opportunity implies greater responsibility before God. In the light of this principle, what kind of judgment awaits America?

miracles. Most of the population of that town refused to accept Jesus as Messiah. This town had ambition to become a great metropolis, a proud city. But because they rejected the Messiah, Capernaum would be brought down to the depths, i.e., would face destruction. The language probably implies the utter ruin of the people as well as the city itself. The towns of Korazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were so thoroughly destroyed shortly after the time of Christ that for many centuries their very location remained a matter of dispute. Today one can visit the ruins of all three towns.

4. Concluding assurance (10:16): ***He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me"***: Jesus is again addressing the 72 disciples. He is underscoring the importance of the message which they will bring to the region east of the Jordan River. To reject that message is to reject Jesus himself, and to reject Jesus is to reject God the Father.¹³¹

Joys and Triumphs

Luke 10:17-37

I. Victory over Darkness (10:17-20):

A. Report of the Messengers (10:17): *The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name"*: How long it took the 72 to return from their mission is not stated. Nor does Luke indicate where they met Jesus after the mission. The mission must have been an overwhelming success. The disciples were especially joyous over the fact that even the powers of evil--the demons--were subject to them. So far as we know, the expulsion of demons had not been included in their task. Yet in faith they had attempted to expel the demons, and they had succeeded.

B. Report of Jesus (10:18-20):

1. Vision of Jesus (10:18): ***He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven:*** The expulsion of the demons meant the ultimate defeat of Satan himself. In prophetic vision Jesus had seen Satan fall suddenly, like lightning falling from the heavens. To fall means to be defeated. In the resurrection of Jesus the overthrow of Satan was complete. His doom is sealed. When Jesus returns, he will be thrown into the lake of fire.¹³²

2. Assurance of Jesus (10:19): ***I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you:*** Some take the snakes and scorpions to be literal. Acts 28:3 is an example where Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake, yet did not die. But the better interpretation of Jesus' words is that he was still referring figuratively to demons who are here compared to snakes and scorpions which sting and harm people. The enemy is Satan. The snakes and scorpions would then represent the power of this enemy. So long as these disciples remain faithful to Christ, no force of the enemy can harm their soul and take away from them eternal life (see John 10:27-28). Jesus is obviously not talking about their physical life, for his disciples were beaten, killed and harmed in many ways as we shall see when we study the Book of Acts.

3. Priorities of Jesus (10:20): ***However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven"***: The power to cast out demons was truly amazing, and worth rejoicing over. Yet there was something greater over which these disciples should be rejoicing. Their names were written in heaven, i.e., they had been counted worthy of eternal salvation. The ability to cast out demons does not guarantee eternal life. Judas, who betrayed Jesus, at one time had this power, but he did not go to heaven. Rather than focusing on these spiritual powers in this life, believers should concentrate on reaching the eternal home.¹³³

¹³¹ When should a minister conclude that he has been rejected by the people to whom he preaches?

¹³² Since the Devil has been defeated, should Christians fear the Devil?

¹³³ Are we rejoicing in earthly powers, honor and prestige, or in the heavenly blessings which are ours and will be ours in Christ?

II. Fellowship with the Son (10:21-24):

A. Jesus' Praise of Revelation (10:21):

1. Occasion for the praise (10:21a): *At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said:* At the time when the 72 returned with their victorious reports, Jesus himself was full of joy. His joy resulted from the Holy Spirit by which Jesus had been anointed at the beginning of his ministry (4:18).
2. Object of the praise (10:21b): *"I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth:* Jesus expressed his joy in praise to the Father.
3. Reason for the praise (10:21c): *Because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure:* Proud, arrogant, conceited people could not understand the message which Jesus brought. God had made the message so simple that people who were wise in their own eyes refused to accept it, to acknowledge it as God's message. Little children are those who are humble, who have no confidence in self, but recognize their total dependence on the mercy of the Father. In this sense the disciples are little children. To give grace and salvation to those who are little children in spirit was God's will from the very beginning.

B. Jesus' Claim of Relationship (10:22): *"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him":* The Son has whatever the sinner needs for salvation. Through Jesus our salvation is possible. That was the holy will of the Father. The Son and the Father had perfect knowledge of one another. If one is truly to understand the Creator--the heavenly Father--he must allow Jesus to reveal him. To know Jesus, is to know the Father. No one can come unto the Father except through Jesus. The Son chooses to reveal the Father to the humble, i.e., those who put their faith in him.

C. Jesus' Blessing of Discipleship (10:23-24):

1. Pronouncement of the blessing (10:23): *Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see:* These disciples had been privileged to see the Messiah for whom Jews had been waiting for hundreds of years.
2. Reason for the blessing (10:24): *For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it":* In visions the Old Testament prophets had seen the coming Messiah. King David had spoken about the coming of his descendant who would rule from the right hand of God. But none of them, while on earth, had seen him in the flesh nor had the privilege of hearing his words.¹³⁴

III. Defeat of Prejudice (10:25-37):

A. Occasion of the Teaching (10:25-29):

1. Question from an expert (10:25): *On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?":* Those scribes who were experts in the Law of Moses were constantly trying to trap or embarrass Jesus. The question he asked seem innocent enough. This expert probably did not understand the full significance of everlasting life. It refers to the life that is endless in duration and priceless in quality. This expert apparently felt that somehow eternal life could be earned.
2. Questions from Jesus (10:26): *What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?":* Jesus answers the question with a question. The answer to the expert's question was found in the Law.
3. Quotation by the expert (10:27): *He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as*

¹³⁴ In what sense is the humblest Christian richer by far than the greatest man of this world?

yourself"': The expert quoted Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18. These passages suggest that love is at the heart of true religion. One must love God and love his neighbor. The love for God must be wholehearted. The love for neighbor must be equivalent to the love one has for himself.¹³⁵

4. Commendation by Jesus (10:28): ***You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live"***: Jesus commends the expert for answering correctly. If one could fulfill this law of love perfectly he would obtain everlasting life.

5. A further question by the expert (10:29): ***But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"***: The expert knew that he did not love God perfectly, and certainly he did not love his neighbor as himself. By directing him to the Law, Jesus had embarrassed this man. But now he thought he would ask Jesus the question which Jewish scholars had debated for centuries, viz., who is my neighbor? Many Jews interpreted neighbor to mean Israelite or fellow Pharisee. They restricted the term to eliminate the obligation to love anyone who did not agree with them.

B. Method of Teaching: a Parable (10:30-35):

1. A violent crime (10:30): ***In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead:*** To answer the expert's question Jesus tells a parable or story. A man--presumably a Jewish man--was making the trip down the steep road which curved through the mountains down to Jericho in the plains. That road passed through the wilderness of Judea which was filled with robbers. The thugs took everything the man had, even his clothes, and left him to die in the road.

2. Criminal negligence (10:31-32):

a. By a priest (10:31): ***A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side:*** A priest was supposed to be a holy man. He was probably returning home from his duties in the temple. This religious leader refused to render assistance to the man in need. Perhaps he was afraid of defiling himself by touching a corpse. But that is no excuse for not coming to the aid of someone in need.¹³⁶

b. By a Levite (10:32): ***So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side:*** Levites served in the temple as assistants to the priests. This Levite is no better than the priest. He remains as far as possible away from the wounded man.

3. Compassionate assistance (10:33-35):

a. He took pity on the victim (10:33): ***But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him:*** Jews hated Samaritans. Yet this man overcame his prejudice, and saw the wounded man as simply a fellow human being who needed help. His heart went out to him.

b. He assisted the victim (10:34): ***He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him:*** The Samaritan immediately administered first aid to the man. Wine served as a disinfectant because of its alcohol content. Oil protected the wounds and aided the healing process. The Samaritan then transported the wounded man on his own donkey to the nearest inn.

c. He provided for continuing care for the victim (10:35): ***The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have':*** The two silver coins represented the equivalent of two days' wages for the average laborer. This amount would pay for several days of lodging at the prices charged in that day. The Samaritan even assured the inn keep that should the recovery take longer than what he had paid for, he would give him the balance on a return trip.

C. Application of Teaching (10:36-37):

¹³⁵ What value do stories and illustrations have in presenting the truth of Christ?

¹³⁶ Do we practice our faith, or like the priest, merely perform it?

1. Probing question by Jesus (10:36): ***Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?***: Jesus now asked the expert to answer his own question. The answer was obvious.
2. Perceptive answer by the expert (10:37): ***The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise"***: Thus when we show pity to one in need we are acting like a neighbor. The law expert should practice this kind of lifestyle, viz., ministering to the needs of those most in need. That way he can fulfill the obligation to love his neighbor as himself.¹³⁷

Priorities in Life

Luke 10:38-11:28

I. A Family Dispute (10:38-42).

A. Setting (10:38): ***As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him:*** Jesus and the Twelve have completed their trip through Perea on the eastern side of the Jordan. On their trip to Jerusalem they have made their way up the steep road from Jericho to Bethany, on the eastern slopes of the Mt. of Olives two miles from Jerusalem. Here lived his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Martha is always pictured as the woman of the house, so to speak, i.e., she always seems to take the lead between the two sisters.

B. Concerns of the Sisters (10:39-40):

1. Priority of Mary (10:39): ***She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said:*** Mary was a devoted disciple. She was interested in every word the Master had to say.
2. Priority of Martha (10:40):
 - a. She was distracted by preparations (10:40a): ***But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made.*** Martha was left to prepare the meal for Jesus and the Twelve alone. She became resentful that her sister was not helping her.
 - b. She asked Jesus to rebuke Mary (10:40b): ***She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"***: She even found fault with Jesus for allowing Mary just to sit there while she was doing all the work.

C. Evaluation of the Sisters (10:41-42):

1. A gentle rebuke for Martha (10:41): ***Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things:*** Jesus disapproved of Martha's priorities, yet he was quite gentle with her. He recognized how upset she was. She really did not need to be preparing such an elaborate meal.
2. A commendation of Mary (10:42): ***But only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her"***: Listening to the words of Jesus was more important than preparing a meal. Jesus refused to chastise Mary, and he refused to cease to instruct her.¹³⁸

II. Teaching on Prayer (11:1-13).

A. Pattern in Prayer (11:1-4):

1. A request by a disciple (11:1): ***One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples"***: In the matter of prayer, Jesus was a great example to his disciples. One disciple asked Jesus to give his followers some specific teaching on the subject of prayer.

¹³⁷ Are modern Christians more concerned about fine points of theology, or of reaching out the hand of help to the needy?

¹³⁸ A believer must make many choices, sometimes between what is good and what is bad, but more often, between what is good and what is better. How can we be sure we are making the right choices?

2. Address in prayer (11:2a): **He said to them, "When you pray, say: "'Father: Hallowed be your name:** Jesus taught his disciples to address God as Father, or as Matthew has it, our Father who is in heaven. This is a prayer for believers, those who are part of the family of God. The name stands for all the attributes of God that he has revealed to men. In other words, the name is God's person. The believer recognizes that God is absolutely holy. Everything about God is to be revered and exalted.

3. Petition in prayer (11:2b-3):

a. Regarding the kingdom (11:2b): **Your kingdom come:** The kingdom is the reign of God in the hearts of men. The church is the visible aspect of the kingdom of God in this world. The prayer is for the reign of God to increase more and more, for his will to be done throughout the earth, just like it is done in heaven.

b. Regarding daily bread (11:3): **Give us each day our daily bread:** Bread here represents whatever is necessary to sustain human life. The believer lives life one day at a time, and trusts God to provide for the needs of that particular day.

c. Regarding forgiveness (11:4a): **Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us:** We can be forgiven because Christ paid the penalty for our sins. But an unforgiving heart is not in a condition that can accept God's forgiveness.

d. Regarding guidance (11:4b): **And lead us not into temptation":** This is a request that God will not permit us to enter into situations which might expose us to temptations which are too powerful for us.

B. Persistence in Prayer (11:5-13):

1. Persistence illustrated (11:5-8):

a. A request for bread (11:5-6): **Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread: 6 Because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him':** The picture here is of a person who avoids the heat of day by traveling at night. He arrives at his destination at midnight. He is tired and hungry. He expects hospitality. But there is no food in the house. So the host goes next door to a neighbor's house to borrow some food. Through the locked door the neighbor explains his situation. He has nothing to serve his guest. Hospitality was taken far more seriously in the ancient world than in our modern world.

b. A refusal of assistance (11:7): **Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything':** The neighbor did not wish to get out of bed at that late hour. In a one room house--which most houses were in those days--stumbling around in the dark would awaken the children.

c. A successful entreaty (11:8): **I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs:** If the needy neighbor keeps pounding on the door, eventually his friend within would get out of bed to answer his request for bread just to get rid of him.

2. Persistence encouraged (11:9-10): **So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened:** If that reluctant neighbor is moved by the persistence of the man pounding on the door, how much more will the heavenly Father, who wants to respond to our prayers, come to our aid when there is a need. Here Jesus gives his disciples three exhortations to continue in prayer. To those three exhortations he adds three promises that the prayers will be answered. To ask implies humility, a recognition of need, and faith in a God who can and will answer. To seek is asking, plus an effort to search out the answer. Biblical prayer requires us to pray as if everything depended on God, then work as if everything depended on us. For example, it is useless to pray for a deeper knowledge of the Bible if we do not put forth the effort to learn it. To knock is to go one step further. It is to persist in the request until the door is opened and the answer given.

3. Persistence rewarded (11:11-13):

a. God does not play jokes (11:11-12): **Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?:** Earthly fathers, sinful

though they may be, would not respond to a child's request for food by giving the child something that is harmful. The sting of a scorpion is very painful, and possibly deadly to a child. Again the point is made that an earthly father would not answer a request for food with that which harms.

b. God is anxious to answer prayers (11:13): ***If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!***: The heavenly Father is far more wise and compassionate than any earthly father. He will give good gifts (Matt. 7:11) including the best gift of all, his Holy Spirit, to those who ask him in the prescribed way. When sinful men repent and are baptized they are asking the Father to give them the gift of his Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

III. Opposition Defeated (11:14-28):

A. A Demon Expelled (11:14): ***Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed:*** On many occasions Jesus demonstrated his authority over demons, the evil spirits who work with and under Satan. Here the demon within a man made him mute, i.e., he could not speak. Jesus easily and quickly expelled the demon, and the man spoke, perhaps for the first time in years. The crowd was amazed by what they had just witnessed.

B. Critics Silenced (11:15-23):

1. Carping of the critics (11:15-16):

a. They attributed his power to Satan (11:15): ***But some of them said, "By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons"***: Some in the crowd--scribes who had come down from Jerusalem (Mark 3:22)--put a different spin on what had just happened. They argued that Jesus got his power over demons from Beelzebub, the prince of demons. The name Beelzebub is derived from the name of a pagan god in the Old Testament (2 Kgs 1:2,3,6). The name appears to mean something like "lord of the manure pile." By this name the Jews heaped scorn on Satan. The charge is that Jesus got his power to work miracles, not from God, but from Satan.

b. They asked him for a sign (11:16): ***Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven:*** Some of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 12:38) demanded that he show them some even more spectacular miracle. No matter how many miracles Jesus performed, the Jews always asked for more (1 Cor 1:22).

2. Critique of the Christ (11:17-23):

a. A principle (11:17): ***Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall:*** Jesus is responding to the charge that he cast out demons by the power of the Devil. No kingdom or even a family can survive if there is internal dissension.

b. Two questions (11:18-19): ***If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebub. 19 Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges:*** If their charge were true, then Satan would be destroying his own work. That makes no sense. Followers of the Pharisees also claimed to cast out demons. How could they approve what their disciples were attempting to do, but condemn Jesus for doing the same thing? The disciples of the Pharisees will recognize this inconsistency and will judge or condemn their teachers for it.

c. An implication (11:20): ***But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you:*** The very fact that the agents of Satan are being expelled proves that it could only be by the finger of God. The finger represents God's power as in Exod. 8:19. God was beginning to assert his authority, reign or kingdom in their midst.

d. A parable (11:21-22): ***"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. 22 But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils:*** Jesus compares Satan to a fully armed strong man. This powerful tyrant guards that which belongs to him. His possessions are safe as long as no one

attacks him. The Stronger One is Jesus himself. At the very beginning of his ministry out in the wilderness of temptation Jesus had shown himself to be more powerful than the Devil. Jesus has stripped away Satan's armor behind which he held his captives. Jesus has liberated those captives. Men and women formerly hounded by demons had become spoils or booty for the King of King. Jesus snatched these precious souls away from the Devil and led them to become servants of the Most High God.

e. An ultimatum (11:23): ***He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters:*** In the struggle between Christ and Satan, neutrality is impossible. One who is not on the side of Christ is against him. One either joins Jesus in the noble task of gathering souls into the kingdom, or one chooses to confuse and scatter the sheep. These words are intended to be a warning to the Pharisees who had accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan.

C. Wickedness Exposed (11:24-26):

1. An expelled demon (11:24): ***When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left':*** This little parable pictures an expelled demon wandering about seeking a resting place. Just as we picture good angels in places of beauty, so evil spirits are pictured in arid (waterless) places, i.e., a barren desert. The evil spirit then desires to return to the house it had occupied prior to being expelled. The house could be an individual's body, or perhaps it represents the entire house of Israel.

2. An empty house (11:25): ***When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order:*** This figurative language describes a person who has repented, and cleaned up his life. It may also describe the Jewish nation after the preaching of John the Baptist. Many people had cleaned up their lives in expectation of the coming of Messiah. Yet when Jesus appeared, many did not fill their hearts with faith in Him.

3. A worse condition (11:26): ***Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there: And the final condition of that man is worse than the first':*** Since the old house is still unoccupied, the evil spirit returns with more of his kind. The person is now worse off than before he cleaned up his life. Under the influence of the Pharisees, the nation is rapidly turning against Jesus. They are becoming wickeder than they had been before John had preached his thundering messages at the River Jordan. The plot was starting to unfold to get Jesus crucified. Ultimately the masses will join their religious leaders in calling for his death. Thus Israel is rapidly becoming wickeder than they had ever been before.

D. Praise Redirected (11:27-28):

1. Blessing on Jesus' mother (11:27): ***As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you":*** A woman in the audience was moved by the majesty of Jesus' words to pronounce this blessing on his mother. The woman was right. Mary was indeed blessed to have a son like Jesus. Yet there is another blessing which Jesus makes known.

2. Blessing on Jesus' disciples (11:28): ***He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it":*** True blessedness includes, not only his mother, but all those who hear his words and obey his commands. All believers are blessed through Christ.

Sparing with Adversaries

Luke 11:29-12:12

I. Critique of that Generation (11:29-36):

A. A Wicked Generation (11:29-30):

1. A request for a sign (11:29a): ***As the crowds increased, Jesus said, "This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign:*** Now Jesus responds to the challenge of some in the crowd to show a sign

from heaven (v. 16). They wanted him to do something that was thrilling and exciting. Perhaps they had something in mind like the standing still of the sun in the days of Joshua. Jesus calls such sign-seekers wicked. Certainly these people had just witnessed some of the most spectacular signs ever performed on earth. Yet they wanted more. Nothing would satisfy them.

2. The supreme sign (11:29b-30): ***But none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. 30 For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites: So also will the Son of Man be to this generation.*** Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of a fish. When God delivered him from that ordeal, Jonah became a sign in his own person to inhabitants of the city of Nineveh. Christ would spend three days and nights in the tomb. He would then be raised from the dead to become the supreme sign to skeptics and critics. The resurrection was the ultimate sign of God's approval, the ultimate sign that Jesus was Messiah, the ultimate sign that he is Lord of the living and the dead.

B. A Condemned Generation (11:31-32):

1. Condemned by the Queen of the South (11:31): ***The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here:*** The Gentile Queen of the South came from a distant land to discover for herself the wisdom of Solomon. In the final day of judgment, the actions of this queen will be the basis for condemning the present generation. In their midst was one far greater than Solomon, yet they mock him, challenge him, debate him and ultimately crucify him.

2. Condemned by the Ninevites (11:32): ***The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here:*** In the final judgment Jesus' generation will be condemned by the heathen men of Nineveh. Those Gentiles repented when Jonah warned them of God's wrath against their city. Their actions will become the basis upon which God will condemn the present generation. Here in the midst of Israel one far greater than the prophet Jonah had been preaching for almost three years, and the people were moving further away from God, not closer to him through Jesus.

C. A Stupid Generation (11:33-34):

1. Hiding the lamp (11:33): ***"No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light:*** This is similar to the statement made in 8:16. It would be stupid in the natural realm to light a lamp and then put it where no one could see the light. Yet in the spiritual realm that is exactly what the Pharisees were doing. Instead of allowing the light of Jesus to shine forth from the lampstand of their hearts, they were attempting to put him aside, to hide him, to obscure his light.

2. Shutting the eyes (11:34): ***Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness:*** When a person's eyes are in good shape, the rest of the body is illuminated. The foot knows where to step, the hand will realize how to grasp something, etc. But if one's eyes do not function properly, that person will find himself groping in darkness. If the leaders shut their eyes to what Jesus is doing in their midst, they will never be enlightened in their hearts and minds. Their entire personality will be enveloped in darkness.

D. A Privileged Generation (11:35-36):

1. They have been exposed to gospel light (11:35): ***See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness:*** Each person individually must keep within the light of the gospel. That light or knowledge of the things of God within the heart will turn to darkness if one willfully walks away from Jesus, the light of the world.

2. They must let gospel light flood their soul (11:36): ***Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you":*** We must strive to allow our entire persons to be illuminated by the light of Christ's gospel. We should not

permit any dark corner of sin to exist within us. When that inner spiritual light floods the life of the believer, it is like the brightness of a flood light on that person.

II. Woes on the Pharisees (11:37-52).

A. Wrong Religious Perspective (11:37-44):

1. Circumstances (11:37-38):

a. Jesus a guest of a Pharisee (11:37): ***When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table:*** As in 7:36, Jesus again accepts the invitation of a Pharisee to eat with him. People in Bible days reclined on cushions while eating. The motive for this invitation to Jesus is unclear. Perhaps the Pharisee was simply curious about Jesus.

b. Jesus criticized by a Pharisee (11:38): ***But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised:*** The Pharisees insisted that a religious ritual be performed in which one dipped his hands in water before meals. This man-made tradition had been observed for many years. Jesus paid no attention to man-made religious rituals.

2. Implied woe regarding cleansing (11:39-41):

a. Pharisees were at odds with common sense (11:39): ***Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness:*** It makes no sense to clean the outside of cups and dishes if the inside is left filthy. That is what the Pharisees did in the spiritual sense. They were so careful about outward ceremonies, but within their hearts was all manner of wickedness. Greed is the desire to possess earthly goods even at the expense of innocent people.

b. Pharisees were at odds with creation fact (11:40): ***You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?*** God created the soul as well as the body. God is concerned about the cleanliness of heart, mind and soul as well as the cleanliness of the body.

c. A corrective (11:41): ***But give what is inside the dish to the poor, and everything will be clean for you:*** One should pour his inner self into the business of helping the needy. Such is the proper way to show our gratitude to God for the forgiveness that he has extended to us. In such practical acts of kindness to the poor these Pharisees could be made truly clean.

2. Woe regarding priorities (11:42):

a. What the Pharisees observed (11:42a): ***Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs:*** Tithing is giving 1/10 of one's income to the Lord. Tithing was required under the Law of Moses. The Pharisees, however, carried tithing to an extreme. They even gave the Lord a tenth of the herbs that they grew in their gardens. Mint was a sweet-smelling herb. Rue is a strong-scented plant. Nothing in the Old Testament required this extreme approach to tithing.

b. What the Pharisees neglected (11:42b): ***But you neglect justice and the love of God:*** While the Pharisees were very meticulous in their observance of tithing, they committed sins far worse. The term justice refers to the duty which a person owes his neighbors to treat them fairly in all situations. Not only did the Pharisees neglect their duty to their fellow man, they also neglected to give God that which he most wants, viz., love. They were very religious, but their religion was cold, loveless and heartless.

c. Corrective (11:42c): ***You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone:*** The Pharisees should have observed the tithing ordinance, though perhaps not to the extent which they went; but they should have given more attention to the more important matters of the Law. It is much easier to give God one tenth of the leaves from a garden herb, then to give him love and to treat others as we would have others treat us.

3. Woe regarding pride (11:43): ***Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces:*** The chief seats in the synagogues were those up in front, facing the congregation. Here the Pharisee would be in the limelight. Being ushered to such seats

was a mark of honor. The Pharisees loved to receive from others lengthy demonstrations of respect in public places and verbal recognition of their spiritual attainment.

4. Woe regarding influence (11:44): ***Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it***: On major holidays the graves on the hills around Jerusalem were whitewashed so that they could be avoided. To walk over a gravesite rendered a person ceremonially unclean and disqualified him from public worship in the temple. Jesus is saying that people who "hang out" with the Pharisees and listen to their teaching will become spiritually defiled. The Pharisees were a detriment to the spiritual life of the people, not a blessing.

B. Accountability of Teachers (11:45-52):

1. A teacher's complaint (11:45): ***One of the experts in the law answered him, "Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also"***: One of the law-experts could restrain his tongue no longer. These scholars were Pharisees of a more advanced sort. By "putting down" the Pharisees, Jesus was at the same time insulting this group of scholars. Surely Jesus did not mean to do that, did he?

2. Woe on their hypocrisy (11:46): ***Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them"***: The burdens were the many rules and regulations which these law experts imposed on the people in the name of Moses and the Lord. With their system of Bible interpretation, they virtually controlled the entire life of a sincere Jew. These law experts, however, knew all the loopholes in their own regulations so that they avoided performing the very obligations that they imposed on others.

3. Woe on their inconsistency (11:47-49):

a. They honored the prophets (11:47): ***Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them***: The Pharisees and law experts wanted the people to think that they were honoring the Old Testament prophets. So they built fancy tombs for them, or redecorated old tombs.

b. Their forefathers killed the prophets (11:48): ***So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs***: Building tombs for the prophets did not honor them. The Pharisees were only finishing what their ancestors had begun. To honor the prophets one would have to follow their teaching and respect the prophecies that they gave about Christ. This the Pharisees did not do.

c. Their forefathers were without excuse (11:49): ***Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute'***: Prophets are spokesmen for God. Apostles are representatives sent out by God. God sent these men to Israel, but they were not appreciated. In fact, some of the Old Testament prophets were persecuted, others were even killed. Yet God, in his divine wisdom, knew that Israel needed constant reminder of his word and his way through such preachers and leaders.

4. Verdict against the present generation (11:50-51):

a. Verdict in general terms (11:50): ***Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world***: Responsibility increases with the passing of time. This generation had the record of the Old Testament to warn them about the consequences of rejecting God's messengers. Thus, by rejecting Jesus, God's great Prophet, this generation had greater guilt than any previous generation. A terrible punishment had been accumulating through the centuries, and it would be poured out on that generation. The reference is to the destruction of Jerusalem that took place about forty years later, in AD 70.

b. Verdict made specific (11:51a): ***From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary***. Abel was killed by his brother Cain (Gen. 4:8). The death of Zechariah the prophet [this is not the Zechariah who wrote the Bible book by that name] is recorded in 2 Chron. 24:20-22. In the Hebrew Bible the books were arranged so that Chronicles was the last book. Thus Jesus is saying, from the beginning of your Bible (Genesis) to the end of your Bible (Chronicles) there is a consistent record of killing righteous servants of God.

c. Verdict repeated (11:51b): ***Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all:*** The present generation had the record of Scripture to warn them, and the teaching of Jesus. They had rejected both. Thus God holds them accountable for all the bloodshed of the righteous through the ages. Each new generation that fails to take to heart the lessons of the previous generations is adding to its own guilt.

5. Woe on being a stumbling block (11:52): ***Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge: You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering.*** The law experts were supposed to unlock the meaning of Scripture in their teaching. But they had thrown the key away! The truth of the Word of God was buried under a mountain of their man-made tradition. The law experts would not enter the kingdom of God (Matt. 23:13) by putting their faith in Jesus. At the same time, they were trying to prevent others from making that commitment to Jesus.

III. Overcoming Opposition (11:53-12:12):

A. Danger from the Pharisees (11:53-54): ***When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions: 54 Waiting to catch him in something he might say:*** Clearly Jesus' warnings to the religious leaders made no impact on them. They began to fire questions at him. The religious leaders were trying to trip Jesus up in one of his answers, so they could have some grounds upon which to demand his death.

B. Dealing with the Pharisees (12:1-12):

1. Circumstances (12:1a): ***Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another. Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying:*** Outside the house of the Pharisee a huge crowd gathered about Jesus. The common people loved the way Jesus took on the arrogant Pharisees. The term disciple means learner. All who were students of Jesus were considered his disciples. Of course the larger crowd would have also heard his teaching on this occasion.

2. Warning regarding hypocrisy (12:1b-3):

a. Hypocrisy is contagious (12:1b): ***"Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy:*** Jesus compares the hypocrisy of the Pharisees to yeast, which is a fermenting substance placed within the dough to make bread rise. Hypocrisy means play-acting, pretending to be one thing while one is really another. The Pharisees were hiding their true self behind a mask, like an actor in an ancient play. Jesus wants his disciples to be sincere in their faith.

b. Hypocrisy is stupid (12:2-3): ***There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. 3 What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs:*** The truth will someday come out, if not in this life, then at the final judgment of God.¹³⁹ Jesus warns his disciples that any ungodly secrets that they have will someday be public knowledge. The darkness cannot hide their conduct. Plans whispered in the most private places will be broadcast from the housetops. Before TV and radio this would be the way things would be announced throughout a village.

3. Warning against intimidation (12:4-5):

a. Improper fear (12:4): ***"I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more:*** The enemies of the disciples were really powerless against them. They are unable to inflict any permanent injury. They cannot kill the soul of a disciple, for the soul lives on eternally.

b. Proper fear (12:5): ***But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him:*** The disciples should learn to fear only God. One who truly fears God will not fear men. God has the power to cast the soul into

¹³⁹ In what ways do modern Christians try to deceive others about the true state of their heart?

eternal hell, the lake of fire. The fear spoken of here is holy reverence with which all believers should speak of the things of God.

c. Assurance of heavenly watch care (12:6-7): ***Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?: Yet not one of them is forgotten by God: 7 Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows:*** The fear or reverence for God commanded in the previous verse must be accompanied by trust and love. Small birds properly prepared were considered a delicacy in that day. They were cheap enough in the marketplace. A Roman penny was worth one sixteenth of a denarius. Two of these small copper coins would purchase five sparrows. Not even the most insignificant of God's creatures is outside the circle of his love and concern. God is so concerned about his people that he even pays attention to each hair of their head. They can be fearless in the face of persecution and death because they can be sure that God's love will never fail them, even in death.

4. Warning against denial (12:8-9):

a. Promise to those who acknowledge Christ (12:8): ***I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God:*** Those who put their trust in God and bear witness for him, will be rewarded. They will be recognized by Jesus as his own people in heaven before the heavenly angels. This is another way of saying that such people will have a place in heaven where they will be commended verbally by the Lord.

b. Fate of those who deny Christ (12:9): ***But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God:*** Those who under the pressure of persecution deny their faith in Christ will be disowned by him publicly in heaven. They will be lost for eternity.

5. Warning against blasphemy (12:10):

a. Blasphemy against the Son (12:10a): ***And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven:*** Jesus has spoken about the power and love of the Father. He has spoken about the Son and his role in final judgment. Now he speaks of the Holy Spirit. Those who publicly speak against the Son may repent and find forgiveness. An example will be found in Luke 23:42-43, where a thief, who at first spoke against Christ, found salvation.

b. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (12:10b): ***But anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven:*** To blaspheme is to speak out against God, to say terrible things against him or, in this case, the Holy Spirit. When the Pharisees were attributing the work of the Holy Spirit through Christ to Satan (Luke 11:15,18), they were coming dangerously close to the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees were making this charge willfully, in spite of all the evidence that Jesus had presented to them in his miracles. Their hearts were so hardened that they would not repent, and without repentance there can be no forgiveness. The problem here is not that God cannot forgive, but that those who make such statements, in spite of evidence, have hardened their hearts to the point where they will not repent.¹⁴⁰

6. Promise of guidance (12:11-12): ***When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say: 12 For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say":*** Synagogues were local congregations of Jews. Most villages in Palestine had at least one synagogue. It took ten Jewish families to establish a synagogue. Synagogue rulers might expel members who turned to Christ, and once expelled, those Christians would be shunned by other members of the community. Christians faced trials by political rulers as well as religious leaders. Here is the reason Jesus' disciples would not need to worry when they faced various official bodies. In that very moment of crisis the Holy Spirit would give them the proper words to say to their adversaries. In Acts 4 and 5 we will see examples of how this promise was fulfilled in the case of the apostles.

Possessions in Proper Perspective

¹⁴⁰ How would you answer someone who thought that, because they had committed terrible sins, they had committed the unpardonable sin? Would a person who truly had committed the unpardonable sin even care that he had so sinned?

I. A Family Dispute (2) (12:13-21):

A. Issue Presented to Jesus (12:13): *Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me"*: It is not uncommon for family members sometimes to feel cheated when it comes to dividing the inheritance left by a dead relative. This person who cried out from the crowd felt he had been done an injustice. Often Jewish rabbis or teachers intervened to help solve these family disputes. This man apparently viewed Jesus as just another rabbi.

B. Response of Jesus (12:14-15):

1. His direct response to the petition (12:14): *Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"*: Jesus refused to become involved in such earthly matters. He had come to accomplish something much more important.

2. His warning to the crowd (12:15): *Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions"*: The person who cried out from the crowd about his inheritance was preoccupied with earthly things. Greed is the desire to possess more and more of the things of this world. Life means more than the sum total of all the things that a person owns.¹⁴¹

C. Parable Warning about Greed (12:16-21):

1. Blessings of a man (12:16): *And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop"*: Jesus uses another parable to drive home the truth he has just stated. He speaks of a rich man who had a bumper crop. There is no indication that he acquired his wealth in any dishonest way. God had blessed the labor of his hands.

2. Problems of abundance (12:17): *He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops'*: The rich man had a problem. His harvest was so large that he had no place to store it. It never seemed to occur to this man that he might share his abundance with those less fortunate.

3. Plans of a fool (12:18-19): *Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods: 19 And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry"'*: The man decided to increase his storage capacity by building bigger barns. The rich man presumes that he will live for many years. He thought, after many years of hard labor, he would be able to live the rest of his life in ease and comfort.

4. Intervention of God (12:20): *But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'*: This man was a fool, because he thought he had no need for God in his life. He did not have many years of ease ahead. That very night his Creator would take back the life which had been given to him. This man was not in control of his life, or the time of his death. That which this man had heaped up for himself would be divided by his heirs.

5. Application of Jesus (12:21): *This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God*: The story of the rich man is repeated again and again in the lives of those who ignore God. To be rich toward God is to make God the priority of life. This parable illustrates the truth that "You can't take it with you." But in one sense, a person can "send it on ahead" by using God's blessing for the work of his kingdom, and to help the poor.

II. Blessings on True Servants (12:22-48):

A. Kingdom Confidence (12:22-30):

¹⁴¹ In what ways does greed affect the lives of modern Christians?

1. Worry is prohibited (12:22):

a. Dimensions of the prohibition (12:22): ***Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear: God takes care of his people. Worry about every day needs, therefore, is not appropriate for a believer. Food and clothing are basic necessities of life. If the Creator gives us life, he will provide for us that which is necessary to sustain life.***

b. Reason for the prohibition (12:23): ***Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes:*** There is more to life than food and clothing. Man was created with the capacity to worship God. Man is not just an animal with creature needs. He is a spiritual being, made in the image of God.

2. Worry is unnecessary (12:24): ***Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!:*** Ravens know nothing about farming skills. They have no storerooms in which to heap up their goods. Yet God provides the needs of such birds, even though under the Law of Moses such birds were considered unclean. People are surely more valuable than birds! Surely God will take care of his people.

3. Worry is useless (12:25-26): ***Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?: 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?:*** Worry does not lengthen life. On the contrary, worry can shorten life. The point is that God determines the length of our life, and worrying about it will not change the time when we must die. If worry cannot add a single hour to one's life, why worry about other matters such as food and clothing?

4. Worry is unnecessary (12:27-28):

a. God clothes the lilies (12:27): ***Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these:*** From the ravens, Jesus now turns to the flowers of the field. They do not know how to spin thread and sew garments. Yet they are more beautiful than all the gorgeous robes that King Solomon may have worn.

b. God will clothe us (12:28): ***If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!:*** God clothes the grass of the field with beautiful flowers. If God can cloth the grass with such beautiful garments (the flowers), then surely God can cloth his people with ordinary clothing! Furthermore, grass dies out in the winter every year. If God can provide for the short-lived grass, he can surely provide for his children who are destined for eternal life. Followers of Jesus who worry are said to be lacking in faith.

4. Worry is characteristic of unbelievers (12:29-30): ***And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it: 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them:*** Here the emphasis is on the word your. In Palestine clean water was sometimes hard to find. In that hot climate one might indeed have occasion to worry about finding water to drink. But worry about such things is not to be a characteristic of believers.¹⁴² Jesus' followers are to be different from people of the world. God knows what we need. He loves us. He will provide for us.

B. Kingdom Focus (12:31-32):

1. Put the kingdom first (12:31): ***But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well:*** The believer should devote himself to the growth of the kingdom or rule of God in his own life, and in the world as a whole. God provides the necessities of life for those who put him first in their lives.

2. Those who seek the kingdom will find it (12:32): ***Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom:*** Believers in Christ here are compared to a flock of sheep. That flock is small, when compared to those who are in the world. Though few in numbers, the flock has no reason to be afraid of what it might face in this world. Those who seek the kingdom in the previous verse are here assured that they will find it. God does not bestow the kingdom grudgingly. He is pleased to give it to faithful believers. The kingdom includes the entire gospel message, especially the

¹⁴² What should be the chief aim in life of a Christian?

plan of salvation and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The church is the visible manifestation of God's kingdom in this world.

C. Kingdom Investment (12:33-34):

1. We should give to the poor (12:33a): ***Sell your possessions and give to the poor:*** Since the Father gives to them the kingdom, believers should be as generous as they can be with the less fortunate. Jesus did not say that they should sell all their possessions. If that were the case, then Christians would themselves soon become a burden on society. The parable that Jesus just told explains what he means here. Do not manifest the selfish spirit. Do not hoard material things for yourself. Share with others.
2. We should store up heavenly treasure (12:33b): ***Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys:*** The rich man in the parable wanted to build bigger barns and store up all his excess crops. But earthly treasure can be stolen, or it can rot, or be destroyed in some other way. Deeds of generosity, however, are like putting money in a purse that never wears out. The value is eternal. The bank of heaven cannot be robbed. Nor can insects attack and destroy what is put in that account. Every generous deed, kind word, thankful gesture is like making a deposit in the bank of heaven.
3. Our heart will follow our treasure (12:34): ***For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also:*** What a person considers valuable in life is here called treasure. If one invests time and money in the work of Christ's kingdom, then his heart is focused on kingdom work. Those who focus on acquiring earthly riches have their heart devoted to the things of this world.

D. Kingdom Expectation (12:35-40):

1. Actively waiting (12:35): ***Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning:*** To be dressed for service means to be ready for work. In Bible days men would tuck their long-flowing robes into their belts so as to free their legs for vigorous effort. To be ready for service is to be ready to render service to our King when he returns from heaven. The waiting period for Christ's return is likened to night. The burning lamp symbolizes readiness. Thus this verse contains two figures to stress that believers should not let the return of Christ catch them unprepared.¹⁴³
2. Expectantly waiting (12:36): ***Like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him:*** The picture here is of a powerful man who went off to be married. His servants knew that he would return to his estate, but the exact time was unknown. They would want to be ready at any hour of the day or night to welcome him back home. Christ is coming, and his followers must be ready to welcome him when he comes.
3. Confidently waiting (12:37): ***It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them:*** The Master will be pleased to find his servants waiting anxiously for him to return.: An earthly master would probably never wait on his servants. But our Master Jesus, is not like earthly masters. Those who serve Jesus faithfully are here called blessed. When he returns, the Master will honor his servants. They will recline at his table, and he personally will serve them. This verse is saying that true servants of Jesus will be rewarded by the Lord when He returns.
4. Alertly waiting (12:38-40):
 - a. He may come in the dead of night (12:38): ***It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night:*** The Romans divided the night into four periods called watches. During the first watch (6:00-8:00 PM) the wedding feast would be conducted. The servants would not know what hour of the night the master might return with his bride. The master might return at the second (9:00 PM-12:00 AM) or third watch (12:00-3:00 AM). The point is, nobody knows exactly when Christ will return. We must be ready at any time.

¹⁴³ In what practical ways can we be prepared for the coming of Christ?

b. He will not announce the time of his coming (12:39-40): ***But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. 40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him"***: The return of Jesus will be as unexpected as the coming of a thief to break into a house. The thief comes when he is least expected. The house owner must be ready at all times to defend his property. Believers should always be ready in heart and mind for the return of Jesus. This verse makes useless any effort to set a time for the second coming. Christians must always be ready spiritually for his return.

E. Kingdom Hope (12:41-52):

1. Background (12:41-42):

a. Peter's question (12:41): ***Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"***: Peter is asking who would be ready when Christ comes, and who would not be ready. Did Jesus mean that some disciples would not be prepared to receive him when he returned? Or did Jesus mean that the people of the world would not be ready?

b. Jesus' question (12:42): ***The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?"***: Jesus did not answer Peter's questions directly. What is really important, he said, was to strive to be like a wise and faithful manager who had been given responsibility over his master's servants. This is another parable. The picture here is of a wealthy estate owner about to go on a journey. Before he leaves, he places his most trustworthy servant over all the others. He must supervise their work, and provide for their needs in the absence of the estate owner. The point is that all believers need to be faithful, but especially those who occupy leadership positions in the church.

2. Reward for faithful service (12:43-44): ***It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns 44 I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions:*** The faithful manager is called blessed. When the master comes, he will reward that faithful servant who is busy doing the job that God has given him. The master would promote the faithful servant to even higher responsibility. The meaning is that when Jesus comes, he will reward all those who have served faithfully in the responsibilities that they have taken upon themselves in the kingdom.

3. Unfaithful service (12:45): ***But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk:*** This servant entertains wicked thoughts in his heart. He becomes abusive of the servants who were put under his charge. He spends his time in drunken meals, i.e., in sinful pleasures.

4. Punishment for unfaithful service (12:46):

a. The master returns unexpectedly (12:46a): ***The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.*** When the master returns unexpectedly, he will deal with that unfaithful manager.

b. The master punishes the unfaithful servant severely (12:46b): He will order him cut to pieces, or as we might say today, he will be cut down to size. That manager will be assigned a place in eternity with those who were never believers in the first place. This parable is a warning that there will be some leaders in the church who will become filled with pride and lust. This parable is a warning to such men.

5. Principles applied to punishment (12:47-48):

a. Flagrant disobedience (12:47): ***That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows:*** Jesus here is speaking about another kind of servant. This servant does not abuse other servants, or indulge in sinful pleasures. He knows what his master wants him to do, but never does it. At the second coming such servants will be beaten with many stripes, i.e., punished severely, but not as severely as the manager in the preceding verse.

b. Disobedience in ignorance (12:48a): ***But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows:*** The greater one's knowledge of the things of God, the

greater the punishment should he be unfaithful. But ignorance of the things of God is never an excuse. God expects his servants to know his will. The point in vv. 46-48 is that unfaithful servants will be punished by the Lord at the second coming, and the punishment will correspond to the seriousness of the sin of the servant. The language is not to be taken literally. Jesus was using the kinds of punishments that might be administered by a wealthy estate owner in that day to unfaithful servants to illustrate the principle that he will punish unfaithfulness when he returns.

c. Principle stated (12:48b): ***From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked:*** The greater the talent or responsibility in the church, the more God expects of us.¹⁴⁴

III. Provoking the Opposition (12:49-53):

A. Climax he Anticipates (12:49-50):

1. He came to bring fiery judgment (12:49): ***"I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!":*** Fire here symbolizes the judgment of God upon sins in the world. That judgment on sin would be rendered at Calvary. Christ bore the judgment of our sins when he died on the cross. Though Jesus knew the cross would mean terrible suffering, he knew that only by offering himself as a sacrifice could the foundation for the salvation of mankind be laid.

2. He came to experience a baptism of suffering (12:50): ***But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!:*** The word baptism is here used in a figurative sense. Jesus is going to be immersed in suffering, overwhelmed by agony. Yet he is not complaining. He was anxious to get on with the work of salvation.

B. Division he Causes (12:51-53):

1. He describes the result of his coming (12:51): ***Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division:*** Jesus did come to bring peace on earth, but peace of a spiritual sort, i.e., peace with God, peace because one's sins are forgiven. But Jesus knew that he was very controversial. People would divide up over their allegiance to him.

2. He illustrates the result of his coming (12:52-53): ***From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three: 53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law":*** Even families split up over allegiance to Jesus. Some accept him; some do not. Sometimes it is the parents who profess faith and Christ and the children who reject him. Sometimes the situation is reversed.

Perspective on the Times

Luke 12:54-13:21

I. Issue of Signs (2) (12:54-59):

A. Recognized Physical Signs (12:54-55): ***He said to the crowd: "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'It's going to rain,' and it does: 55 And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It's going to be hot,' and it is:*** The rain in Palestine comes from the Mediterranean Sea in the west. The wind blowing in from the south was called the sirocco. This wind came off the desert and was scorching hot.

B. Unrecognized Spiritual Signs (12:56-59):

1. Hypocrites can't recognize signs (12:56):

¹⁴⁴ How can we convince more Christians to use all their talents for the Lord?

Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?: Jesus is addressing the crowd. They accurately could interpret weather signs, but could not understand the events that had been happening right under their noses for the past two years. Jesus called these people hypocrites because they claimed to be experts in religious things, but they were ignoring the great works of God being done in their midst by Jesus.

2. Others must judge for themselves (12:57):

a. A call for a personal decision (12:57): **Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?:** The crowds are called upon to make their own individual decision about who Jesus is. They should not listen to their hypocritical religious leaders. They should learn to think for themselves.

b. A parable (12:58-59): **As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled to him on the way, or he may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison: 59 I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny":** This is another parable. In ordinary life a person would be stupid not to try to settle a dispute with an accuser out of court. By doing this one can avoid the humiliation of having to stand before a judge and perhaps being sent to prison. In Bible days people might be sent to jail for failure to pay their debts. They would not be released until they [or somebody in their behalf] paid every last penny of the debt. The point in vv. 58-59 is that people needed to make a decision about Jesus. Every listener should make his peace with God now, before the final day of judgment. Once a person has entered the prison called hell, he cannot escape. The implication of these verses is that God is anxious and ready now to be reconciled to those who are in debt to him because of their sin.

II. Lessons on Repentance (13:1-9):

A. False Interpretation of Providence (13:1-5):

1. Report of the temple martyrs (13:1-3):

a. Pilate had killed certain Galileans (13:1): **Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices:** Some Jews from Galilee had made their way to the temple in Jerusalem. There, for some reason, Pilate ordered them to be cut down while they were in the act of making their sacrifices to the Lord. Pilate is the same Roman governor who will later send Jesus to the cross. The people regarded those who were so murdered as gross sinners because such a terrible fate had befallen them.

b. Question about the temple martyrs (13:2): **Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way?:** Most people in that day believed that personal disaster came as a result of sin in the life of the individual. Jesus did not endorse such a notion.

c. Declaration about repentance (13:3): **I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish:** Unless the people of Palestine undergo a complete change of heart, they will also perish. Some think Jesus is referring to the slaughter of the Jews in AD 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans.

2. Case of the collapsing tower (13:4-5):

a. The question about those who had died (13:4): **Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them--do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem?:** This tower was near the pool of Siloam in the southeast section of Jerusalem. The tower had recently fallen, crushing 18 people to death. These 18 were not greater sinners than any other citizens in Jerusalem. In other words, accidents do happen, and accidents do not necessarily mean that God is punishing someone for sin.¹⁴⁵

b. Declaration about repentance (13:5): **I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish":** Repentance is surrendering to God's will. It involves a change in lifestyle. It is saying, Not my will, but

¹⁴⁵ When we hear of calamities befalling other people, what questions should we ask ourselves about our relationship to the Lord?

God's will be done in my life. Unless his audience repented, they too would perish, not just die in an accident. They would be lost for all eternity.

B. Urgency of Repentance (13:6-9):

1. Inspection of the fig tree (13:6): ***Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any:*** It was not unusual to plant a fig tree in a vineyard. That fig tree would have received special care by the owner. It normally takes a long time for a fig tree to bear fruit. But in spite of the special care, the tree yielded no fruit to the owner.

2. Condemnation of the fig tree (13:7): ***So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?':*** The tree was useless. It failed to produce fruit, and at the same time it occupied space that could be put to better use. The owner ordered the vinedresser to destroy the tree.

3. Suggestion concerning the fig tree (13:8): ***'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it:*** Apparently the fig tree was special to the vine dresser. He did not wish to destroy it. He requested one more year to work with the tree, giving it special water and fertilizer.

4. Compassion for the fig tree (13:9): ***If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down!'***: If the tree failed this last opportunity to bear fruit, then it would be destroyed. The fig tree in the vineyard symbolizes Israel and the privileged position that that people had in the vineyard of God. That nation did not bear fruit for God. Yet God was patient with them. Through Christ they were being given one last opportunity to repent. If they did not turn to the Lord, they as a nation would be cut down. The fulfillment is what happened in AD 70 when the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and Israel as a nation.¹⁴⁶

III. Triumph Over Opposition (13:10-21):

A. A Sabbath Healing (13:10-21):

1. Circumstances (13:10-11): ***On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues: 11 And a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all:*** This incident probably took place in Perea on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Jesus was now in the last few months of his earthly ministry. This woman apparently entered the synagogue while Jesus was teaching. Her affliction was brought on by an evil spirit, a demon. She had a spinal affliction which caused her not to be able to stand up straight. Her condition must have been painful.

2. Miracle (13:12-13):

a. Jesus summoned the woman (13:12): ***When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity":*** Jesus used this hopeless lady to illustrate his power, and the proper use of the Sabbath day.

b. Jesus healed the woman (13:13): ***Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God:*** As he spoke to the woman, Jesus put his hands on her. She was instantly healed. She praised God because she realized that it was through his power that she had been healed.

B. Criticism by the Opposition (13:14): ***Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath":*** The ruler was in charge of keeping order in the synagogue services. As he saw it, the healing of the woman violated the principle that no work was to be done on the Sabbath. The man was angry with Jesus, but he directed his remarks to the crowd. He probably lacked the nerve to attack Jesus directly. This man misunderstood the intent of the Sabbath day, as Jesus will now show.

¹⁴⁶ What evidence is there of God's patience with us?

C. Christ Answers his Critics (13:15-17):

1. Jesus points out an inconsistency (13:15): *The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water?":* The ruler and all those who agreed with him were hypocrites, because they expected others to do what they did not do themselves. These men did not consider it a violation of the Sabbath to lead an animal out to water. It was OK to meet an animal's need on the Sabbath, but not the needs of people. How inconsistent they were!

2. Jesus advances an argument (13:16): *Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?":* If an animal could be loosed on the Sabbath, how much more would it be appropriate to release this descendant of Abraham from that which had bound her for eighteen years. Is a daughter of Abraham of less importance than an ox or a donkey? If ever there was a day on which to reclaim a godly woman from the clutches of Satan, it would be the Sabbath. Thus Jesus saw the Sabbath as a day to help people, to show God's love for the unfortunate.

3. Jesus achieves a victory (13:17):

a. His opponents were humiliated (13:17a): *When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated...* The critics were humiliated by Jesus' argument. They could not answer him.

b. People were pleased (13:17b): *but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing:* The people rejoiced to hear such gracious words and observe such wonderful deeds.¹⁴⁷

D. Parable of Growing Tree (13:18-19). *Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches":* Now that Jesus had the attention of the crowd in the synagogue, he began to explain to them the nature of the kingdom of God. They had to realize that his kingdom was not of this world, not the kind of kingdom that most of them expected. A mustard plant reaches ten to fifteen feet. Birds would fill the branches of this tree. Once established, the kingdom of God would keep on expanding. People of every race and nationality would find that kingdom a blessing.¹⁴⁸

E. Parable of the Hidden Leaven (13:20-21): *Again he asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? 21 It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough":* Using questions like this was Jesus' favorite way of arousing interest and focusing attention on a particular theme. Yeast is what makes dough rise to result in the bread that we eat. The point is that the kingdom of God is introduced from without through the teaching of Jesus. It is worked into the hearts of men. Once there, the teaching of the kingdom penetrates and transforms lives from within. The kingdom, then, is a life transforming power within the lives of individuals.

A Glorious Gathering

Luke 13:22-14:6

I. An Exclusive Gathering (13:22-30):

A. Circumstances (13:22-23):

¹⁴⁷ The Lord's Day is not the Sabbath. Still we should respect the day. How can we best show our respect for the Lord's Day?

¹⁴⁸ A tree grows slowly, but surely. So also does the kingdom of God. What evidence of the growth of God's kingdom can you observe in your community?

1. Jesus was heading toward Jerusalem (13:22): ***Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem:*** Jesus began his journey toward Jerusalem back in 9:51. He was in no hurry to get there. He paused in the towns along the way to teach and heal.
2. Jesus was asked a question (13:23): ***Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them:*** The rabbis taught that all of Israel would be saved. Jesus had taught that salvation depended on one's personal relationship to the Lord. From certain things Jesus had said, some had drawn the conclusion that only a very few would be saved.¹⁴⁹

B. Exclusion of Some (13:24-25):

1. Because the door is narrow (13:24): ***"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to:*** Jesus did not give a direct answer to the question. He encouraged everyone to enter by the narrow door that leads to life eternal. The word strive implies struggle. He who would be saved must struggle against Satan, self and the world to live the godly life. By God's grace and with his help the struggle can be successful. Nonetheless, many would not be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to be a follower of Jesus.¹⁵⁰
2. Because the door will be closed (13:25): ***Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.' "But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from':*** The owner of the house of salvation is Christ himself. The day will come when he will close the door to eternal life. Those who have refused to strive to enter will find themselves outside knocking furiously. It will be too late then. One must accept salvation now.

C. Protest of the Excluded (13:26-28):

1. Claim of familiarity with Jesus (13:26): ***Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets':*** On the day of judgment these people would plead that they had heard Jesus teach, they had dined with him on occasion. But merely being around Jesus is not the same as accepting him as Savior and Lord.
2. Rejection of the protesters (13:27): ***But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!':*** Those who do not accept Christ as Savior are evildoers, for the greatest evil one can do is to reject the Son of God. The application of these verses is clear: Merely going to Sunday School and church services does not make one a Christian. Unless we in faith accept Jesus and obey his commands, we cannot be considered Christians, and we will not be saved in the judgment.
3. Fate of the protesters (13:28): ***There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out:*** The unsaved face a terrible eternity, an eternity of weeping and gnashing of teeth. This represents rage against oneself, and against God. Here is the reason for the rage and weeping. The lost will be able to see or realize that all the great Old Testament saints were enjoying the glories of the heavenly kingdom. On the other hand, these lost souls will realize that they have been excluded from that eternal state of bliss for all eternity.

D. Inclusion of the Unexpected (13:29-30):

1. People from distant places (13:29): ***People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God:*** The lost Jews will see or realize that Gentiles from all over the world will be seated where they could have been seated in that heavenly kingdom. Note that the heavenly kingdom is likened to a banquet.

¹⁴⁹ Should we waste our time in speculating about how many will be saved, or should we concentrate on preaching the Gospel?

¹⁵⁰ What kinds of things will we not be able to take with us through the narrow door that leads to life eternal?

2. Those who were not God's people (13:30): ***Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last***: The last who will be first are those Gentiles who were not considered God's people. But when they hear the gospel they accept it, and in the kingdom of heaven they shall be first, i.e., will be leaders in the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, some who in this world are first, i.e., they had the opportunity to hear the truth, but rejected it, in that final day will be last, i.e., lost.

II. Christ's Attitude towards Rejection (13:31-35):

A. Attempted Intimidation (13:31): ***At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you"***: Herod Antipas was the tetrarch who ruled over Galilee and Perea, the very region through which Jesus was now traveling. Herod and the Pharisees were enemies. Yet they found a common enemy in Jesus. Both wanted Jesus to go to Judea. Herod was afraid that the Jesus movement might cause political trouble for him with the Romans. Also Jesus reminded Herod too much of John the Baptist, whom he had killed. He thought that by threatening Jesus, he could get rid of him. The Pharisees wanted Jesus in Judea because that was where their strength was. There it would be easier to get rid of him permanently.

B. Jesus' Intention (13:32): ***He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal'***: Jesus compared Herod to a fox because he was sly and crafty. Herod was trying to bluff Jesus into leaving Perea for Judea. Jesus wants the "fox" to know that he has no intention of stirring up political trouble. He is there to help the subjects of the ruler. Herod has nothing to fear from Jesus. Jesus will not be intimidated. He will continue to carry on his ministry today and tomorrow, i.e., indefinitely. Jesus operated on God's timetable, not Herod's. When he is ready, he will depart to reach the goal of his earthly ministry. On the third day was a way of saying, at the appointed day, not one day sooner or later.¹⁵¹

C. Jesus' Destination (13:33): ***In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day--for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!***: Jesus must continue on his appointed journey each day until he finally reached Jerusalem. There in Jerusalem the religious leaders were already plotting how they might kill him. With some sarcasm, Jesus states the truth that Jerusalem was the center for killing prophets. He, being the greatest of all prophets, could not be killed outside that city. Jesus knew it was his destiny to die in the "Holy City" where so many prophets before him had died.

D. Jesus' Frustration (13:34): ***O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!***: Jesus loved Jerusalem and its people. He is grief stricken over the fate that awaited that city. His deep emotion is indicated by the repetition of the name. The Gospel of John documents the extensive work which Jesus did in the vicinity of Jerusalem. He loved those people. He wanted to spare those people from judgment, like a hen might try to protect her chicks by gathering them under her wing. The citizens of Jerusalem, however, were not willing to put their trust in Jesus, and thereby find the protection from judgment which he offered.

E. Jesus' Prophecy (13:35):

1. About the destruction of the temple (13:35a): ***Look, your house is left to you desolate***: The house is probably the entire city of Jerusalem. But that would include that special house or temple which was located there. In AD 70 the city and temple were completely destroyed and left desolate by the Romans.

2. About the second coming (13:35b): ***I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'***: After the final week and the crucifixion Jesus will not

¹⁵¹ Jesus knew what his goal in life was. What is your personal goal?

publicly reveal himself to the Jews until the second coming. In that glorious day all will be compelled to render homage to him. Many will joyfully welcome him as Savior; others will remorsefully acknowledge him, but will realize that it is too late for their salvation.

III. Man's Needs and God's Due (14:1-6):

A. Circumstances (14:1-2):

1. Jesus observed by critics (14:1): ***One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched:*** This is now the third recorded time when Jesus accepted an invitation to dine in the home of a Pharisee (cf. 7:36; 11:37). The Sabbath meal was the most important meal of the week. All preparation for this meal had been done the day before, so that no work in preparing food might violate the Sabbath laws. The host and his fellow Pharisees had ulterior motives for inviting Jesus to the meal. They were watching him, trying to find some ground upon which to make an accusation against him.

2. Jesus confronted by a suffering man (14:2): ***There in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy:*** This man may have been a "plant" just to trap Jesus into performing some work on the Sabbath. Dropsy is an abnormal accumulation of fluid that indicates disease in the kidneys, liver, blood, and/or heart.

B. Jesus Silences Critics (14:3-6):

1. By his theoretical question (14:3): ***Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?":*** As in 6:9, Jesus asked this question before effecting the miracle. He knew that the Pharisees regarded healing on the Sabbath to be a violation of the Law. The question puts them on the defensive.

2. By his mighty miracle (14:4): ***But they remained silent, So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him away:*** Since no one present publicly objected to what he was about to do, Jesus healed the man.

3. By his practical question (14:5-6):

a. Point of the question (14:5): ***Then he asked them, "If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?":*** The Sabbath law of the Pharisees did not forbid rescuing a son or a valuable animal on the Sabbath. In rescuing a son of Abraham from a life-threatening disease Jesus was only doing what the Pharisees would do for one of their children or livestock.¹⁵²

2. Response to the question (14:6): ***And they had nothing to say:*** They could not answer because they were unwilling to admit they were wrong.

A Glorious Banquet

Luke 14:7-15:2

I. Invitation Declined (14:7-24):

A. Circumstances (14:7): ***When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable:*** Normally the table was just a few inches off the ground. Guests would recline on cushions around the table, which was often in a U shape. The bottom of the U would be the chief seat, with the places immediately to the left and right being the second and third seats of honor. The further away one reclined from the host, the less honor he enjoyed at the feast. Jesus noticed that the guests were scrambling for the positions of honor about the table.

¹⁵² Parents naturally are concerned about the physical well-being of their children. Are parents as concerned about the spiritual well-being of their children as they should be?

B. Instructions Regarding Banquets (14:8-14):

1. Instructions for a guest (14:8-11)

a. What should not happen (14:8): ***When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited:*** One should not rush to the place of honor at a wedding banquet. It could be that the host may have invited someone he considers more important than you.

b. What might happen (14:9): ***If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place:*** It would be most embarrassing to be asked to get up and move to a less important position at the table. By the time the host approached, all the other places were taken. The only place left would be the least important position at the table.

c. What should happen (14:10): ***But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests:*** Jesus advised that one should immediately take the least important seat at the banquet. If the host so chooses, this person may be honored by being ushered to the most prestigious seat.

d. Principle set forth (14:11): ***For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted":*** Christ emphasized humility often in his teaching. God can do nothing with proud people. In the end, the proud shall be cut down to size. But those who have humbled themselves before God and their fellow man shall be given great honor.

2. Instructions for a host (14:12-14):

a. What he should not do (14:12): ***Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid:*** Jesus does not forbid normal social life. But he is trying to encourage people to do good things without any expectation of repayment.

b. What he should do (14:13): ***But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind:*** Such people would not be able to return the invitation. One would have no ulterior motives in inviting such people to a banquet.¹⁵³

c. A promise (14:14): ***And you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous":*** When we are kind and considerate of the less fortunate, we will have blessing in this life. The eyes and faces of the needy will beam when we share our time and material goods with them. That is the blessing. But there is more. God will repay such hospitality at the second coming when the righteous are raised from their graves. In the resurrection the soul is given a new body. The resurrection of the righteous is another way of referring to eternal life with the Lord.

C. Final Banquet (14:15-24):

1. Yearning to be there (14:15): ***When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God":*** Apparently one of the Pharisees present at the meal voiced a yearning to be a part of the kingdom of God. He may not have had a totally accurate view of what the kingdom would be. But Scripture often compares the joy of the new heaven and earth to a banquet or party. Truly a man would be blessed if he was permitted to join in that feast.

2. Invited guests (14:16-17): ***Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests: 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready':*** Jesus accepts the idea that the kingdom of God is like a banquet. What is really important is that one has accepted the invitation to attend that great feast. The certain man in the parable represents God. The Jews issued two invitations to formal events. The first invitation announced the date of the important event, the second urged the guests to hasten to the event. So here, when the banquet had actually been prepared, the second invitation was issued.

¹⁵³ How can we do more to show the needy that we love and respect them?

3. Excuses of the invited guests (14:18-20):

a. First silly excuse (14:18): ***But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me:*** All of the invited guests had promised to attend. But when the actual day arrived, they began to make excuses. The host had spent considerable effort to prepare the banquet. To accept the invitation, then to reject it after the preparations had been made was a terrible insult to the host. What a superficial excuse. No man would buy a field without first looking it over. So why would the man have to go and look at his new possession again, on the very day when the great banquet was to be held?¹⁵⁴

b. Second silly excuse (14:19): ***Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me':*** Once again, this is a shallow excuse. No man would purchase work animals without being confident that they would be able to do the work. But even if he had doubts, he could postpone for one day trying them out.

c. Third silly excuse (18:20): ***Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come':*** Newly married men were not required to perform public or military service. But no law prohibited them from attending banquets. This man too just did not want to attend.

4. Expanded invitation (14:21-23):

a. Less fortunate invited (14:21): ***The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame':*** The banquet was not called off because the invited guests were not interested in attending. The host immediately dispatched his servant to the parts of town where the poor and needy lived. The servant was to bring these people to the banquet, to show them the way, to personally conduct them to the proper location.

b. Untouchables invited (14:22-23): ***'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room': 23 Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full:*** The host wanted the banquet chamber filled to capacity. Even after the poor and needy took their places, there was still room for more. The poorest of the poor lived in huts along roads outside the city. These were the untouchables, the lepers and outcasts of society. Such were to be made to come to the banquet, not by physical force, but by the force of loving persuasion.

5. Declaration (14:23): ***I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet''':*** What would happen to those who were first invited, but who refused to come at the last minute? They would be forever excluded. Jesus is saying to all the Pharisees present at the dinner with him that one who refused to accept the gracious invitation to salvation will be excluded from the blessings and joys of that glorious day of eternal celebration. Through the ministry of Christ, God had extended the invitation to the Jews. Most of them had rejected the invitation. So now the invitation will be extended to those who were looked down on by the Jews.

II. Cost of Discipleship (14:25-35).

A. Cost is Considerable (14:25-27):

1. Occasion (14:25): ***Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said:*** Huge crowds were following Jesus as he traveled through Perea on his way to Jerusalem.

2. Supreme love (14:26): ***If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple:*** The word hate in this passage means to love less. A disciple must love Jesus more than father, mother, wife, etc. This is made clear in the parallel passage in Matthew 10:37. What Jesus demands of his followers is complete devotion. Every other relationship in life must be subordinate to the relationship with Christ.

¹⁵⁴ What silly excuses do people give today for not coming to the services of the church?

3. Self-sacrifice (14:27): ***And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple:*** Here Jesus states in the negative that which he stated in the positive in 9:23. See comments on that verse.

B. Cost Must be Counted (14:28-33):

1. Unwise builder (14:28-30):

a. Habit of counting the cost (14:28): ***Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?:*** The tower might be a watch tower for a vineyard or perhaps an entire farm building, something like a silo. The builder would first calculate whether or not he had the money to complete the project.

b. Result of not counting the cost (14:29-30): ***For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30 Saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish':*** The builder would become the laughingstock of the community should he run out of money and only have the foundation constructed. The world is very harsh with those who start projects, but never finish. The point is this: It is not easy to be a Christian. Some people backslide and are lost. One should make sure he has the spiritual commitment to remain faithful until death.

2. Desperate king (14:31-33):

a. Necessity of counting the cost (14:31): ***Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?:*** A country is being attacked by a force of 20,000. The local king only has 10,000 men with which to oppose the invader. He must make a decision that affects the lives of all his soldiers. Can he win against such odds? Or is the battle hopeless?

b. Result of counting the cost (14:32): ***If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace:*** If the king concludes that he cannot defend his country with only 10,000 men, he most likely will try to petition the invader for terms of peace. So the sinner, like that king, must decide whether to be reconciled to God, or face the judgment of the King of Kings.

c. Need for total surrender (14:33): ***In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple:*** Christ demands total surrender. We must be willing to place our bodies, our talents, our treasures, all that we are or hope to be at the service of our Savior.¹⁵⁵

C. Cost of Genuineness (14:34-35):

1. Salt can lose its saltiness (14:34): ***Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?:*** Salt is good for imparting flavor to food. It also retards deterioration. Salt, however, can lose its flavor and become tasteless and useless. Jesus is referring to people like the Pharisees who advocated a formalistic faith with no heart-felt commitment to God. Their religion was as dry as dust, and as dead as King Tut. It was worthless.

2. Savorless salt is cast away (14:35a): ***It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out:*** Sometimes salt from the Dead Sea was mixed with manure and used to fertilize soil. But if the salt had lost its character as salt if was good for nothing, not even the manure pile. It is thrown away. Those who are trained in the knowledge of the truth (like the Pharisees) but who have turned away from it, no longer have any spiritual value. Such people harden their hearts to the gospel, reject the Messiah, and hence are deprived of any standing which they once had with God.

3. Call for careful consideration (14:35b): ***"He who has ears to hear, let him hear":*** This is Jesus' way of saying, Listen up! Pay attention to this!

III. Pharisees Criticize Christ (15:1-2):

¹⁵⁵ Why does Jesus have the right to ask us to give up everything to follow him?

A. Jesus Drew Sinners to Himself (15:1): *Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him:* Tax collectors were viewed as thieves and traitors, since they worked for the Romans. Sinners were people with bad reputations. Good Jews did not associate with such people. Yet these social outcasts flocked to Jesus. They loved his teaching. Jesus did not condone the sin of these people. But he met them where they were in order to deliver them from the bondage of their sin. They regarded Jesus as their Friend.

B. Jesus Drew Criticism to Himself (15:2): *But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them":* Earlier these hypocrites criticized Jesus' disciples for associating with such people (5:27-29). Now they boldly criticize Jesus himself.¹⁵⁶

A Glorious Redemption

Luke 15:3-16:18

I. The Father's Entreaty Rejected (15:3-32):

A. Parable of the Lost Sheep (15:3-7):

1. A lost sheep results in a thorough search (15:3-4): *Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?:* Perea was a region where sheep and shepherds were quite common. A lost sheep would not be ignored and abandoned to its fate. A shepherd would secure the flock in the fold, then go out into the night to look for the lost sheep. Every good shepherd would do that! God is the Good Shepherd. Certainly he will not abandon those who have wandered away from the fold.

2. A found sheep triggers great joy (15:5-6):

a. Joy in the shepherd (15:5): *And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders:* The search for the lost sheep might be hard and time-consuming. Yet when the animal is found, the shepherd rejoices. Normally shepherds would carry a sheep upon their shoulders with its four feet tied together in front of his face. He rejoices, not just because he has avoided financial loss, but because he truly loves the sheep.

b. Joy among friends (15:6): *And goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep':* When the shepherd reaches his home village, he calls for his friends to come together for a celebration over the recovery of the lost sheep.¹⁵⁷

3. Application (15:7): *I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent:* Heaven rejoices when one lost person turns to the Lord in repentance. To repent is to submit to the will of God, to turn away from sin. The ninety-nine righteous persons probably refers to people like the Pharisees, who were self-righteous, or righteous in their own eyes. They thought that they did not need to repent.

B. Parable of the Lost Coin (15:8-10).

1. Anxious concern over a lost coin (15:8): *Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?:* Married women wore a string of coins on their foreheads to signify their married status. To lose one of these coins would be equivalent to a woman losing her wedding band today. Because the house is dark inside, she lights a lamp to help in the search. She sweeps every nook and cranny of the house looking for the coin.

¹⁵⁶ What is our attitude toward terrible sinners? Do we hate them? Welcome them? Seek them?

¹⁵⁷ Does joy over the salvation of sinners fill your church?

2. Celebration over finding the lost coin (15:9): ***And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin':*** The finding of the valuable lost coin was again an occasion for great celebration.
3. Application (15:10): ***In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents":*** God himself, who dwells in the presence of the heavenly angels, rejoices when a lost sinner turns to him. The angels may join in that rejoicing, but this verse stress what God is doing in the presence of the angels.

C. Parable of the Lost Son (15:11-24).

1. Foolish mistake of the younger son (15:11-16): ***Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons:*** This is the third parable in the chapter.
 - a. He requested his share of family inheritance (15:12): ***The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate'. So he divided his property between them:*** The boy was tired of living at home. He wanted to be free from parental rules. He wanted his freedom. But he needed money. So he requested that he be given his share of the family inheritance. Under the Law of Moses he would be entitled to one third of his father's wealth at his death. This would probably mean that the land would have to be divided up into lots, and part sold to secure the cash. The older son received two thirds of the property that he would not actually control until the death of the father.
 - b. He departed for a distant land (15:13): ***Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living:*** Many Jews in Jesus' day were leaving Palestine to live in distant lands. The young man took everything with him. He put nothing in the bank, laid nothing away for a rainy day. In the far country the young man spent all of his money in wild parties.
 - c. He spent his inheritance (15:14): ***After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need:*** Disaster struck that region. A famine made food scarce. The young man had no more money with which to purchase food. Party time was over for sure.
 - d. He became destitute (15:15-16): ***So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything:*** The young man got a job feeding pigs. For a Jew, this was the lowest of occupations because pigs were considered unclean animals. The young man was hungry all the time. He would eat anything to stop the hunger pangs, even the pig's food. No one had pity on him, to give him enough food to satisfy his hunger. The text does not indicate why he did not actually eat the pig's food.
3. Humble repentance of the lost son (15:17-20a):
 - a. He realized his sin and need (15:17): ***When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!':*** Finally the young man began to think about home. The hired servants of his father always had plenty to eat. Surely if he were home, he would at least have food for his belly.
 - b. He resolved to return to his father (15:18): ***I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you:*** The young man realized that his decision to leave home, and his conduct in that distant land, was a sin against God and against his father. He realizes that he had been both ungrateful and selfish.
 - c. He was willing to make restitution (15:19): ***I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men':*** He feels he no longer has a right to be called a son of his father. He will only ask his father to make him one of the hired hands.
 - d. He returned to his father (15:20a): ***So he got up and went to his father:*** He actually carried out his resolutions. He did what he had resolved to so.
4. Warm reception for the returning son (15:20b-24):
 - a. The father lovingly welcomed the son (15:20b): ***"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him:*** The father must have been looking for his boy every day. What a sight that boy must have

been ragged, gaunt, staggering up the lane. The father was filled with compassion for him. Though he may have been up in years, the old father ran as fast as he could to meet the boy. He embraced the boy and gave him a kiss. That boy knew he was welcome home.¹⁵⁸

b. The father reinstated his son (15:21-22): ***The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son': 22 But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet:*** The boy told his father exactly what he had rehearsed in his mind many times. He never got to the request that he be made a hired servant. His father would hear no more. The father immediately gives the servants orders to treat the wayward boy as if he were some important person. He is to be given the best robe available. A ring is to be placed on his finger and sandals on his bare feet. This boy is not a slave, he is a free man!

c. The father ordered a celebration (15:23-24): ***Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate: 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found'. So they began to celebrate:*** The father orders a celebration. Meat was only consumed on the most special days of the year. A fattened calf is one that has been fed so as to make it plump and tender for some special occasion. The son was dead in sin in that far country; but now he is alive again. He was lost in his sin, but now he has been found. The father's orders were carried out, and the celebration began.

D. Parable of the Elder Brother (15:25-32):

1. He hears the sounds of celebration (15:25): ***"Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing:*** The party is already in progress when the elder brother comes in from working in the fields. He could hear the celebration from afar.

2. He learns the reason for the celebration (15:26-27): ***So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 27 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound':*** The elder brother did not wish to barge into the party because he was sweaty and dirty. He asked a servant what the celebration was all about. The servant seems excited to share the news. He calls the prodigal son your brother, suggesting that the elder brother should be equally joyous.

3. He resists the appeals of his father (15:28-32):

a. The father pled with him (15:28): ***The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.*** The older brother represents the attitude of the Pharisees. They were angry when lost sons of God--their brothers and fellow Jews--came back to the Lord. The father loved the older brother too. He wants him to be part of the celebration.¹⁵⁹

b. The son felt unappreciated (15:29): ***But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends:*** Note how this son looks on the work he has been doing. It was pure drudgery. He represents those who serve the Lord, but with the wrong spirit, and the wrong motivation. They have no joy in their relationship with the Lord. This son appears to be self-righteous. He was conscious of no wrong doing in his life. But the father already had assigned him two-thirds of the estate. All those years he had enjoyed the privilege of being in the presence of his father.

c. The son felt hostility toward his brother (15:30): ***But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!':*** The elder brother speaks bad of his younger brother. He refuses to even call him his brother. The elder brother had no knowledge that his younger brother actually had paid prostitutes to make love. This was slander on his part.

4. He heard the explanation of his father (15:31-32):

a. The father appreciated this son (15:31): ***"'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours:*** The father speaks most tenderly to the elder son. He already has bestowed

¹⁵⁸ How does this prodigal son illustrate the meaning of repentance?

¹⁵⁹ How much of the elder brother attitude is present in your church?

on this son everything that he owns. The father had appreciated the faithful service of this son through the years.

b. The father loved the younger son as well (15:32): ***But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found***": The father does not apologize for the celebration. Quite the contrary. It was absolutely necessary to celebrate the return of this lost son. Note that the father refers to the prodigal as this brother of yours. The point is, when a lost person repents it is like one returning from the dead, like the recovery of a valuable thing that has been lost. That simply demands excitement and celebration. The text does not indicate whether or not the elder brother ever changed his attitude. Jesus is hoping that the self-righteous Jews would see themselves in this elder brother and would change their attitude toward the tax collectors and sinners who were turning to God in great numbers.

II. Calculations of Stewardship (16:1-13):

A. Parable (16:1-8):

1. A crooked manager (16:1-2):

a. Accusation (16:1): ***Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions:*** The rich man here probably was an owner of a huge estate. He had a manager to take care of the business affairs of the estate. Here is a case of mismanagement, but not necessarily theft.

b. Confrontation (16:2): ***So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer':*** The rich man called the manager into his office and confronted him with the rumors that had been circulating about him. When the manager was not able to give a good explanation for his conduct, he was fired. Naturally this would mean that the manager would have to turn over the business records to the boss so his successor would be able to take over. He was first given the opportunity to get the records in order.

2. A desperate manager (16:3): ***The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg:*** The unfaithful manager knew he had to work fast to prepare for the fact that he would not have a pay check much longer. He knew he was not strong enough to perform manual labor in the farm fields. He could not bring himself to beg others for his food.

3. A shrewd manager (16:4-7):

a. His concern for the future (16:4): ***I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses':*** Quickly the manager devised a plan which would guarantee that he would have some friends who would invite him into their homes. He would make those who owed money to the boss indebted to him, the manager.

b. His reduction of the first debt (16:5-6): ***So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied. "The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred':*** The manager called in everyone who owed money to his boss. Privately he asked each how much they owed. The first debtor owed the master 800 gallons of olive oil. Olive oil was used for cooking, and to fuel lamps. It was also used as a medicine and an agent for skin care. The shrewd manager handed the debtor the original note and told him to alter the figures. He should reduce his obligation by half.

c. His reduction of the second debt (16:7): ***"Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?' "A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied."He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred':*** The second debtor was told to reduce his obligation from 1000 bushels of wheat to 800. The debtors probably thought the reduction was legitimate. They probably thought that the manager had persuaded the boss to reduce their obligation. When the boss got the books, he knew that something was wrong. The debtors were probably praising his name throughout the town because (they thought) the boss had reduced their debt. If the boss were to tell the people that there had been a mistake, and they still owed the larger amount, he would be cursed throughout the land.

4. A commended manager (16:8a): ***The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly:*** What the manager did was dishonest. He was stealing from his boss. Yet at the same time he was shrewd. He was planning for his future. He was taking advantage of the opportunity that was his before he left office. It should be stressed that the boss is not praising the dishonesty of the manager, but his foresight and cleverness.

B. Observations and Exhortations (16:8b-13):

1. A comparison (16:8b): ***For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light:*** Worldly people show foresight when it comes to the things of this world, much more so than people of the light, i.e., believers, show regarding the things of eternal life. Christians need to think ahead to eternity when they make use of their money.¹⁶⁰

2. Exhortation regarding wealth (16:9): ***I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings:*** Jesus urges his followers to use worldly wealth for the sake of his kingdom. Those that we help here with our wealth will be there with the angels to welcome us when we leave worldly things behind to enter eternal dwellings, i.e., heaven.¹⁶¹

3. Observation regarding honesty (16:10): ***Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much:*** This verse makes it clear that Jesus did not approve of the dishonesty of the manager in his parable. The disciples of Jesus were not rich. They might not think that what Jesus said about wealth applied to them. But people would use great wealth the same as they use a small amount of money. Those who prove to be trustworthy with small amounts of money, most likely can be trusted with larger amounts. Those who handle earthly riches well can be entrusted with all the riches of heaven.¹⁶²

4. Warning regarding wealth (16:11-12): ***So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?: 12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?:*** Worldly wealth is money. True riches are the blessings of the kingdom, things like peace, joy, forgiveness, etc. Some do not use their money properly for the good of the kingdom and the needs of other people. Such will never enjoy some of the greatest blessings that God can pour out upon his people. All that we own belongs to God. If we are unfaithful in handling those resources, then how can we expect to receive our heavenly possession?

5. Observation regarding masters (16:13): ***No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money":*** A master is one who has absolute control over a servant. Therefore it would be impossible to serve two masters, because inevitably the demands of the two masters would be exactly opposite. How could anyone please both masters under such circumstances? He may try for a while. But eventually his true allegiance will surface. Either the one master or the other will win out. The love for the one master will than result in hate for the other. In life ultimately one can choose to serve either God or Money, but not both. Later in our text we will read of a man and his wife who tried to serve both God and Money. See Acts 5.

III. Kingdom Principles (16:14-18).

A. Kingdom Priorities Mocked (16:14-15):

1. Mockers (16:14): ***The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus:*** In Jesus' day money was viewed as an evidence of God's blessing. The Pharisees promoted this idea. They scoffed at Jesus' teaching regarding money.

¹⁶⁰ What preparations are we making for our long-range, eternal well being?

¹⁶¹ Will anyone be in heaven to welcome us because of the way we have helped them in this world?

¹⁶² How is this verse a good principle for judging political candidates? for judging candidates for elder and deacon? What are some little ways we can show our faithfulness to the Lord?

2. Jesus' response (16:15): ***He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight:*** The main concern of the Pharisees was that they be well thought of among men. Wealth gave them prestige, because wealth indicated God's blessing, so they thought. God, however, does not look on the outward circumstances of men; God looks on the heart. We do not please him by pretending to be religious. Our nice homes and cars do not impress him. In fact, those things most highly praised by men are despised by God. On the inside the Pharisees were the exact opposite of what people thought them to be.¹⁶³

B. Kingdom Priorities in Danger (16:16): ***"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it:*** The Law and the Prophets was a way of referring to the Old Testament. Until John the Baptist appeared on the scene, the Old Testament was all the light that God's people had. They lived by the commands of the Old Testament and trusted in the promises of the prophets. John was a great prophet who announced that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Now many, like the Pharisees, were attempting to force their way into the kingdom in the sense that they were trying to take over. They would not listen to Jesus' teaching of a spiritual kingdom. They wanted to capitalize on the excitement of the people and take charge of the movement John launched.

C. Kingdom Priorities Affirmed (16:17-18):

1. Abiding character of God's law asserted (16:17): ***It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law:*** With their traditions, the Pharisees tried to evade both the spirit and letter of Moses' law. The Law of Moses was God's Word for people living before the time of Christ. Not the smallest part of that Law would drop out or pass away. In other places, however, Jesus indicated that the Law of Moses would be fulfilled in his life, death and resurrection. While the Old Testament is still valuable to us as Christians, believers today are under the commands and directions of the New Testament.

2. Abiding character of God's law illustrated (16:18): ***"Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery:*** Here is a specific example of the abiding character of God's Law. Pharisees permitted divorce for virtually any cause. But marriage was designed by God to be a permanent institution. Nothing but death should separate a husband and wife. To divorce one's spouse and marry another is considered equivalent to the sin of adultery. In Matthew 5:32 Jesus added that remarriage would not be considered adultery if the reason for the divorce was the unfaithfulness or immorality of the spouse who was divorced.

Our Glorious Home

Luke 16:19-17:10

I. Need to Focus on Eternity (16:19-31):

A. Contrasting Conditions (16:19-23):

1. Here in this life (16:19-21):

a. Condition of the rich man (16:19): ***There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day:*** Some argument exists as to whether or not this is a parable. If it is, it is the only parable in which Jesus gives a personal name to one of the leading characters. In Christian tradition the rich man is known as Dives. The purple and linen in which he dressed was the most expensive of the day.

¹⁶³ Can you think of some things which men highly prize, but which God despises?

b. Condition of the beggar (16:20-21): ***At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 And longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores:*** The estates of rich people in those days were surrounded by a courtyard that was entered by a gate. The poor Lazarus apparently had to be carried by relatives or friends to that gate so as to beg from the wealthy people coming and going. Poor hygiene and disease caused this man's body to be covered with sores. Lazarus hoped that the rich man simply would give him some of the garbage from his dinner table. He was so weak from malnutrition that he could not defend himself from the street dogs which came and licked his sores.

2. In the hereafter (16:22-23):

a. Condition of the beggar (16:22a): ***The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side:*** Death finally ended the beggar's misery. No reference is made to his burial, if he received one at all. But the angels of God carried the real Lazarus--his soul--to the side of Abraham. Saved people join Abraham and the other great heroes of faith in Paradise, or heaven. See comments on Luke 23:43. Lazarus was saved, not because he was poor, but because he had placed his trust in God. The picture here is of a banquet. Lazarus is sitting in the place of honor, at the side of the most famous of the Old Testament saints.

b. Condition of the rich man (16:22b-23): ***The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side:*** Even the most wealthy must eventually face death. It must have been a splendid burial. After death, the wicked face torment or punishment in Hades (the abode of the dead) which here signifies hell. In the world beyond Lazarus was enjoying a banquet; the rich man was suffering. His suffering was made all the worse by the fact that he could see Abraham, and Lazarus by his side. Clearly those who have passed on are not unconscious or "asleep."

B. Appeals of the Rich Man (16:24-31)

1. He appealed for personal relief (16:24): ***So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire':*** The rich man addresses Abraham as Father, for in Scripture he is the father of the Israelite nation. During his life the rich man never showed pity to Lazarus, but now he asks pity from Abraham, the greatest Patriarch of the Old Testament. Hell is represented throughout Scripture as a place of fire, but also as a place of darkness. Even on earth it is possible to be burned (for example, by radiation) in the dark. But is this literal fire in the text? If it is not, it is something far worse. Nothing is more painful than being burned. Hell is a place of eternal burning. Note that the rich man still views Lazarus as his servant. Even hell has not changed his character!

2. Response of Abraham (16:25-26):

a. The rich man's request was improper (16:25): ***"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.*** Abraham addresses the rich man in a compassionate way by calling him son. The rich man's request for a drop of water cannot be granted because it is improper. On earth he had lived a life of ease, and Lazarus had suffered terribly. Now justice required the reverse to happen.

b. The rich man's request was impossible (16:26): ***26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us':*** Besides being improper, the rich man's request was impossible to answer. A great chasm or gulf or ravine separates the saved from the lost in the afterlife. No one can move back and forth across that chasm. Thus this verse rules out all notions of purgatory, where people are punished for a period, then admitted to heaven. It also rules out the notion that after death people get a second chance at salvation.

3. Request for his brothers (16:27-28): ***He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment':*** For the first time this rich man is thinking of others. Those who are in hell suddenly get concerned about the salvation of family and friends left behind on earth. He wants his five brothers

warned so they might stay out of hell. If Lazarus returned from the dead, those brothers would surely take the warning seriously. The man may have been suggesting that he himself had not been sufficiently warned about hell. In a way he is blaming God for not warning him, blaming God that he is in hell.¹⁶⁴

4. Response of Abraham (16:29): ***"Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them':*** Moses and the Prophets is a way of designating the entire Old Testament. The rich man was without excuse. He had been warned. Had he only lived by the light of the Word of God which he had available to him, he would not be in torment. The same was true of his five brothers. Both Moses and the Prophets had commanded a life of generosity and sharing. Both had warned of the terrible consequences of refusing to obey God's Law.

5. Final protest of the rich man (16:30): ***'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent':*** The rich man was wrong. A Lazarus (not this one) did return from the dead (John 11), yet the wealthy Pharisees simply plotted to kill him (John 12:10) and destroy Jesus (John 11:47-50).

6. Final response of Abraham (16:31): ***"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead'"***: Even when Jesus himself returned from the grave, many did not believe him, and still do not to this day. The important truth here is this: Believe Scripture, and obey its commands in your life. Then you will be prepared for eternity.

II. Need to Avoid Stumbling (17:1-4):

A. Word of Warning (17:1):

1. To the disciples (17:1a): ***Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come..."*** This is a sinful world. Everyday we are faced with temptation. Most temptation is put before us by other people. They may try to entice us into sin by their words, or by their actions.

2. To the stumbling block (17:1b-2):

a. Pronouncement of a "woe" (17:1b): ***... but woe to that person through whom they come:*** The person who allows his life to become a stumbling block to others comes here under one of Jesus' "woes." The word woe suggests a terrible fate for anyone who through word or deed causes another person to sin.

b. Reason for the "woe" (17:2): ***It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin:*** A millstone was a circular stone--like a wheel--with a hole cut in the middle. A pole was put through the hole, and an ox would push the stone around in a circle on top of the grain to crush the kernels into flour. A millstone would be very heavy. If one were thrown into the sea with a millstone tied about his neck, he would surely die a horrible death. But that would be better than the fate that awaits the person who causes one of Jesus' disciples to sin and to forsake the Lord. Jesus called his disciples little ones, i.e., little children. This term conveyed his affection for them. It also stresses their trust in him, just as little children have complete trust in their parents.

B. Word of Instruction (17:3-4):

1. Recognize sin (17:3a): ***So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him..."*** Disciples must always be on guard against those who would pull them back into the world. Jesus' disciples are not to ignore sin. When one who is a Christian brother sins against another brother, he should be rebuked, i.e., his sin should be pointed out and condemned. Jesus does not expect his disciples to be doormats.

2. Practice forgiveness (17:3b-4): ***and if he repents, forgive him: 4 If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him":***

¹⁶⁴ What would happen in your church if the elders, deacons, preacher and teachers could visit hell for just five minutes, and then return to their ministries?

But a disciple of Jesus should also be ready to forgive when that brother repents of that sin. To repent is to feel sorrow for the sin, to walk away from it, and to take a stand against that sin. Seven in the Bible is the number of completeness. Jesus is directing his disciples to always have a forgiving spirit. If those who offend us repeatedly come and repent, i.e., ask our forgiveness, we should extend it to them. This is very hard to do. We sometimes will have to ask God to help us to have this forgiving spirit.

III. Need for Greater Faith (17:5-10):

A. Request for Greater Faith (17:5): *The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!":* The disciples knew that it would be very difficult for them to measure up to the standards of Jesus regarding forgiveness. They felt they would need greater faith--faith in the ultimate justice of God, faith in the wisdom of Christ, faith in the power of forgiveness.

B. Encouragement to Greater Faith (17:6): *He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you:* Jesus is saying that it is not a question additional faith, but of genuine faith. The mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds known in Palestine. Even that much of genuine faith is powerful. Jesus pointed to a near-by mulberry tree. With mustard seed faith, he said, you could uproot this tree and replant it in the sea. Perhaps everyone chuckled at this. No one would want to transplant a productive tree into the ocean. That would be stupid. What Jesus is getting at is the power of the smallest amount of genuine faith. With even that much real faith his disciples will be able to uproot from their hearts the unforgiving spirit, and bury it forever in the sea.

C. Key to Greater Faith (17:7-10):

1. Recognize who we are (17:7): *Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'?:* Among the Jews of Jesus' day were many who, because of debt, had become servants or bond slaves. The picture here is of a servant who has worked hard all day with his duties. When he comes in at night his boss would not invite him to sit down to a meal at which the boss would wait on him.

2. Put the Master's interests before our own (17:8): *Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'?:* The boss would expect the servant, tired though he was, to prepare and serve him the evening meal. Then after the boss had been served, the servant could eat and refresh himself before resting for the night.

3. Carry out duties without great expectations (17:9): *Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do?:* Normally the boss would not thank the servant for doing what it was his job to do. The point is, it is the duty of servants to carry out the orders of their boss.

4. Application (17:10): *So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty'":* Because disciples labor long and hard for the Lord, they should never think that they are deserving of some special commendation from him. A servant is not to be motivated by the thought of earning honors, but of fulfilling responsibility. We can never do too much for Christ. We can never think that God owes us anything because we are doing our duty to him.

Coming of the Kingdom

Luke 17:11-18:14

I. Return of the Leper (17:11-19).

A. Circumstances (17:11-12):

1. Travels of Jesus (17:11): ***Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee:*** The slow journey to Jerusalem is still under way. One of the most traveled roads from Galilee passed along the border between the regions of Galilee and Samaria. On this final trip to Jerusalem, Jesus is taking the long route that would take him across the Jordan River, through Perea to Jericho, then up the steep, winding road to the capital.

2. Encounter with some lepers (17:12): ***As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance:*** The particular village is not identified. Finding ten lepers on the outskirts of a small village would be unusual to say the least. Lepers were not allowed to live in the city limits. For the most part they lived in huts or caves on the outskirts of a town. Following the instructions of the Law of Moses, the men stood at a distance.

B. Request for Mercy (17:13): *And called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!":* To be heard from a distance, the men yelled to Jesus. They addressed him as Master; they asked for pity. This suggested they believed in his power to heal them of the dreadful disease. Leprosy is a disease that attacks the skin, and especially the extremity of the body, like fingers, toes, ears, eyelids. In the advanced stages, this disease can cause terrible disfigurement.

C. Miracle (17:14):

1. Command of Jesus (17:14a): ***When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests."*** Under the Law of Moses a leper could not be readmitted to society until he had been pronounced clean by a priest. He had to secure a certificate from the priests attesting that his body no longer showed any signs of leprosy. The priests were the health inspectors among the Jews.

2. Cleansing of the lepers (17:14b): ***And as they went, they were cleansed:*** By sending them to the priests, Jesus was implying that they would shortly be cleansed of the disease. They showed their faith by starting off on the long trip to the temple in Jerusalem. They had not gone far, when their bodies felt different. They had been healed!

D. Aftermath of the Miracle (17:15-19):

1. Gratitude of one leper (17:15-16): ***One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice: 16 He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan:*** Only one of the ten men returned to thank Jesus for what he had done. He was praising God for having sent into the world one with such power as Jesus again has displayed.

The man threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him again and again. This man was a Samaritan, a member of the mixed race that Jews looked down on.

2. Disappointment of Jesus (17:17): ***Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?":*** Jesus asks these two questions in order to make a point with those who were traveling with him. He was pointing out how ungrateful people are for what God does for them. We expect God to come to our aid in any emergency, but so few of us feel any sense of gratitude to him when he intervenes on our behalf. A third question directs the attention of the crowd to the fact that the one man who returned was not a Jew. The implication is that the other nine were Jews. This man, who practiced a different religion, had more gratitude in his heart than all nine of the healed Jews put together. This is another way of trying to break down the prejudice against the Samaritans that might still have been in the hearts of his disciples.

3. Commendation of Jesus (17:19): ***Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well":*** Jesus now dismissed the Samaritan, and commended him for his faith. Faith that expresses itself in gratitude is complete faith. That kind of faith is commended by Jesus.

II. Visible and the Invisible (17:20-37).

A. Kingdom's Coming Invisible (17:20-21):

1. Circumstances (17:20a): **Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come...** The Pharisees tried to embarrass Jesus by asking when the kingdom was coming. They had not noticed any sign that the kingdom was coming. Their idea was that the kingdom of God was an earthy, material, physical kingdom that would drive out the Romans and reestablish Jewish independence.

2. Nature of the kingdom (17:20b-21):

a. Kingdom is invisible (17:20b): **Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation:** Jesus corrected that notion. The kingdom of God was invisible and spiritual.

b. Kingdom personal (17:21): **Nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you":** The kingdom of God would not be located in any one spot. It would not have, for example, any earthly capital or headquarters. The kingdom or reign of God begins within the heart of individuals. To the extent that individuals allow God to have control of their lives, the kingdom of God has come for that person. The King himself was in their midst living out by example the kingdom life; but the Pharisees did not recognize this.

B. King's Coming Visible (17:22-25):

1. Fond memories of Jesus' presence (17:22): **Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it.** In the previous verse Jesus said that the kingdom, in effect, is already here. But in its visible and final form the kingdom is yet future. There is yet another chapter in the life of the kingdom. When Jesus departed from his disciples, they would miss him. They would long to see him again. Because they would be so anxious to be reunited with him, they might be enticed to believe false reports about him.

2. False reports of Jesus' return (17:23): **Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them:** Jesus warned his disciples not to be led astray by rumors that he had returned and was secretly waiting for them here or there. They should not waste their time trying to track him down in some remote spot.

3. Nature of Jesus' return (17:24-25):

a. It will be obvious to all (17:24): **For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other:** When that final day of his second coming arrives, all will be aware of it. No one will have to tune in to the evening news to learn that Christ has returned. Just as lightning illuminates the entire sky and can be seen by all, so all will see the return of Jesus. His second coming will be public, visible, loud, and dramatic.

b. It will be preceded by rejection (17:25): **But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation:** Before that glorious day there must come the suffering of the cross. That generation would reject him. They would demand his death. That generation would not experience the glorious day of Christ which is being described in v. 24.

4. Shock of Jesus' return (17:26-29):

a. As in the days of Noah (17:26-27): **"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27 People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all:** The coming of the Son of Man--Jesus--will be unexpected just as the Flood was in the days of Noah. People rejected the warnings of Noah concerning the coming judgment. People were living their everyday lives when Noah entered the ark and God shut the door. After that, no one could be saved. The world was destroyed by a Flood in which only the eight human beings on the ark were saved. So it will be when Jesus returns. There will not be any special signs that his coming is near. People will be going about their normal activities. Suddenly Jesus will be revealed from heaven to bring judgment on those who have rejected him.

b. As in the days of Lot (17:28-29): **It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all:** Jesus cites another example of sudden and unexpected judgment from the Old Testament. Up until the day Lot left the city of Sodom, people were

going about their normal routines. They did not have a clue that terrible and total destruction was about to rain down on their city from heaven. Once Lot was safely out of the city, then fire and brimstone (sulfur) rained down on Sodom and three other cities and totally destroyed them because of their terrible sin. The point again is the suddenness and unexpectedness of the judgment.

5. Glory of Jesus' return (17:30): ***It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed:*** The second coming is the day when the Son of Man (Jesus) is revealed as the all-powerful King. He will come in flaming fame taking vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the gospel (2 Thess 1:7-8).

6. Suddenness of Jesus' return (17:31): ***On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything:*** In that day some Christians may be on the roof of their houses. In Palestine the roofs of houses were flat. The roof could be reached by outside steps. People spent much time there, especially in the cool of the evening. The coming of Christ will be sudden. There will be no time for one to gather any of his possessions from the house beneath. The same is true of the person out in the field. He will not be able to return to the house for any of his material goods. The point is, the coming is sudden and unexpected and we will not be able to take the things of this world with us when he gathers us up to himself.

7. Warnings respecting Jesus' return (17:32-33):

a. ***Remember Lot's wife!*** (17:32): Lot's wife turned and looked back toward Sodom. She really did not want to leave the city, even though she had been warned that the place was about to be destroyed. Because she was so worldly she died and became encrusted with salt. In the region of the Dead Sea where Sodom was located many of the rocks around the sea are coated with salt. Apparently that is what happened to Lot's wife.

b. Need to surrender our life (17:33): ***Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it:*** When we give our lives to Jesus, we will have life more abundant and life eternal. If we try to hang on to our life and pursue our own selfish ways, unconcerned about the things of God and the needs of our fellow man, we will not really experience abundant life here, and certainly not life eternal in the world to come.

8. Judgment in respect to Jesus' return (17:34-35):

a. A separation of sleepers (17:34): ***I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left:*** Some take this to be a reference to the so-called rapture when the saints of God are taken away to be with Jesus. The context here, however, is talking about those taken away by judgment (see vv. 27, 29). The one who is taken during the night, is the one taken away by God's final judgment.

b. A separation of workers (17:35): ***Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left":*** As in the previous verse, a saved woman and a lost woman may be working together grinding grain. One will be taken away in judgment, the other will be preserved. The previous verse has its setting in the night; this verse is set in the working hours. In one part of the world it will be daylight when Jesus comes; on the other side of the globe it will be night.

c. Question regarding judgment (17:37): ***Where, Lord?" they asked. He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather":*** The disciples desire to know where this judgment will take place. Jesus' answer is a proverb common in that time. Wherever there is a dead body, vultures will swoop down upon it. The thought is, wherever there is a dead soul--a lost person--the judgment of God will swoop down upon him.

III. Two Prayer Parables (18:1-14):

A. Introduction (18:1): ***Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up:*** Disciples of Jesus must continue to engage in prayer no matter what. There is a tendency to give up on God when our prayers are not immediately answered to our satisfaction.

B. Persistence in Prayer (18:2-8).

1. Corrupt and inconsiderate judge (18:2): ***He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men:*** Jesus pictures a judge who was an atheist (he did not fear God) and a tyrant (he did not care for men). He was not motivated in his decisions either by the fear of God or compassion for the needs of those who stood before him. Jesus intends us to see in this judge a contrast to the heavenly Judge.

2. A widow who kept on pestering the judge (18:3): ***And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary':*** Widows (women whose husbands have died) in Bible days were often destitute. Unscrupulous men took advantage of them, swindling them out of their houses and property. Jesus pictures such a disadvantaged widow coming virtually every day before the judge to seek justice. She was probably trying to get her property back from those who had taken it away.

3. Judge granted the request (18:4-5): ***For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men: 5 Yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!''***: The judge turned down the woman's request several times. But the woman continued to "bug" him with her request. Finally the judge decided to do something about her case. The woman's persistence paid off. The judge got tired of her coming before him day after day. He finally decided to grant her petition just to get rid of her.

4. Application (18:6-8):

a. Listen to the unjust judge (18:6): ***And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says:*** Jesus invites his audience to hear the words of that unjust judge. What the judge is saying in effect is this: Persistence pays off.

b. Recognize God is not like the unjust judge (18:7): ***And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?'***: God is totally unlike the judge in Jesus' story. He is compassionate, fair and just. So if a man of this world, gives in to persistence, how much more will the heavenly Judge, who really is favorable to us to start with, hear our petitions when we continue to cry out to him about our problems. But why does God make us ask more than once? For several reasons. Sometimes our prayers need to be refined. We are not asking for what is possible within God's plan, or our prayers are not focused enough, or we need more light from the Scriptures to help us pray within the will of God. Be persistent in prayer. Sharpen your focus. Bring your requests into harmony with God's plan. Get rid of selfishness or vindictiveness in your prayers. When God does not respond to persistent prayer, there is probably something wrong with the prayer itself.

c. God grants justice to those who seek it (18:8): ***I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?''***: When God's chosen ones--Christians--are treated unjustly, God will see to it that they will get justice quickly if they will continue to cry out to him. That, of course, requires great faith, a faith that does not give up and get bitter. When the Lord returns at the second coming, not many will have the kind of faith which keeps on crying out to God in time of need.

C. Petition in Prayer (18:9-14):

1. Target of the parable (18:9): ***To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:*** Righteousness is right standing with God. Those who were confident of their own righteousness were really self-righteous, i.e., they thought they were better than others, and therefore pleasing to God. The Pharisees were the prime example of people who thought that their careful observance of rules and regulations proved that they were children of God. In sinful pride, however, they looked down on all others.

2. Picture of two worshipers (18:10): ***Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector:*** Pharisees and tax collectors were at opposite ends of the social structure, although both would have been wealthy men. Tax collectors were often crooked. They were viewed as

traitors because they worked for the Romans. Twice each day were marked as special times of prayer in the temple, at 9:00 in the morning, and 3:00 in the afternoon.

3. Prayer of a Pharisee (18:11-12):

a. His pride-filled thanksgiving (18:11): ***The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector:*** Many different postures of prayer are mentioned in the Bible. Standing for prayer is fine. What made the Pharisee's prayer improper is that he prayed about himself. The Pharisee was thankful, but not for the right things. He was thankful he was better than everyone else. Others were robbers, evil-doers, or had violated the marriage vows by committing adultery with another person's wife. Some were even as low as this tax collector. In effect the Pharisee was bragging about himself, how good he was.

b. His boastful attitude (18:12): ***I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get':*** The Pharisee thought he was so much better than all other men because he kept all the man-made rules and regulations set down by the teachers of the law. He cites two examples. He fasted (went without food) two days during the week. Fasting was supposed to be a sign of repentance, mourning, and self-examination. Judging by this prayer this Pharisee might as well have eaten during those two days. The Pharisee was also a tither. He gave one tenth of all he earned to the Lord. By these acts this Pharisee thought he had earned God's favor. He thought he was in good standing with God.

4. Prayer of the publican (18:13): ***"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner':*** How different was the prayer of the tax collector. He stood in a distant place in the courtyard of the temple, not even feeling worthy to draw near toward the altar. He looked down, not up, when he prayed, showing his humility before God. He beat on his chest to demonstrate in the manner of that day his personal pain over the sin in his life. Most importantly, he acknowledged before God that he was a sinner, and he asked God for mercy.

5. Evaluation of the two worshipers (18:14): ***"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted":*** The tax collector went home from the temple justified, i.e., regarded by God just as if he had not sinned. The Pharisee went home smug, complacent and misguided. The point is, that there can be no forgiveness with God until we realize that we are sinners who cannot be saved without the mercy of God. Mercy is withholding punishment that is justly due. We all deserve God's punishment because of our sins. We are all unworthy of his love. Here is a principle which Jesus' disciples need to learn. The proud who think they do not need God will be cut down to size, if not in this world, then at the judgment seat of Christ. The humble who realize how unworthy they are will be exalted, if not in this life, then at the judgment seat of Christ.

Entry into the Kingdom

Luke 18:15-19:28

I. Prerequisite for Entry: Humility (18:15-34):

A. Develop Child-like Disposition (18:15-17):

1. Circumstances (18:15): ***People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them:*** Parents always seem to want famous people to touch their small children. There may be an element of superstition here. They may think that a baby touched by Jesus would be able to withstand the terrible diseases which killed so many of the infants in those days. The disciples were trying to shield Jesus from the constant interruption of the parents and their children. In their view, these blessings of children took too much time away from the most important thing, the preaching of the kingdom.

2. We must welcome children (18:16): ***But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these:***

Jesus wants all to know how much he loved little children. He encouraged them to come out of the crowd to sit on his lap and at his feet. He orders his disciples not to hinder any little child who might wish to approach him. He used those children as an illustration of the kind of people who would be part of his kingdom. The passage seems to suggest that little children already belong to God. They have not sinned, and therefore are not in need of divine forgiveness. For this reason, little children do not need to be baptized, because baptism is God's command to those who need forgiveness for sins committed against him. Only those who can and should repent are proper candidates for baptism.

3. We must have child-like faith (18:17): ***I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it***: Little children are innocent, enthusiastic, full of faith and trust. That's what it takes to be a disciple of Jesus. To receive the kingdom as a little child means to have absolute sincerity in professing faith in Jesus, to believe without question that which the Lord sets forth as truth.

B. Avoid Worldly Preoccupation (18:18-30):

1. Interaction with a ruler (18:18-23):

a. Question of a ruler (18:18-19): ***A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"***: This ruler may have been a synagogue ruler; or he may have been the administrator of certain territories under one of the kings or tetrarchs of the region. He certainly asks an important question. The same question was asked by an expert in the law in 10:25. Both men assumed that they could earn eternal life by performing good deeds.

b. Naiveté of a ruler (18:19): ***"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone***: Jesus wanted to make this man stop and think. He had used the word good in reference to Jesus thoughtlessly. Did he really mean what his words implied? God is the only source of all goodness. Did he mean to give Jesus a title that was appropriate only to God? Did he recognize Jesus as God in the flesh?

c. Obligation of the ruler (18:20): ***You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother'***: Jesus knew that this fine Jewish man knew the Old Testament Law. He here cites five of the Ten Commandments.

d. Claim of the ruler (18:21): ***"All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said***: The ruler was not being hypocritical in stating that he had observed these five commandments all of his life. But his quick answer indicates that he had a superficial understanding of what these commandments really required. For example, Jesus in another place explained that merely looking at a woman with lust in the heart was equivalent to adultery. Merely hating a person was equivalent to murder. Under Jesus' understanding of the Ten Commandments, who in this world could possibly say what this ruler said?

e. Lack in the ruler (18:22): ***When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me"***: Jesus did not argue with the ruler about his shallow understanding of the commandments. He pointed out one thing obviously lacking in his life. His riches were standing between him and the Lord. He needed to demonstrate the spirit of generosity. Once he overcame his attachment to riches, he should become a disciple of Jesus. Only by so doing could this man have treasure in heaven, i.e., have eternal life.

f. Sorrow of a ruler (18:23): ***When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth***: That Jesus had put his finger on the one thing standing between this man and heaven is clear by his reaction. He was very sad over what Jesus said. He would have probably done most anything Jesus asked him to do, except share his wealth with the needy. Men often strive so hard to get hold of riches only to find in the end that riches have taken hold of them!

2. Observation about the rich (18:24-27):

1. Difficulty of salvation for the rich (18:24-25):

a. Exclamation (18:24): ***Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"***: Jesus did not say it was impossible for the wealthy to be saved, only that it was very difficult. He could have said the same thing about fame, about immorality, about drunkenness,

about anything that takes control of a person's life. We simply do not want to quit what we enjoy doing, to give up what we enjoy having. We measure success in life by what people own. But when we become disciples of Jesus, we must deny ourselves, surrender all we have and are to the cause of his kingdom.

b. Illustration (18:25): ***Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God***": Perhaps Jesus meant for this illustration to be humorous. Certainly no camel could squeeze through the eye of a needle. Some think the eye of the needle is the name of one of the low entrance gates into Jerusalem. In any case, Jesus is trying to illustrate something that is humanly impossible. It is impossible for a rich man to buy his way into heaven.

3. Protest of the audience (18:26-27):

a. A protest question (18:26): ***Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?"***: Those who heard Jesus' shocking statement were dismayed, i.e., upset. They realized that Jesus was saying that if a rich man could not earn his way to heaven, neither could anyone else. We get to heaven only by God's grace, and through our faith in Christ.

b. A pleasing answer (18:27): ***Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God"***: Salvation is something God offers to us free of charge. It is impossible to earn it, merit it, deserve it. Only by placing our faith in God's Son and yielding our life to him in obedience can we receive forgiveness of our sins, the life more abundant, and heaven itself.

4. Reward for sacrificial service (18:28-31):

a. Observation by Peter (18:28): ***Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!"***: Speaking for the twelve, Peter observes that they had left all worldly things to become full-time followers of Jesus. What Peter is wondering is this: Is the self-sacrifice that the Twelve have made sufficient to indicate their faith in Jesus? Would they be saved because they had put Jesus first in their lives?

b. Declaration by Jesus (18:29-30): ***"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God: 30 Will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life"***: Jesus recognized that the Twelve, and many others down through the ages, had made huge sacrifices for his sake. In order to preach the good news of the kingdom of God some have had to go far from family for long periods of time. Those who make such sacrifices for the sake of Christ's kingdom will receive many times more than what they give up here in this life. How does that work? In the work of Christ they will come to know and love people, and be loved by them, as much as physical family members love each other, and often times more. In this age means during one's lifetime, any time before the second coming. Then, in the age to come, after the second coming, those who have sacrificed much for the Lord will have eternal life. The blessings for serving Jesus start now and continue into eternity.

C. Accept the Way of the Cross (18:31-34):

1. Prophetically necessary (18:31): ***Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled"***: During his busy public ministry in Perea, Jesus took time out to spend private time with the Twelve. They needed special attention. In a short time they would be tested to the maximum by what they would experience in Jerusalem. Jesus wants them to know that it was his intention now to go to the capital. He knew, and they knew, that in Jerusalem he would face the final showdown with his enemies. He wanted them to know that this final trip to Jerusalem would fulfill what the Old Testament prophets, who spoke of his death on behalf of sinful men, had said about him. See especially Isaiah 53.

2. Terribly humiliating (18:32): ***He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him***: Jesus outlines what would take place in Jerusalem. He does this so that the Twelve will realize when the events there have concluded that he voluntarily had gone to Jerusalem to make the supreme sacrifice. This is now the third and most detailed of his predictions of his suffering. Jesus would be handed over by the Sanhedrin to the Gentiles, i.e., the Roman authorities. This is the first time that Jesus mentioned the Gentiles in connection with his death. At the

hands of those Romans he would be mocked and humiliated. He would be flogged, i.e., beaten with a whip. Finally he would be executed. Since the Roman used the cross as the means of executing criminals, Jesus is announcing that he would die on a cross.

3. Ultimately victorious (18:33): ***On the third day he will rise again***: This was the good news. Unfortunately, the Twelve got so caught up in the bad news mentioned in the previous verse that they really did not tune in on this announcement until after he in fact rose from the dead. None of the immediate disciples seem to have expected Jesus to come back from the dead. Perhaps they did not understand what he meant when he said he would rise again. Perhaps they gave some spiritual interpretation to these words.

4. Temporarily confusing (18:34): ***The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about***: The disciples were so convinced that the Messiah would be an earthly king that they could not grasp the meaning of Jesus' predictions. Perhaps they thought these words were like a parable with some mysterious meaning. The text does not say that it was God who hid the meaning of Jesus' words from them. Sometimes our prejudices and preconceived notions are so strong that we cannot accept the truth even when it is presented plainly to us. The later accounts will prove that even after his death, no one really expected Jesus to rise from the dead.

II. Appropriating Kingdom Blessing (18:35-19:10):

A. Persistence Required (18:35-43):

1. Circumstances (18:35-37):

a. An approaching Savior (18:35): ***As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging***: Jesus has now left Perea. He has crossed the Jordan River and is heading toward Jericho on the main road to Jerusalem. He paused in that place to heal, to refresh himself, and to teach. As he approached Jericho he passed by a blind man. Matthew mentions two blind men, but Luke focuses on the more prominent of the two. The man was begging those who traveled that busy highway to Jerusalem to give him alms or money.

b. A curious beggar (18:36-37): ***When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening: 37 They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by"***: The blind man could hear the commotion of the crowd which accompanied Jesus. He knew something exciting was happening, but had to ask someone what was taking place. The blind man was told that the excitement concerned Jesus of Nazareth who happened to be passing through the city that day. Note that the name of Jesus' hometown is added to his name to distinguish him from others who may have had the same name. Jesus was a famous person. But note that the speaker did not identify Jesus as "Prophet" or "Teacher" or "Messiah."

2. A plea for mercy (18:38-39):

a. It was grounded in faith (18:38): ***He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"***: From his place by the side of the road this man called out to Jesus for mercy. He wanted Jesus to cure his blindness. The title son of David was one of the designations of Messiah. Thus this blind man gives evidence of strong faith in Jesus as the long awaited Messiah or Christ. How this man had come to know about Jesus we are not told. Perhaps the thousands who made their way to Jerusalem for the festivals talked much about the young Teacher from Nazareth who could heal all manner of sickness. Perhaps faith in Jesus had begun to grow in this man's heart long before Jesus passed by that day.

b. It was persistent and bold (18:39): ***Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"***: The other Gospels indicate that the crowd tried to silence this man. They resented the interruption. But Jesus stopped the procession and ordered the man brought forward.

3. A growing faith (18:40-41): ***Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him: 41 "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied***: Jesus knew what the man wanted. Everyone knew. So why did Jesus ask him what he wanted? In order to help the man's faith grow still more! When we express our needs to the Lord, our

faith in his ability to supply those needs grows. Did this man have the faith to say with his lips what he had hoped in his heart? Yes, he did. He asked Jesus to restore his sight.

4. A powerful miracle (18:42-43):

a. The miracle was performed by spoken word (18:42): ***Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you"***: Jesus' healing technique was calm and ordered. There was no hocus focus, no dramatic actions. Jesus merely spoke the words, and the man was healed. This man's faith had caused him to cry out the words which recognized Jesus as Messiah; this man's faith had caused him to ask for Jesus to do what was humanly impossible, viz., restore his sight. This faith is now rewarded. The man could see again.

b. The miracle was immediate and complete (18:43a): ***Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God***: Healing was immediate. Naturally the man joined the crowd following Jesus. He was praising God who had sent such a healer to him. The crowd too marveled at the miracle and joined the praise to the Lord.

B. Humility Required (19:1-10):

1. Circumstances (19:1-2): ***Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through: 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy***: The healing of the blind man took place as Jesus approached Jericho. Inside the village itself another incident of great importance took place. A chief tax collector is one who had been granted the legal right to collect taxes on behalf of the Romans. Normally the Romans required a set amount, and all over that amount which the tax collector could get out of the people, he could keep for himself. Zacchaeus probably had several tax collectors working under him. Often the tax collectors were crooked, and some got very wealthy.

2. Determination to see Jesus (19:3-4): ***He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way***: Zacchaeus was short in stature. He desperately wanted to see the Prophet Jesus who was known to be a friend to tax collectors like himself. Yet because he was so short, he could not see over the heads of the crowd that pressed in around Jesus. Zacchaeus ran ahead on the main road that led through Jericho. There he climb a tree which would allow him to see all the action on that exciting day. The sycamore-fig tree was plentiful in Palestine. Amos the prophet earned part of his living by cultivating these trees and selling their fruit.

3. Conversation with Jesus (19:5-7):

a. Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus' home (19:5): ***When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today"***: Jesus spotted Zacchaeus in the tree. He called him by name and announced that he wished to spend the day at his home. Zacchaeus must have been shocked that Jesus knew his name, and even more shocked that he desired to spend time with him. Jesus knew the heart of this man. He knew that Zacchaeus wanted to learn from him.

b. Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus (19:6): ***So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly***: Zacchaeus was overjoyed with the announced intention of Jesus. He had come to the street that day just to try to get a glimpse of the most famous religious Teacher of that time. Now he would have the opportunity to entertain Jesus in his own home.

c. Reaction of the people (19:7): ***All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner'"***: Jews hated tax collectors, because they considered them traitors and thieves. They worked for the hated Romans. How could a holy man, like Jesus, go into the home of one who was a sinner, i.e., one who made no pretense of following the Law of Moses? Jesus, however, never let public criticism dictate his conduct.

4. Conversion of Zacchaeus (19:8-10):

a. Indication of repentance (19:8): ***But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount"***: Just the thought that Jesus respected him and loved him moved Zacchaeus to declare a total change in his life. His change of heart is indicated by two declarations.

First, he would give half of his possessions to the poor. Only a person genuinely touched by the Lord would make such a declaration. Second, if he had ever charged anyone too much in taxes, he would pay back to him four times as much as he had wrongly taken.

b. Declaration of salvation (19:9): ***Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham:*** Jesus saw in Zacchaeus saving faith and true repentance. He publicly recognized Zacchaeus as saved or forgiven of his sins. He recognized that this man, so despised by his countrymen, was just as much a son of Abraham as they were, if not more. They were biological sons of Abraham. Zacchaeus was a spiritual son of Abraham in that he shared the same faith and commitment as the great Patriarch.

c. Explanation of ministry (19:10): ***For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost":*** Here Jesus states the grand design of his ministry. He came to seek out those who were lost in their sins, and to bring them salvation. He sees what happened to Zacchaeus as an example of the work he came to do.

III. Return of the Lord (19:11-28):

A. Circumstances (19:11): ***While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once:*** As Jesus approached Jerusalem, the crowds thought that he would declare himself before the leaders and launch his kingdom, which they expected would be an earthly kingdom. God's kingdom will be manifested in power at the second coming. Meanwhile, his kingdom or reign is spread in the hearts of mankind through the work of the church.

B. Departure of the Nobleman (19:12-14):

1. Reason for the departure (19:12): ***He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return:*** This is a parable, but it is true to the circumstances of that time. Regional kings had to be appointed by the Emperor in Rome. More than one of the sons of Herod had made the trip to Rome to secure that appointment. The noble man represents Jesus who will ascend to heaven to be given a kingdom by his Father.

2. Instructions to his servants (19:13): ***So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back':*** Before leaving on his long journey the would-be king distributed to his servants ten minas. A mina was equal to about \$20, and was the equivalent of about three month's wages for a laborer. Each of the ten servants received one mina. The servants were told to put that money to work, i.e., to make it grow by investing it in some productive enterprise. The servants represent disciples of Jesus.

3. Opposition of the subjects (19:14): ***But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king':*** Again the parable is true to life. The Jews once went to Rome to oppose the appointment of Herod Antipas as their king. The subjects who hated the king represent the Jewish people who refused to accept Jesus.

C. Return of the King (19:15): ***"He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it:*** In spite of the opposition of his subjects, the king was crowned. Then the king returned home. This refers to the second coming of Jesus. The first order of business upon returning was to find out what the servants had done with the money that he had loaned them to invest.

D. Report of the Productive Servants (19:16-19):

1. Servant with ten minas (19:16-17):

a. His report (19:16): ***"The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more':*** The first servant had served his master well. His mina had earned ten additional minas. We are not told how he invested the money to make it grow. That is not the point.

b. His commendation (19:17): **"Well done, my good servant!" his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities':** The king commended the first servant for his diligence. He had shown himself to be faithful in handling the relatively small amount that his master had entrusted to him. He is promoted to a position of honor. He would now administer ten cities for his king. The point is, when Jesus comes back he will reward those who have been faithful in using what he has given to them--their time, treasure, talent, brain power, etc. Great honors lie ahead for the faithful servants of the Lord.

2. Servant with five minas (19:18-19):

a. His report (19:18): **"The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more':** The second servant did not do as well as the first. Not all the servants of Jesus have equal abilities in making use of what God has given them. Nonetheless, he had made his mina grow. He returned to his master five additional minas along with the one that had been loaned to him.

b. His commendation (19:19): **"His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities':** The second servant is rewarded in proportion to the demonstration of diligence which he had shown. He was appointed over five cities. Whereas all those who put their faith in Jesus and obey his gospel will have eternal life, the rewards that he will bestow on his disciples will vary according to effort put forth by each.

E. Report of the Unproductive Servant (19:20-23):

1. His report (19:20-21):

a. Return of the mina (19:20): **"Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth:** The third servant did not invest his mina. He wrapped it up and hid it. Perhaps he was afraid of losing it. But in so doing he had violated the instructions of his master to put that money to work.

b. Reason for his action (19:21): **I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow':** This servant was motivated by fear for his master rather than love. He thinks of his master as a hard man. One who takes what he did not put in and reaps what he did not sow is a thief. This servant viewed his master as a brutal thief. He feared that if he lost the mina or invested it unwisely he would experience terrible punishment. This servant represented servants who do nothing for the Lord. They take no risks for him. They view God as a tyrant, rather than as a loving Father. They attend church out of fear, not love. They do the least they can do to still be called Christians.

2. His condemnation (19:22-23):

a. Basis of the condemnation (19:22): **"His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow?':** The master evaluates this third servant as wicked. He would use the servant's own words in pronouncing judgment upon him. Did this man really think his master was a brutal thief? Well he did not act like it.

b. Means of condemnation (19:23): **Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?':** The master condemned this servant by means of a question which exposed his indifference and slothfulness. If he thought his master was so harsh, why did he not at least put the money in the bank so it would gain some interest during the master's absence. Surely he must have realized that the master would expect some return on the mina. The point is, God expects us to do something positive for the kingdom during our life. Those who, out of fear of failure, never attempt anything great for God here stand condemned.

F. Judgment by the King (19:24-26):

1. Judgment of the unproductive servant (19:24-26):

a. An order (19:24): **Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas':** The master orders the mina of the non-productive servant to be given to the most productive servant.

- b. An objection (19:25): **"Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!':** Some in the crowd interrupted the parable to object to the orders of the master. Why should a man with ten minas beside the original one be given yet another? Isn't that discrimination? Doesn't the third servant need it worse than the first?
- c. A declaration (19:26): **He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away:** Jesus answers those objectors who did not like the way he told his parable. Those who do not use what God has given them shall lose it. Their God-given gift will be given to the more productive servants. This is not hard to understand. One who learns enough piano to play a tune, but who does not continue to practice, will lose what little ability he does have. Those who aggressively use their talents and abilities for the Lord will along the way acquire yet additional abilities. The principle here is, use it, or lose it.
2. Judgment on the enemies (19:27): **But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them--bring them here and kill them in front of me!":** After the interruption of the crowd and Jesus' answer, the Lord concludes here the parable itself. The enemies who fought against the enthronement of the king were to be executed on the spot. This points to the fate of those who oppose Jesus' reign in their hearts. At the judgment they will be sentenced to eternal death in the hell of fire. The message then is, turn or burn! Turn to Jesus, or spent eternity in hell.

G. Conclusion (19:28): After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem: The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem was extremely important because (1) the enemies were forced to deal with him once and for all; (2) Jesus thereby fulfilled prophecy; and (3) Jesus demonstrated to the crowds that he was not the kind of Messiah they had been seeking. Jesus took the lead in marching his disciples up the steep hills from Jericho to Jerusalem.

CONFRONTATION IN JERUSALEM

Luke 19:29-21:38

First Coming of the King

Luke 19:29-48

I. Triumphant Entry (19:29-40):

A. Preparation (19:29-35):

1. Dispatch of disciples (19:29-31):

a. Sent to secure a colt (19:29-30): **As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them: 30 "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here:** Bethany and Bethphage were near-by villages on the eastern slope of the Mt. of Olives. It was the first day of the week. From Bethany Jesus dispatched two of his disciples the short distance to Bethphage to begin to make arrangements for his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In Bethphage the disciples would find a donkey colt tied up. This animal was so young that it had never before been ridden. It was as if God had reserved this animal just for the use to which it would be put on this day.

b. Instructed regarding their words (19:31): **If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it!":** From this verse the conclusion can be reached that the owners of the colt were friends of Jesus. Perhaps on some previous occasion they had offered it for his use should he ever need it. Thus Jesus protects the disciples from accusations of theft by telling them what to say if anyone challenged the taking of the animal.

2. Mission of the disciples (19:32-34): **Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them: 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?": 34 They replied, "The Lord needs it!":** The two disciples obeyed Jesus, even though it probably made them uncomfortable taking the animal without asking permission first. Of course, the two found the situation just as Jesus had described it. The two disciples were challenged by the owners

just as Jesus anticipated. The disciples gave the answer that Jesus had told them to give. Apparently the owners were perfectly willing to allow Jesus to use the colt that day.

3. Use of the colt (19:35): ***They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it:*** The disciples put their robes on the colt so as to make as comfortable a seat as possible for him. They then assisted their Master in mounting the colt.

B. Acclamation (19:36-38):

1. A crowd accompanied him (19:36): ***As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road:*** As the procession moved on toward Jerusalem the crowds gathered. People were spreading their garments in the road as if to make a carpet for the King to ride upon as he made his way down the western slope of the Mt. of Olives, across the Kidron Valley, and up the steep slope of the hill where Jerusalem was located.

2. Praise surrounded him (19:37-38):

a. Place of the praise (19:37): ***When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:*** The nearer the procession got to Jerusalem the larger the crowd became. As they started down the western slope of the Mt. of Olives the crowd began to sing praises to Jesus with great excitement. The main topic that captivated the crowd was that of the miracles performed by Jesus during his ministry. The recent resurrection of Lazarus from the dead was probably foremost in their minds (John 11).

b. Substance of the praise (19:38): ***"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!":*** The crowd used the language of Ps. 118:26 to praise the Master. This distinctively messianic Psalm was sung as part of the ritual on Passover night. The people would be as familiar with it as modern people would be familiar with a Christmas carol. The king who comes in the name of the Lord refers to Messiah who was the promised King, a descendant who would sit on the throne of God. (No doubt these crowds still thought of Jesus at this time as an earthly king who would drive out the Romans). This coming King or Messiah would usher in a time of peace with God. No longer would God be angry with his people. Glory in the highest would express the joy of heaven itself at the coming of Messiah, joy which would match and exceed that of the crowd which was then chanting his praises.

C. Protestation (19:39-40):

1. Demand of the Pharisees (19:39): ***Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!":*** There were skeptics in the crowd. Pharisees took offense at what the people were saying to and about Jesus. The Pharisees, of course, did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Furthermore, they worried that if the people thought Jesus was the Messiah, they might rise up against the Romans, thinking that Jesus would lead them. While they did not love the Romans, the Pharisees did not want any popular uprising that might bring down on Jerusalem the wrath of the occupying forces. They were afraid that such an uprising might cause them to lose their leadership positions among the Jews. They thought that Jesus was surely aware of the danger that such enthusiasm could provoke the masses into such a disastrous rebellion. Furthermore, they hated Jesus and resented this outpouring of praise on his behalf. For the moment Jesus was so popular that the Pharisees did not dare to try to silence the crowd directly. So they asked Jesus to do it for them.

2. Response of the Master (19:40): ***I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out":*** Jesus approved of the fact that the people recognized him as Messiah. He never approved, however, of their misunderstanding of what that messiahship involved. For the moment, however, they were giving him the welcome that the entire Jewish nation should have given him throughout his ministry. If he attempted to silence the truth they were proclaiming, the very stones would cry out. This was a proverb current in that time which meant that the truth must be made manifest one way or the other.

II. Destruction of Jerusalem (19:41-44):

A. Circumstances (19:41): *As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it:* From the slopes of the Mt. of Olives one can look down on the entire city of Jerusalem. As he rounded a bend in the road and caught a glimpse of the great city, Jesus broke out in tears.

B. Jerusalem had Missed a Golden Opportunity (19:42): *And said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes:* The tears of Jesus are here explained. With the eye of a prophet, Jesus could see that beautiful, bustling city in smoldering ruins. He could see thousands of that city's inhabitants slaughtered, and others made slaves. Had they only embraced him, Jerusalem would have been spared the terrible fate that Jesus foresaw for Jerusalem in AD 70 when the Romans destroyed the place. Jesus had been to the city many times before, but never had he received a warm welcome. Even now, those who are praising him are his supporters from Galilee, not the citizens of Jerusalem. When sinners are willfully blind to the truth, God is said to hide truth from their eyes. The door of grace was not completely closed for these people yet, but it is fast closing.

C. Jerusalem Faced a Terrible Devastation (19:43-44):

1. A siege by armies (19:43): ***The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side:*** In the coming war with Rome (AD 68-70) Jerusalem would be blockaded. The Roman army would besiege the place. No one would be allowed to escape. Those who were caught were crucified in full view of the citizens still behind the city's walls. Within the city itself there would be three factions of Jews. One radical faction would not let anyone go outside the walls to surrender to the Romans. Thousands of Jews were killed by other Jews before the Romans were able to break through the walls to slaughter the rest. All of this is attested by the Jewish historian Josephus who had surrendered to the Roman army, and who watched the terrible ordeal as it unfolded day by day.

2. Jerusalem utterly destroyed (19:44): ***They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you":*** The Romans did in fact level Jerusalem to the ground. They left only a couple of towers as monuments to how great this city had once been before they captured it. The slaughter by the Romans was indiscriminate. Women and even children were cut down by the thousands. They will not leave one stone on another is an idiom which refers to complete destruction. The AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem came about because the inhabitants of Jerusalem did not recognize that God had visited them in the person of Jesus Christ. They rejected and crucified their own Messiah.

III. Christ's Temple Instruction (19:45-48):

A. His Dramatic Action (19:45-46):

1. He drove out the merchants (19:45): ***Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling:*** Some three years earlier Jesus had cleansed the temple (John 2:13-17), but in the intervening time the abuse of the temple area had arisen again. For a more detailed account of this cleansing of the temple, see Mark 11:15-19. It is Mark that makes clear that this cleansing took place on the Monday following the triumphal entry. Jesus entered that part of the temple known as the Court of Gentiles. It had become a virtual marketplace instead of a worship place. Oxen and sheep were being sold to the thousands who had come from all over the world for the Passover celebration. These animals would be used for sacrificial purposes in the temple. The merchants had agreements with the priests to pre-approve all the animals sold there for use in sacrifice. One could, theoretically, bring his own sacrificial animal, but he ran the risk that the priests would not approve it for sacrificial purposes. Thus the priests, especially Annas and Caiaphas, were being paid off by the merchants for approving those animals being sold in the temple courts. In the first temple cleansing Jesus used a whip to drive

out the greedy merchants, and he also may have used it in this instance. One thing is certain, Jesus is asserting his claim to be Lord over the temple.

2. He accused the merchants with Scripture (19:46): ***"It is written," he said to them, "My house will be a house of prayer' ; but you have made it 'a den of robbers'"***: In justification for his action of cleansing the temple, Jesus quoted the Old Testament. The temple was intended to be a house of prayer, a place for worship (Isaiah 56:7). Like the people of Jeremiah's day, the Jews had made God's temple a den of robbers, i.e., a place where thieves hang out (Jeremiah 7:11). Jesus is alluding to the dishonest practices of those merchants who sold sacrificial animal or changed foreign money into the coins that would be accepted for temple offerings.

B. His Bold Teaching (19:47-48):

1. Plots against him (19:47): ***Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him:*** Jesus came to the temple every day to teach the throngs of people. The religious leaders of the Jews were trying to find a way to arrest him, put him on trial and, execute him.

2. People surrounded him (19:48): ***Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words:*** The crowds listened attentively to Jesus. They loved his method of teaching, and they loved his message. These leaders were afraid of a popular uprising if they should try to arrest Jesus publicly.

Question of Religious Authority

Luke 20:1-19

I. King Questioned (20:1-8):

A. Circumstances (20:1): ***One day as he was teaching the people in the temple courts and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him:*** On Sunday evening after the triumphal entry Jesus had entered the temple (Mark 11:11). He entered it again on Monday and cleansed it (Mark 11:15). Now He returns on Tuesday to the temple to engage in a day of debate with the leaders of the Jewish nation. The temple was surround by courtyards and shaded porches that would make ideal locations for the events of this chapter. Three groups are mentioned as confronting Jesus, the three components of the Sanhedrin. Most likely these men came as official representatives of the Sanhedrin to challenge Jesus.

B. Question of the Antagonists (20:2): ***Tell us by what authority you are doing these things," they said. "Who gave you this authority?"***: The issue was one of authority. By whose authority had Jesus cleansed the temple? By what authority did he presume to teach in the temple? Who gave him his authority? They wanted to see his credentials, so to speak. They were obviously trying to embarrass the carpenter from Nazareth. If he admitted he had no credentials, the people would turn against him. If he considered himself authorized by God to do the things he had been doing, then he might be accused of blasphemy.

C. Jesus' Question to his Antagonists (20:3-5):

1. Nature of the question (20:3-4): ***He replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me: 4 John's baptism--was it from heaven, or from men?"***: Jesus goes on the attack against these leaders. He asks them a question, since they were the ones with the credentials to answer questions. The answer to their question to him will be found in their response to his question. If the leaders declared that the baptism of John was from heaven, i.e., authorized by God, then Jesus would ask them why they had not been baptized. If they said that John's baptism was of men, then the crowds would turn on them.

2. Difficulty of the question (20:5-6): ***They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Why didn't you believe him?': 6 But if we say, 'From men,' all the***

people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet": The leaders clearly saw their dilemma. They had rejected John and his baptism, so they obviously could not say that his baptism was authorized by God. The people held John in high esteem. They considered him a prophet, i.e., one who had been sent by God to them with a message from heaven. They might stone the leaders if they "put down" John by saying that his was a man-made message and baptism.

3. Response to the question (20:7): ***So they answered, "We don't know where it was from"***: These leaders could not answer Jesus without embarrassing or endangering themselves. They therefore refused to answer. They pretended not to know where John got his authority to baptize.

D. Jesus' Response to his Critics (20:8): *Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things"*: Since they had refused to answer his question, Jesus refused to answer theirs. He knew they did not want the truth, and would not believe the truth even if he told them. He knew they were only trying to entrap him.

II. Murder and Vindication of the King (20:9-18).

A. Parable (20:9-15a):

1. Rented vineyard (20:9): ***He went on to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time"***: The purpose of this parable is to warn the people against the religious leaders who had just tried to entrap him. At this time large portions of Palestine were owned by foreigners who lived many miles from their property. Those who managed their holdings had considerable freedom. In this case, Jesus mentions a vineyard that was entrusted to local managers, while the owner left the region for a considerable period of time.

2. Rejection of the owner's servants (20:10): ***At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed: 11 He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed: 12 He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out***: At the proper time, the owner sent a servant to collect what was rightfully his from the crop of grapes produced by the vineyard. The tenants refused to carry out their part of the contract. Instead, they beat the servant and sent him back to the owner empty-handed. A second representative of the owner was treated in the same shameful manner. The third servant of the owner had been grievously wounded in his encounter with the tenants.

3. Murder of the owner's son (20:13-15a):

a. Plan of the owner (20:13): ***"Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him'"***: The owner now decided to send his own beloved son to collect what was due from the vineyard. The owner did this at some risk, for he knew how the tenants had treated the three servants.

b. Plan of the tenants (20:14): ***But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. 'This is the heir,' they said. 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours'"***: When the wicked tenants saw the son approaching, they began to plot. They realized that the son would be the heir to that vineyard. They seem to take for granted that the owner had died. If they killed the heir, then they could claim the vineyard as their own.

c. Death of the owner's son (20:15a): ***So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him***. The tenants carried out their plot. They cast the son out of the vineyard, and then stoned him to death. Jesus then posed the question to his audience.

B. Application of the Parable (20:15b-18):

1. Rhetorical question (20:15b): ***"What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?"***: What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants who have killed his beloved son?

2. Jesus' answer to the question (20:16a): ***He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.*** Matthew makes clear that the crowd first answered Jesus' question, and he concurred with their answer. In the end the owner of the vineyard triumphs over the wicked tenants.

3. Reaction of the audience (20:16b): ***When the people heard this, they said, "May this never be!"***: The people by this time grasped the meaning of the parable. The vineyard represented Israel (Isa. 5:1-7). The owner of the vineyard was God, and his Son is Jesus, the Messiah. The tenants were the national leaders of the Jews. The servants sent ahead of the Son were the Old Testament prophets who were rejected and mistreated by the national leaders. So now the Son was being rejected by those same leaders. The threatened destruction of the tenants points to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The privileged position of national Israel as God's vineyard would be given to others. The very thought of the Jews losing their privileged position shocked the audience. This is why they shook their heads and said, May it never be!

4. Application defended (20:17-18):

a. Prediction regarding the rejected stone (20:17): ***Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone"?:*** Jesus is quoting Ps. 118:22. The picture here is of the temple builders examining and then rejecting a beautiful and perfectly suitable building block. The rejected stone symbolizes Christ who had been rejected by the national leaders. But the builders were wrong about that stone. That rejected stone would become the capstone of the temple. A capstone is a beautiful stone that was put into a building to signal the completion of the building. The builders did to the stone, what the tenants in the preceding parable did to the Son. So the thrust here is this: the Jews would lose their privileged position. God would erect a new and spiritual temple with the exalted Jesus as the central figure. The church of Christ is the new Israel of God, God's present vineyard and temple.

b. Prediction regarding the stone judgment (20:18): ***Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed"***: Christ is the stone. Those who do not build their lives on the Christ, trip over him. To fall on him is to continue to oppose him, to question his statements, disbelieve his promises, and disobey his commands. That stone (Christ) will one day fall on them with such force that they will be crushed.

C. Reaction to the Parable (20:19): ***The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people:*** The religious leaders knew that Jesus was spoke of them when he referred to the wicked tenants and the stupid builders. They were the ones who had been rejecting him. They were filled with rage. They would have seized him that very hour, but they feared the people who regarded Jesus as a prophet (Luke 7:16).

Question of Political Authority

Luke 20:20-26

I. Strategy of the Critics (20:20-21):

A. Their Intention (20:20): ***Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be honest. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor:*** The direct challenge of the authority of Jesus had failed. Now these leaders changed tactics. A new committee was dispatched to pretend to be sincere students. According to Mark, this group consisted of Pharisees and Herodians (Mark 12:13). Herodians were those who supported the claims of the descendants of Herod the Great. While pretending to be seeking Jesus' input on a deeply troubling question, they were really trying to trick him into saying some politically incorrect thing that would warrant arrest and trial before the Roman governor, Pilate.

B. Their Set Up (20:21): *So the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth:* What hypocrites. They address him as Teacher, but they did not accept his teaching. They begin with flattery. Jesus had a reputation of "telling it like it is." He would faithfully declare the will of God regardless of the consequences. Whether he spoke to the rich and powerful, or the humble and poor, Jesus never "pulled any punches" in his teaching. This flattery was designed to cause Jesus to let his guard down. Perhaps he would be more blunt than he needed to be and thus say something that would offend the Romans.

C. Their Question (20:22): *Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?":* Every adult male in Judea was required to pay a tax to the Roman governor. Since Roman coins bore the likeness of Caesar who claimed to be divine, the payment of this tax was very distasteful to the Jews. Already there had been one armed insurrection against the Romans in Galilee because of this very tax. The question is very clever. If Jesus said that people should pay taxes, he would offend many devout and patriotic Jews. If he said they should not pay taxes, he could expect repercussions from the Romans.

II. Response of Jesus (20:23-25):

A. He Recognized Their Intent (20:23): *He saw through their duplicity and said to them:* Jesus was fully aware of their wicked intentions (Matt. 22:18). He knew that they were willing to do anything, no matter how underhanded, to entrap him.

B. He Called for a Coin (20:24a): *Show me a denarius.* This was a small silver coin equal to a laborer's usual wage for a day's work. It was the amount fixed by law for the payment of the tax in question. Some take this verse to mean that Jesus and his disciples were too poor to possess one of these coins. Probably, however, Jesus had a purpose in making them produce the coin.

C. He Asked Them a Question (20:24b): *Whose portrait and inscription are on it?":* His question regarding whose image and inscription were on the coin was easily answered, without even examining it. Everyone knew that Caesar's head appeared on one side, and a picture of the Emperor sitting on his throne on the other. The coin would have an inscription identifying the Caesar as "son of the divine Augustus" and "highest priest."

D. He Responded to Their Answer (20:25): *Caesar's," they replied. He said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's":* Jesus in effect is saying, Yes, pay the tax. Honoring God does not require believers to dishonor earthly rulers. The Roman government brought to the world good roads, a postal system, courts, and a general peace throughout the empire. Those who benefited from what the government did should pay their fair share. But Caesar (the government) should be given only what is due him. He was not entitled to divine honor. Caesar is not God. One is obligated to render to God what is due him, viz., gratitude, praise, love, obedience and service.

III. Silence of the Critics (20:26): *They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent:* The spy committee had not expected this kind of answer. How could they fault it? Jesus had neither offended the Romans, nor had he in any way compromised man's obligation to God. The spies were silenced, and soon departed (Matt 22:22).

Question about Resurrection

Luke 20:27-44

I. Source of the Question (20:27-33):

A. Sadducees (20:27): *Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question:* The Sadducees traced their name back to Zadok, one of the two main priests in the days of David. The Sadducees were strong supporters of the priests and the temple. They did not accept all the traditions that the Pharisees took to be equal to Scripture. They did not accept the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, nor did they believe in angels. In their view, the soul perished along with the body. Politically, they supported the status quo. Sadducees were not very popular with the masses.

B. Scripture (20:28): *Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother:* The Sadducees quote Deut. 25:5-6 as the springboard for their question. The Law of Moses permitted "levirate" marriage, the marriage of a childless widow to the brother of her dead husband. A child born to that union was considered to be the son of the dead brother. This kept his family name alive in the registers of the nation, something very important to ancient peoples.

C. Story (20:29-32):

1. Death of seven husbands (20:29-31): *Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. 30 The second 31 and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children:* The Sadducees were trying to accomplish two things: (1) embarrass Jesus in his views about the resurrection; and (2) triumph over their arch-rivals the Pharisees by asking a question which they thought had no answer. Perhaps many times before they had stumped the Pharisees with this question. They present a hypothetical case in which there were seven brothers. The first married, but died childless. Following the Levirate law, the second brother married the childless widow. This family of brothers was most unfortunate. Each brother married the same woman, then died before a child could be born. (Was she putting arsenic in the hamburger?).

2. Death of the woman (20:32): *Finally, the woman died too:* Did she mistakenly eat some of her own hamburger?

D. Question (20:33): *Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?":* Keep in mind that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, or any survival after death. They are posing the question in order to ridicule the whole idea that man will survive death in a resurrection body. All seven men had been married to the same woman. Would they all fight over her in the world to come? Would she get to choose which of the seven she wanted to spend eternity with? One can imagine that many in the crowd chuckled as the Sadducees painted this ridiculous picture.

II. Scope of the Answer (20:34-38):

A. Issue of Marriage (20:34-35):

1. Marriage designed for this life (20:34): *Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage:* Marriage belongs to this world. It serves the purpose of providing companionship. It is a means of reproducing the human race on earth. God instituted marriage in the beginning for the well-being of the human family in this life.

2. Marriage not part of the life to come (20:35): *But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage:* Those who put their faith in Jesus and obey the gospel are accounted worthy to partake of the glories of the world to come. The resurrection of the dead takes place when Jesus returns to earth. The dead then receive their resurrection bodies. Marriage will not be part of that new age.

B. Issue of the Resurrection (20:36-38):

1. Nature of the resurrection (20:36):

a. They are like the angels (20:36a): ***And they can no longer die; for they are like the angels...*** Here is the reason marriage will not be a part of the resurrection of the dead. After the resurrection people do not die. There will be no need to reproduce the race. With respect to marriage, the saved will be like the angels, who also do not reproduce.

b. They are sons of God (20:36b): ***They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection:*** The sons of the resurrection are sons of God in the sense that they have been born of God, and in a sense are like him (John 1:13; 1 John 3:2).

2. Proof of the resurrection (20:37-38): ***But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'. 38 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive"***: Jesus now turns to the writings of Moses to demonstrate that the doctrine of the resurrection was a true doctrine. Jesus noted that God said to Moses at the burning bush, I AM, not I WAS, the God of Abraham. I AM implies that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still alive. He is not the God of dead bodies, but of living persons. The Lord has a personal relationship with each of these precious souls in heaven. This certainly implies that their bodies will not be left to the worms, but will one day be gloriously resurrected.

C. Reaction of Listeners (20:39-40):

1. Approval of the law teachers (20:39): ***Some of the teachers of the law responded, "Well said, teacher!"***: Most of the scribes were Pharisees who believed in a bodily resurrection. On this issue, they stood with Jesus. They probably marveled at the way in which he silenced their enemies the Sadducees.

2. Cessation of questions (20:40): ***And no one dared to ask him any more questions:*** The Sadducees had been defeated. They did not venture to ask Jesus another question.

Question for His Critics

Luke 20:41-44

I. General Question (20:41): *Then Jesus said to them, "How is it that they say the Christ is the Son of David?":* Jesus now turned the tables on his adversaries. He asked them a question. Old Testament prophecy indicated that the Messiah would be the son of David. But many, apparently, thought he was merely the son of David and nothing more. That is the point of Jesus' question.

II. Scriptural Light on the Issue (20:42-43): *David himself declares in the Book of Psalms: "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand 43 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."* Jesus pointed out that in Ps. 110 David refers to the Messiah as his Lord. The Messiah would be invited by the heavenly Father to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places. This implies that Messiah would be divine. He was more than David's son; he is also the Son of God. Messiah will sit enthroned at the right hand of the Father until all of his enemies have been put under his feet, i.e., conquered. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death itself. Therefore Christ will continue his reign at the right hand of the Father until the Second Coming when death is forever abolished.

III. Probing Question (20:44): *David calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?":* Jesus drives home the point of his argument. A father does not refer to his son as Lord unless, of course, that son or descendant is the Son of God.

Assessment of Temple Offerings

Luke 20:45-21:4

I. Warning against Hypocrisy (20:45-47):

A. Circumstances (20:45): *While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples:* Jesus had silenced both the Sadducees and the Pharisees. He had the full attention of the people. He now begins to warn his disciples about the practice of these hypocrites.

B. Ungodly Pride of the Leaders (20:46): *Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets:* In this verse and the following one there are six items of criticism of the scribes who were also Pharisees. First, these men put on airs; they walked around attired like kings or priests about to perform their official functions. Second, they longed for demonstrations of respect, a public recognition of their position. Third, they grabbed the chief synagogue seats. These were the up front seats which faced the congregation. Fourth, they expected to be seated in the most prominent seats at formal banquets.

C. Unconscionable Practices of the Leaders (20:47): *They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely":* The fifth criticism is that the Pharisees mistreated widows. To devour their houses is to seize their homes from them, probably because they could not pay their mortgage or rent. As devouring food fattens the body, so the ruthless seizure of the property of widows fattened the pocketbooks of these Pharisees. Sixth, they prayed long prayers just to call attention to themselves. Perhaps the thought is that they covered up their ruthless treatment of widows by making long prayers. Such people like these hypocritical religious leaders will be punished more severely by the Lord.

II. Demonstration of Sincerity (21:1-4).

A. What Jesus Saw (21:1-2):

1. The rich making a show of their giving (21:1): *As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury:* Jesus' had just completed his great discourse on the Seven Woes (Matt. 23). He was now resting. He was probably sitting upon a bench in the Court of Women which contained thirteen trumpet-shaped chests that were used to collect contributions to the temple. The receptacles were marked for different purposes. The hypocrites against whom Jesus had just railed may have been among the wealthy who were casting their gifts into the receptacles.

2. A poor widow giving here coins (21:2): *He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins:* Among those wealthy men who were making such a show of their giving was a poor widow. The two small coins she dropped into the chest were worth about one quarter of a penny. In the eyes of the world what the woman gave did not amount to much.

B. What Jesus Said (21:3-4): *I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others: 4 All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on":* Jesus made a solemn pronouncement about that widow. Measured by the standards of God, this woman's contribution was priceless. Jesus here explains why the widow's gift was of more value than that of the rich. All the others had given out of their abundance, i.e., their gifts represented no sacrifice on their part. The widow, however, in spite of her poverty had given all that she had. Thus her gift was a gift of faith, love and sacrifice.

Judgment on Jerusalem

Luke 21:5-38

I. Circumstances (21:5-7):

A. Casual Remarks by the Disciples (21:5): *Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said:* As Jesus

was leaving the temple (Matt. 24:1; Mark 13:1), the Twelve were discussing the beauty of the magnificent temple complex. The beautiful stones were decorations that crowned the walls of the temple. These had been donated by wealthy worshipers.

B. Shocking Remarks by the Lord (21:6): *As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down*": Those beautiful stones which so impressed the disciples would one day be cast down. The fulfillment of this prediction came in AD 70 when the Roman general Titus destroyed the temple.

C. Two Specific Questions (21:7): *"Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"*: The staggering prediction of Jesus regarding the temple shocked the disciples. In their minds the destruction of the temple would mean the end of the world (Matt. 24:3). They wondered if there would be any warning sign that would precede the event.

II. Events that Might Deceive (21:8-9):

A. False Messiahs (21:8): *He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them:* Jesus now begins to list some of the events which would precede the destruction of Jerusalem. First, false messiahs would arise, announcing the end of the world. The Jewish historian Josephus documents several false christs who arose in the period between AD 30 when Jesus spoke these words and AD 70 when his predictions were fulfilled.

B. Rumors of War (21:9): *When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away*": The second sign would be wars and rumors of war. The long peace which the Roman Empire was enjoying during the days of Christ would disappear. Over the next four decades that empire would be shaken by political turmoil. This political turmoil must take place, but that would not signal the end of the world, nor even the doom of Jerusalem for that matter.

III. Events to Watch (21:10-21):

A. Empire-wide Insurrections (21:10): *Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:* Revolts and insurrections would break out all over the Roman Empire.

B. Natural Disasters (21:11): *There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven:* Next Jesus mentions natural disasters that would precede the fall of Jerusalem. Again Josephus documents earthquakes, famines, and plagues that broke out in various parts of the Roman Empire during the years between AD 30 and AD 70. Such events should not alarm the disciples. They did not signal the end.

C. Persecution of Christ's Disciples (21:12-19):

1. Source of the persecution (21:12): *But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name:* Even before the other events mentioned in the preceding 4 verses something else would happen. Jesus' followers would be seized and imprisoned. This persecution would be orchestrated by the leaders of the local synagogues. These Jews would press charges against Christians in the secular courts. All of this is thoroughly documented in the Book of Acts. Up to AD 70 the main adversaries of the Christians were the Jews scattered throughout the

Roman Empire. The persecution would break out against the Christians because of their loyalty to the name of Jesus.

2. Opportunity in the persecution (21:13-15):

a. Opportunity to witness (21:13): ***This will result in your being witnesses to them:*** These times of persecution would only provide an opportunity to witness through word and example to their faith in Jesus. The fulfillment is found in the Book of Acts.

b. Persuasive testimony (21:14-15): ***But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves: 15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict:*** The apostles would not need to prepare before hand what to say to their persecutors. Jesus would impart to the apostles the wisdom to say the right thing at the right time and in the right manner whenever they had trouble with the authorities. Again the Book of Acts contains several examples of how the apostles confounded those who put them on trial.

3. Severity of the persecution (21:16): ***You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death:*** Under pressure of the authorities some would betray their nearest and dearest relatives. This could involve telling the authorities where someone might be arrested, perhaps even testifying against their flesh and blood in court. Some of Jesus' disciples would lose their lives in these persecutions. James the apostle and Stephen would be examples of early Christian martyrs.

4. Reason for the persecution (21:17): ***All men will hate you because of me:*** Among the enemies of the faith would be people of every rank, station, race, nationality, age and sex. The world hated Christ; it will also hate those who serve Christ.

5. Promise in the persecution (21:18-19):

a. Assurance of divine watch care (21:18): ***But not a hair of your head will perish:*** How can this be? Only two verses earlier he warned that some of his followers would die for their faith. Probably Jesus meant that even the hair of the head of his followers is under the watch care of God. See Matt. 10:29-30. If any hair of their head perishes it is only by his will and for his purpose. And God's purpose for them was their eternal salvation. Enemies may kill the body, but they could not destroy the soul.

b. Reward of perseverance (21:19): ***By standing firm you will gain life:*** In order to gain the crown, Jesus' followers must persevere in spite of persecution. They must not get discouraged. They must remain faithful to him no matter how fierce the persecution may become. Thus will they receive the ultimate reward.

D. Jerusalem Surrounded (21:19-20):

1. Final Sign (21:19): ***"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near:*** Jesus has just outlined the several events which would occur before Jerusalem's destruction. Now Jesus begins his predictions regarding the destruction of the city. First, he predicts that Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies. Of course he refers to the Roman armies. In Matthew's account this is called the abomination of desolation. The Roman soldiers carried standards emblazoned with symbols of pagan gods. The soldiers actually worshiped these military standards. For Jews such objects were abominations. The approach of the Roman armies with these pagan standards is the sign for which the disciples are looking, the sign of Jerusalem's impending destruction.

2. Signal to flee (21:21): ***Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city:*** When they saw the sign--the Roman armies approaching Jerusalem--then Jesus told his followers to do three things. First, those who lived in the populated area of Judea should flee to the desolate Judean mountains where they could hide out in the caves. Second, those who lived in the city of Jerusalem itself should get out. Third, those who lived outside the city should make no effort to flee within the massive walls of Jerusalem for safety. The early Christian historian Eusebius relates that when the Roman army approached Jerusalem, then temporarily withdraw, the Christians fled across the Jordan river and took up residence in a town called Pella. Because they heeded these instructions by Jesus, not one Christian lost his life when the Romans returned a few months later to besiege and then destroy Jerusalem.

IV. Fall of Jerusalem (21:22-24):

A. Significance of Jerusalem's Fall (21:22): *For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written:* Jesus had come with a message of hope and salvation. But he had been rejected by the majority of his countrymen, especially the national leaders. As a result, prophecies of vengeance and woe were going to be fulfilled against the Jewish nation. See the warning of Luke 11:50-51.

B. Distress of Jerusalem (21:23-24a): *How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations.* Jesus predicts the outpouring of God's wrath against Jerusalem, but he does not delight in that judgment. He mentions how hard that ordeal will be, especially for pregnant women and nursing mothers. Luke's Gospel is full of special concern for women and children. According to the Jewish historian Josephus 1,100,000 Jews perished during the war with Rome, and another 97,000 were taken into slavery.

C. Domination of Jerusalem (21:24b): *Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled:* The last part of this verse is very controversial. Some think that the times of the Gentiles ended May 14, 1948 when the state of Israel was created by the United Nations. Others think that the period ended when the Israeli army captured the old city of Jerusalem in the war with the Arabs in 1967. Probably it is best to regard the times of the Gentiles as extending from the time Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem back in Old Testament days, until the second coming of Christ. New Testament teaching suggests that Christians are the true Israelites today. Since rejecting their Messiah, biological descendants of Abraham are no different from Gentiles in God's eyes. Thus the times of the Gentiles continues until that time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of Christ (Rev. 11:15).

V. Other Signs (21:25-33).

A. Heavenly Signs (21:25): *There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea:* Other signs that will precede and/or accompany the fall of Jerusalem are here named. In the Old Testament whenever a great nation came under God's judgment, the prophets spoke of the occasion being marked by darkness of the sun, and moon and stars. See for example Isa. 13:10; 24:23; 34:4-5; Ezek. 32:7-8). The darkness of the sun from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM on the day Christ died may be cited as one example of a literal sign in the heavens. Josephus, the Jewish historian, reports other strange atmospheric and astronomical phenomena that preceded the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. People would be frightened by the signs in the sun, moon and stars. Apparently the tides of the ocean would be affected by the changes in the moon.

B. Terrifying Signs (21:26): *Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken:* The signs in the heavens will create fear and apprehension about what might be happening. Some would think that the world was coming to an end. God's people are compared to stars in various passages (e.g., Gen. 37:9-10; Dan. 12:3). The heavenly bodies may refer to the leaders of the Jewish nation. The Roman destruction of Jerusalem would shake them from their positions of leadership. Never again would there be a high priest from the line of Aaron.

C. Ascension Sign (21:27): *At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory:* The pronoun they refers to the heavenly bodies (Jewish leaders) in the previous verse. The verse does not say that they would see Christ coming to earth. Rather, they would "see" or

realize that Christ had ascended on the cloud to heaven to receive from the Father a kingdom, power and great glory (Dan. 7:13-14). Again the Old Testament is the guide as to how these words are to be explained. When God came in judgment on ancient nations, he is said to come on a cloud. Thus here it is Christ who comes in a cloud to show his authority and power by bringing about the terrible judgment upon Jerusalem. Some commentators think this verse refers to the Second Coming, when Christ also comes on a cloud. But at the Second Coming Jesus will come with his holy angels in flaming fire.

D. Redemption Signs (21:28): *When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near*": Christians have nothing to fear from the judgment which Christ will bring upon Jerusalem. The signs that cause perplexity and fear among the unbelievers, will remind the Christians that their deliverance is near. The Jewish persecution of Christians came to an end when Jerusalem was destroyed.

E. Wake-up Signs (21:29-31):

1. Illustration (21:29-30): *He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. 30 When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near:* Jesus concluded his teaching on the coming destruction of Jerusalem with an illustration. He called the attention of the disciples to the fig tree. By observing the fig tree the people of that day could know when summer was near. The leaves on the tree were a sign that the seasons were changing.

2. Application (21:31): *Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near:* The signs mentioned in the previous verses--signs in the sun, moon, stars, false messiahs, wars, etc.--would indicate to the followers of Jesus that the kingdom of God, in the person of its King, Jesus, was near. King Jesus would come to bring judgment on the city that turned its back on him.

3. Declaration (21:32-33):

a. Regarding the signs (21:32): *"I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened:* This verse indicates that the interpretation proposed above is correct. All that has been predicted to this point would happen during that generation. Thus while it is popular today to read some of these verses as references to the Second Coming, Jesus himself indicated that these events would transpire within the next few years.

b. Regarding the sayings (21:33): *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away:* Though Jerusalem and its temple would be totally destroyed, and the entire Jewish religious system altered by the events of AD 70, the word of Christ would never pass from the earth.

VI. Second Coming (21:34-38):

A. Lifestyle Preparation (21:34-35): *"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life And that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap; 35 For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth:* Dissipation is excessive indulgence in pleasures. Anxiety is simply worry. Those who rely upon themselves and neglect the Word and prayer are often overwhelmed by worry about the problems of life. The reference is to the day of Christ's return. For those who fall into sin and worry, the final day will close in on them like a trap. They will face the judgment of Christ in that day. The day of Christ's return and judgment will come upon the entire world.

B. Spiritual Preparation (21:36): *Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man*": Only by living a life of prayer and consecration can one escape the terrible judgments which will be part of the day of Christ's return. Only the truly committed will be prepared to stand before the Lord at that time, saved by his grace.

VII. Conclusion of Temple Teaching (21:37-38): *Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple: And each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives. 38 And all the people came early in the morning to hear him at the temple:* Some of Jesus' temple teaching is contained in chapters 21-22. We do not know whether Jesus and his disciples camped out on the Mt. of Olives, or resided in the home of one of Jesus' disciples. Thousands of pilgrims from all over the world were in Jerusalem at that time for the observance of Passover. Because he was always surrounded by throngs of people, the Jewish leaders were afraid to arrest Jesus.

COMPLETION OF THE MISSION

Luke 22:1-24:53

King Eats in Jerusalem

Luke 22:1-22:38

I. Plot against Jesus (22:1-6):

A. Plans of the Leaders (22:1-3):

1. Passover season (22:1): *Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching:* It is now Spring of the year AD 30. The appointed day for the Passover feast fell on a Thursday evening that year. Passover always occurred on the fourteenth day of the Jewish month of Nisan, at full moon. Computers have tracked through the centuries the dates for the full moons visible in Jerusalem. Hence scholars can be relatively certain about the date for the last Passover, the institution of the Lord's Supper, the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus. The Passover feast celebrated the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt under Moses. For seven days, beginning on Passover, the Jews were required to eat unleavened bread. So while the feast of Passover was only one night, the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted a week. For all practical purposes the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were considered one celebration.

2. Problem of the leaders (22:2): *And the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people:* According to Matthew (26:3) the elders of the people also joined the chief priests and scribes in the plot against Jesus. For a description of these three groups, see on Luke 20:1-2. Jesus had many followers, especially among the Galileans, who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. Caiaphas the high priest seems to have played a prominent role in this plot against Jesus (Matt. 26:57; John 11:47-53).

B. Betrayal by Judas (22:3-6):

1. Actions of Satan (22:3): *Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve:* Satan took over Judas' heart. Yet Judas is still responsible for his deed because he should have resisted the Devil. The betrayal by Judas is especially ugly because he was privileged to be one of the inner circle of Jesus' followers. He had spent months in the immediate presence of Jesus. He had seen the miracles. He had himself performed miracles in Jesus' name.

2. Negotiations of Judas (22:4-5): *And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus: 5 They were delighted and agreed to give him money:* Christ's enemies were looking for a way to arrest Jesus without causing a riot (John 11:57). Judas made things easier for them by volunteering to deliver their enemy to them without a public disturbance. Matthew reveals the amount that the leaders paid Judas--30 pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15).

3. Agreement of Judas (22:6): *He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present:* Judas agreed to tell the leaders when they would be able to catch Jesus alone, apart from the crowds.

II. Preparation for Passover (22:7-13):

A. Circumstances (22:7): *Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed:* It is now Thursday, the 14th day of the month of Nisan. In the afternoon thousands of people would take their lambs to the temple to be slaughtered in preparation for the Passover meal that night.

B. Instructions to Disciples (22:8-12):

1. General instructions (22:8): *Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover":* Preparations for the Passover would include the slaughter of the lamb at the temple, and the purchase of unleavened bread, bitter herbs, fruit of the vine, etc. Luke does not relate why Jesus delegated this responsibility to Peter and John.

2. Request for more details (22:9): *Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked:* The two disciples wanted to know in what place Jesus and his disciples would observe the Passover. It would take a rather large room for the group of thirteen.

3. Specific instructions (22:10-12):

a. Path to the house (22:10): *He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters:* A man carrying a pitcher of water would be unusual. Men usually carried water in an animal skin prepared for that purpose; women normally carried water in a jar. The man was probably a servant.

b. Request of the house owner (22:11): *And say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?':* Peter and John were to follow the man with the water jar to a house. Then they were to ask the house owner the location of the guest room where the Passover could be observed. No doubt this man was a disciple who had invited Jesus and his apostles to celebrate Passover in his house. Now the two disciples needed to know exactly what room they were to use.

c. Upper room (22:12): *He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there":* Jesus knew that this man had a large room which he had already furnished with the necessary equipment--tables, cushions, etc.--where the group of thirteen could celebrate the feast. There Peter and John were to make the final preparations for the meal.

C. Discovery by the Disciples (22:13): *They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover:* The two disciples must have marveled again over the knowledge of Jesus. They found everything just as Jesus had indicated. It must have taken all afternoon for the two disciples to make the preparations for the feast.

II. Eating with his Disciples (22:14-23):

A. Setting (22:14): *When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table:* At that time people reclined on cushions at a table that was but a few inches off the floor.

B. Opening Comments by Jesus (22:15-16):

1. Final Passover (22:15): *And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:* Jesus knew that this would be the last opportunity to be alone with his band of apostles before his arrest. Jesus' voice must have been choked with emotion as he spoke these words.

2. Future Passover (22:16): *For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God":* This was the last earthly Passover for Jesus. The Passover as a religious observance would be fulfilled in God's coming kingdom. The Passover symbolism of the lamb dying to save Israelites from the death angel pointed forward to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The kingdom of God on earth is the church. Replacing the Passover in the New Covenant is the Lord's Supper.

C. Passing of the Cup (22:17-18):

1. Instruction (22:17): ***After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you:*** Four cups of the fruit of the vine were consumed during the course of the Passover celebration. Jesus took in his hand the first of those four cups and gave thanks. He then invited the apostles to sip from the cup. With this act the Passover began.

2. Explanation (22:18): ***For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes":*** Again Jesus indicates that only in the coming kingdom would he share this cup with his disciples. Christ shares with his followers each Lord's Day as they gather about his Table.

D. Institution of the Lord's Supper (22:19-20):

1. Bread (22:19): ***And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me":*** Jesus next took from the table a slice of unleavened bread. He gave thanks again and started breaking it into smaller pieces. This breaking of the bread is mentioned in all four Gospels. It is part of the symbolism of the Lord's Supper. The broken pieces of bread symbolized the body of Jesus that was about to be given on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. It was the desire of Jesus that by means of the Supper here instituted the church should remember his sacrifice. He does not specify how often the Supper is to be observed. Later in Acts (20:7) the early church appears to have partaken of the Supper each Lord's Day.

2. Cup (22:20): ***In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you:*** Just as Jesus gave new significance to the unleavened bread of the Passover meal, so also he gives new meaning to the fruit of the vine. The cup symbolized the blood of the New Covenant that was about to be poured out on behalf of all sinners. Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission or forgiveness of sins. Thus Christ, the perfect Lamb, offered himself in substitution for sinners upon the cross. This offering of Christ is at the heart of the New Covenant, the Christian faith. The Old Testament looked forward to the New Testament (Jer. 31:31). Now the New Covenant or Testament was about to be implemented.

E. Announcement of the Betrayal (22:21-22):

1. Shocking announcement (22:21): ***But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table:*** Jesus alerted those in that room that the betrayer was in their midst. Luke here is not following chronological order, for the other Gospels make clear that the exposure of Judas preceded the institution of the Lord's Supper. Judas then immediately left the room. He was not present when Jesus explained the new significance of the broken bread and the fruit of the vine.

2. Warning announcement (22:22): ***The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him":*** He lives on earth, suffers, and dies to fulfill God's great plan. Nothing happens to him by chance. The betrayer intended to upset the plan of God by his actions. That would not happen. Judas was now under a divine woe, i.e., under the wrath of God. Judas faced eternal punishment for his betrayal of God's Son. The hardness of Judas' heart is indicated in that, even after this exposure and warning, Judas left the upper room to fulfill his bargain with the Jewish leaders.

3. Perplexing announcement (22:23): ***They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this:*** Again Luke abbreviates what took place. It is clear, however, that the eleven apostles did not have a clue that Judas was the betrayer. Even when he left the room, they assumed he was going out to buy more supplies for the Passover feast, since he was the treasurer of the group.

III. Passover Teaching (22:24-38):

A. Instruction about Leadership (22:24-30):

1. Dispute among the disciples (22:24): ***Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest:*** Luke does not indicate at what point during that Thursday night this dispute broke out among the apostles. The other Gospels strongly suggest that it occurred at the beginning of

the feast. Luke again has chosen to organize his material along topical rather than chronological lines. That the apostles would be arguing about who was the greatest on the eve of Jesus' death for their sins is truly amazing. The dispute was probably triggered by concern about who would perform the task of washing the feet of the others when they entered the house, and who would sit in the seats of honor around the Passover table.

2. Worldly leadership (22:25): **Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors:** Jesus shows his apostles that their attitude was worldly and even pagan. Gentile rulers exercised authority ruthlessly, but nevertheless took delight in being called Benefactors. Such were hypocrites. The attitude of the apostles bordered on hypocrisy as well as egotism.

3. Kingdom leadership (22:26-27):

a. Unlike worldly leadership (22:26): **But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves:** Jesus did not want Gentile leadership styles to be imitated in his church. Jesus wants leaders in his kingdom to be servants, doing the humble tasks normally assigned to young people or servants.

b. Leadership example (22:27): **For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves:** Jesus uses an illustration to drive home his point. In a home, those who recline at a table are more important than those who wait on that table. Yet Jesus, their Master, on that night and indeed throughout his ministry had served his apostles. He may be referring to the fact that he had pick up a towel and a wash basin and washed their feet (John 13:1-11). The point is that Jesus set the example for leadership in his kingdom by assuming the role of a servant.

4. Kingdom privileges (22:28-30):

a. They had stood by their Master (22:28): **You are those who have stood by me in my trials:** Having just rebuked his apostles for their self-centered attitude, Jesus now praised them. While others had deserted Jesus along the way, these apostles--with the exception of Judas--had been loyal to him through all the trials of his ministry.

b. They would have a part in Christ's kingdom (22:29): **And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me:** Jesus reminded his apostles that his Father had assigned to him a kingdom. These loyal apostles will share in his royal rule.

c. They would experience the joys of Christ's kingdom (22:30a): **So that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom...** Eating and drinking in Christ's kingdom are part of the symbolism of the joys that God's children will experience in the New Covenant age.

d. They would exercise leadership in Christ's kingdom (22:30b): **and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel:** Jesus repeats the promise made earlier (Matt 19:28) that his apostles would sit on twelve thrones judging or ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel. The term Israel embraces all of the saved, both Jews and Gentiles. The church of Christ is the New Covenant Israel (Gal. 6:16; James 1:1; Rev. 7:3-8). The point is that these apostles will be the chief authorities on earth once the kingdom was launched.

B. Personal Word for Peter (22:31-34):

1. Word of warning (22:31): **Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat:** Jesus now addressed Simon Peter personally. He was the natural leader among the Twelve. The use of the name Simon reminds Peter of his creaturely weakness. The repetition of the name suggests deep concern. Peter is warned about Satan's intention. In the spiritual realm a constant struggle goes on between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Satan had asked permission, yes demanded, that he might sift the apostles (the pronoun is plural) like wheat, i.e., subject them to intense persecution and temptation. Wheat was put in a sieve and shaken vigorously in order to separate the kernels of grain from the chaff. What Jesus is saying is this: The disciples too will be subjected to severe trial. That trial would begin that very night when Jesus was arrested. Thus in this verse Jesus is addressing one individual, but he is predicting what is going to happen to the entire group.

2. Word of assurance (22:32): ***But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers***": The you in this verse is singular. Jesus prayed often for all the apostles. But here Peter is in view. He was the recognized leader of the group. That very night Peter would momentarily fall away from the Lord. Therefore Jesus prayed for him specifically that in the end his faith might prevail over doubt and fear. When he was restored or got back on the right track he should devote himself to strengthening his brethren, i.e., the other disciples.
3. Peter's boast (22:33): ***But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death"***: Like many believers, Peter thought his faith was more solid than it really was. He thought he would be willing to face prison and even death for his Master. Eventually he would have that courage, but not yet. Peter was weaker than he knew.
4. Word of prediction (22:34): ***Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me"***: Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. He predicted that before early morning when roosters start crowing Peter would have denied him, not once, but three times. Peter's boast in the previous verse is therefore empty. Note that Jesus here calls Simon by his special name, Peter or Rock. When that rooster crowed the next morning Peter should remember that he was the Rock to which the other disciples were looking for strength in the moment of trial.

IV. Provisions for Mission (22:35-38):

A. Material Preparation Necessary (22:35-36):

1. Previously they had not prepared for their mission (22:35): ***Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?" "Nothing," they answered***: Up to now Jesus had assumed the responsibility of caring for his disciples. When he sent them out on their preaching missions they had lacked nothing of the necessities of life.
2. Now they must make preparation (22:36): ***He said to them, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one"***: After Christ departs from them, the apostles would have to take the initiative in providing for their needs. Making provision for missionary travels such as taking along a purse and a traveling bag will now be necessary. The reference to the purchase of a sword is puzzling and has been interpreted many ways. Was Jesus thinking of a literal sword to protect themselves against robbers? Was he thinking more of a knife that they would need to carve their own meat? Surely he did not intend for his disciples to think that they would have to fight on his behalf (See vv. 49-51). Was he using the term sword figuratively, meaning they would need courage that night and through the rest of their ministries?

B. Psychological Preparation Necessary (22:37): *It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment*": Jesus here applies the language of Isaiah 53:12 to himself. The suffering servant depicted throughout Isaiah 53 is Messiah. Christ would die among sinners and die for sinners. That prophecy was about to be fulfilled within the next few hours.

C. Confusion of the Disciples (22:38): *The disciples said, "See, Lord, here are two swords." "That is enough," he replied*: The disciples were confused about Jesus' reference to securing a sword in v. 36. They had misunderstood their Master again. They thought that he was talking about physical swords. They already had two among them. Would that be enough? Jesus was curt and decisive in his response to them. He wants no further discussion of that subject. His response seems to suggest that in v. 36 he was not using the term sword in its literal sense.

King Tried by Religious Authorities

Luke 22:39-71

I. Preparation for the Ordeal (22:39-53):

A. Circumstances (22:39): *Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him:* Leaving the upper room, Jesus and the Eleven made their way to a garden on the lower slopes of the Mt. of Olives. Much teaching took place as they walked to that spot, teaching which is found in several chapters of John's Gospel. Luke omits this teaching. Judas knew that Jesus would follow his usual custom of going to that Garden to pray. And Jesus knew that if he went there he would be arrested. Yet he chose to follow his usual custom. He made no effort to conceal himself from enemies.

B. Initial Prayer (22:40-43):

1. Instructions to his disciples (22:40): ***On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation":*** Though he was facing death himself, Jesus was concerned about the well-being of his disciples. He did not ask them to pray for him, but for themselves that they might be strong in the face of the temptations they would face that very night.

2. Prayer of Jesus (22:41-42):

a. Description of his prayer posture (22:41): ***He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed:*** Jesus went a little further into the Garden where he could pray by himself. He was a stone's throw away from eight of the apostles whom he had left at the Garden entrance. Peter, James and John were closer to him, close enough to hear his words and observe his agonizing. But soon they fell asleep. At first he knelt down. But as his prayer intensified he fell on his face, according to Matthew. The writer of Hebrews (5:7) says that "he offered up prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears."

b. Content of his prayer (22:42): ***"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done":*** Luke again abbreviates. Jesus made three petitions in the Garden which Luke has summarized in this verse. Most likely in that Garden Jesus received a mental preview of what was about to happen on the cross. The cup throughout the Old Testament is a symbol of God's wrath and judgment. Christians sometimes forget that Jesus was as much human as he was divine. On his human side he dreaded the cross, and hoped that there might be some other way to accomplish the mission. The Suffering Savior renders complete and unqualified submission to the will of his heavenly Father.

3. Response to Jesus' prayer (22:43): ***An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him:*** The discouragement of Jesus and his physical weakness are here attested. It was necessary for the Father to send an angel from heaven to strengthen him. From this Jesus learned that he had not been completely abandoned by his Father in this hour of ordeal. Exactly how the angel went about strengthening Jesus is not stated. Perhaps the mere presence of the angel strengthened his resolve and bolstered his courage.

C. More Earnest Prayer (22:44): *And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground:* Jesus prayed even more intensely after the visit of the angel. The condition known as hematidrosis was of special interest to Luke the physician. The strain of the hour caused the capillaries of the skin to dilate to such an extent that they burst. When this occurs in the vicinity of the sweat glands, blood and sweat will be exuded together. The sweat becomes reddish in color. Such was the agony and strain of Jesus in the Garden.

D. Failure of the Disciples (22:45-46):

1. Jesus found them asleep (22:45): ***When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow:*** Peter, James and John were battling fatigue and sorrow of their own that night. They were exhausted by the hectic pace of recent days, and overwhelmed by the sense that the end was near. To be sure, they should have stayed awake.

2. Jesus rebuked them for sleeping (22:46): ***Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation":*** Jesus' question certainly suggests that they had let him

down by falling asleep. Initially Jesus told the weary disciples to sleep on (Mark 14:41). As he heard the soldiers coming to arrest him, Jesus awakened the disciples and urged them to pray as a protection against the temptations they would face in the next few hours.

II. Arrest of Jesus (22:47-65).

A. Jesus Confronts Judas (22:47-48):

1. Approach of Judas (22:47): ***While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him:*** When he had left the upper room, Judas went immediately to the chief priests, the men who had hired him. It must have taken some time for the group to get organized. Temple police, soldiers, members of the Sanhedrin would all have to be notified. Since that was a holiday, and many would be visiting relatives and friends, that would be no easy task. But the enemies could not afford to let this opportunity pass them by. Jesus was alone, outside the city with only eleven of his disciples. They would be able to seize him without provoking any riots. Judas led them straight to the Garden of Gethsemane. He had a hunch that Jesus would be there because he went there often (John 18:2). To emphasize the dreadful deed that Judas was about to do, the text describes him as one of the Twelve. The prearranged signal was that Judas would greet Jesus with a kiss. The officers did not want to make any mistake in the dark and seize the wrong man.

2. Rebuke of Judas (22:48): ***But Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?":*** A kiss was a sign of friendship and affection as well as a greeting. Judas greeted Jesus with the title Rabbi (Mark 14:45). Then he started to kiss Jesus. By asking Judas this question, Jesus was still urging Judas to think about what he was doing. The question is, in effect, yet another warning to Judas to abandon his course of action. Judas was not deterred. He kissed Jesus. The officers moved forward to arrest him.

B. Jesus Restrains his Disciples (22:49-51):

1. They asked for direction (22:49): ***When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?":*** It finally dawned on the disciples what was happening. They awaited the command from their Master to attempt to defend him with their two swords. This again shows that the disciples had failed to grasp the significance of Jesus' words in vv. 36 and 38.

2. They resorted to violence (22:50): ***And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear:*** Events were unfolding quickly. Before Jesus could respond to the question of the previous verse, Peter drew his sword and swung it in the direction of the nearest member of the hostile crowd. Peter for the moment was trying to make good on his boast of v. 33. Malchus, the high priest's servant, was on the receiving end of Peter's sword. He lost his right ear. See John 18:10.

3. Jesus prevented further violence (22:51): ***But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him:*** Jesus was forbidding the use of force to protect him. A more detailed account of what he said is found in John 18:11 and Matt. 26:52-54. Jesus had compassion even on his enemies. He restored the man's ear.

C. Jesus Exposes the Officers (22:52-53):

1. They were treating him as a common criminal (22:52): ***Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs?":*** Jesus then addressed the leaders of the crowd. They had come against him that holy Passover night with weapons as if he were some dangerous criminal. Was that really necessary?

2. They had ignored many opportunities to arrest Jesus (22:53): ***Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour--when darkness reigns":*** In reality Jesus had been a quiet, peaceful Prophet, sitting day by day in the temple, teaching the people. His life had been an open book. Had he been guilty of any crimes, those in charge of law and order

would have had every chance to seize him. These words were designed to make those in the crowd reflect on their guilt. Most hardened themselves to his words. But some of these arresting officers may have later become Christians. This was the predetermined hour in which the powers of darkness had their way with Jesus. How appropriate, then, that it was in the midst of darkness that they arrested him.

III. Trial by the High Priest (22:54-65):

A. Circumstances (22:54): *Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance:* When they saw Jesus arrested, the disciples deserted him and fled into the darkness (Matt. 26:56). At a safe distance Peter followed the crowd to their destination, the house of the high priest Caiaphas. The youngest apostle, John, was known to those who keep the gates to the courtyard. With his influence he was able to gain admission for Peter (John 18:15-16).

B. Betrayal by Peter (22:55-62):

1. Peter at the fire of the enemy (22:55): *But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them:* In the courtyard of the high priest's palace some of the arresting crowd lingered. They built a fire because of the chill in the air. Peter cautiously joined them around the fire, perhaps for warmth, perhaps to learn what he could of their intentions regarding Jesus.

2. Peter accused by a maid (22:56-57): *A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him". 57 But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said:* In the flickering light of the fire, one of the servant girls studied the dark figure of Peter as he huddled there. No doubt he was concealing his face as much as possible, and saying nothing. His behavior aroused her suspicion. The girl then publicly identified Peter as one of Jesus' followers. Peter panicked, and blurted out this denial of even knowing Jesus.

3. Peter accused a second time (22:58): *A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied:* Peter attempted to leave the courtyard (Matt. 26:71) where he was confronted by another servant girl (Matt. 26:71; Mark 14:69). She was joined, it would seem by a man. Both identified him as a disciple of Jesus. Again Peter lied and disavowed any relationship with Jesus.

4. Peter accused a third time (22:59-60): *About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean". 60 Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed:* No doubt the people in the courtyard were now keeping a close eye on Peter, watching his every move. After about an hour, someone else, even more emphatically, insisted that Peter must be a disciple of Jesus since he obviously was a Galilean. His accent identified him as a Galilean (Matt. 26:73). At this point a relative of Malchus shouts out that he had seen him in the Garden (John 18:26). Angry and excited Peter now began to swear that he did not know Jesus (Mark 14:71). While Peter was still cursing and denying that he knew Jesus, a rooster crowed.

5. Peter recalled Jesus' earlier prediction (22:61-62): *The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." 62 And he went outside and wept bitterly:* At the very moment the rooster crowed, the Jewish police were transporting Jesus to a holding area. They escorted him along an open hallway within view of the courtyard. Jesus momentarily fixed his eyes on Peter even as Peter was following Jesus with his eyes. Peter then remembered what Jesus had predicted earlier that evening regarding how he would deny his Lord. With every eye fixed on Jesus, those in the courtyard did not notice that Peter made his exit. Peter now realizes what a terrible thing he had done. His denial was all the more tragic in view of his earlier boasts, and the warnings of Jesus about his denial.

C. Abuse of Jesus (22:62-65):

1. Physical abuse (22:63): ***The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him:*** The policemen who were under the authority of the Sanhedrin took Jesus to a holding area. There they mocked him and his reputation as a Prophet.
2. Psychological abuse (22:64): ***They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?":*** They covered his eyes, then struck him. Then they demanded that he identify the one who struck him.
3. Verbal abuse (22:65): ***And they said many other insulting things to him:*** Luke cannot bear to go into any more detail regarding the insults hurled at Jesus by the Jewish police.

III. Trial by the Council (22:66-71):

A. Circumstances (22:66): ***At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them:*** The other Gospels report that Jesus stood before Annas and before Caiaphas during the course of Thursday night. The Sanhedrin, however, could not legally conduct business at night. Hence it was necessary for that body to meet early in the morning so as to give a semblance of legality to the proceedings against Jesus. The council or Sanhedrin was composed of the 24 chief priests, 24 scribes who were also Pharisees, and 24 elders of the people.

B. Leaders Challenged Jesus (22:67):

1. They demanded to know his identity (22:67a): ***"If you are the Christ, " they said, "tell us."*** The witnesses who were scheduled to testify before the Sanhedrin regarding Jesus were not agreed in their testimony (Mark 14:55-59). So the officers of the Sanhedrin were compelled to try to get Jesus to incriminate himself by his own testimony. If they could get him to admit in court that he was the Christ, with all the political concepts associated with that title in the minds of people, they would have a charge which they could take to the Romans with a recommendation of execution.
2. Jesus refused to satisfy their demand (22:67b): ***Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me:*** Jesus was more clever than that. He would not answer their question because they were so prejudiced against him they would not believe him no matter what he said.

C. Jesus Challenged the Officers (22:68-70):

1. He pointed out their hardness (22:68): ***And if I asked you, you would not answer:*** Jesus attempted to help these learned men come to a realization of his identity by asking them questions which would force them to acknowledge him; but they would not answer his questions. He had already tried this method once before (Luke 20:3-7).
2. He made an astounding prediction (22:69): ***But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God":*** Jesus is giving a commentary on Ps. 110:1 and Dan. 7:13,14. The idea that the Messiah would be seated at the right hand of God is clearly stated in the Old Testament prophecies. These learned religious leaders would have understood that fact. By Son of Man Jesus is referring to himself. Jesus here is claiming that some day Caiaphas and his fellow council members will be on trial before him!
3. Jesus made a staggering claim (22:70): ***They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You are right in saying I am":*** To ascend in the clouds and to sit on the right hand of God meant that one was divine. They recognized the implications of his statement in v. 69, but they wished to have him on the record make the claim directly. Jesus did not hesitate to make the claim to be the Son of God.

D. Verdict (22:71): ***Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips":*** The Jewish authorities regarded Jesus' claim as blasphemy. They regarded Jesus as a mere man who was claiming divine honor for himself. The high priest tore his garment (Matt. 26:65; Mark 14:63). With this direct admission from the lips of Jesus, they did not need to prolong the proceedings by hearing the testimony of many witnesses.

King Executed by Political Authorities

Luke 23:1-56a

I. Trial before Pilate (23:1-7):

A. Circumstances (23:1): *Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate:* The Sanhedrin ordered Jesus to be brought to Pilate. Jews did not have the authority to execute criminals. If they were going to get rid of Jesus once and for all, Pilate would have to order his death. Pilate was the fifth Roman governor of Judea and Samaria. He was noted in Roman circles for his many acts of cruelty. By combining the various Gospel accounts one gains the impression that from start to finish Pilate did everything in his power to avoid sentencing Jesus.

B. Pilate's Initial Impression (23:2-4):

1. Accusations by the Jews (23:2): *And they began to accuse him, saying: "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar, and claims to be Christ, a king":* Before the Sanhedrin Jesus had been accused of blasphemy. But that was a religious charge. They needed a political charge in order to get Pilate to hear the case. They made three charges against Jesus. The first charge is rather vague. Perhaps they mean that Jesus' teaching had guided them down a wrong path in terms of their relations to the Romans. The second charge is an outright lie. Jesus never forbade his followers to pay taxes (Luke 20:21-26). The third charge is a half truth. Jesus did present himself as Christ, and therefore King. But he refused to be a king or Messiah in any political sense (John 6:15).
2. Interrogation by Pilate (23:3): *So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied:* Pilate was not so stupid as to think that the Jewish leadership would be upset by anyone uttering anti-Roman propaganda. He knew that it was envy that moved the Sanhedrin to bring the case to the governor's court. Pilate asked Jesus this question for the record, not because he believed there was any real chance that Jesus was a king. It is as if Pilate is saying: "You a king? How ridiculous!" Luke abbreviates Jesus' answer to the question. In effect Jesus answers in the affirmative, but he hastened to explain that he was not a king in the sense that Pilate meant the question (John 18:33-38).
3. Announcement by Pilate (23:4): *Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man":* Pilate told the crowd and their leaders that he could find no crime in Jesus which would warrant further action by the Roman court. This should have ended the matter.

C. Attempt to Evade Responsibility (23:5-7):

1. Further accusations by the Jews (23:5): *But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here":* The enemies pay Jesus an unintended compliment when they say that he stirs up the people throughout the land. Pilate paid special attention when he heard that Jesus' teaching career began in Galilee.
2. Further interrogation by Pilate (23:6): *On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean:* Galileans had the reputation of being in the forefront of rebellion against Rome. The crowd, no doubt, thought they had scored a point against Jesus by mentioning his origins in Galilee. Pilate, however, had another reason for inquiring directly as to whether or not Jesus was a Galilean.
3. Reassignment of jurisdiction (23:7): *When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time:* Roman law allowed an accused person to be tried by the rulers of the province to which he belonged. The ruler of Galilee was Herod Antipas, the same Herod who had killed John the Baptist. Herod had a palace in Jerusalem that he visited during the holidays, especially Passover. By assigning the case to Herod, Pilate could escape making a decision about Jesus.

II. Trial before Herod (23:8-12):

A. Herod's Expectation (23:8): *When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle:* When Herod heard of the marvelous works attributed to Jesus, he thought that John the Baptist had returned from the grave (Matt. 14:1-2). For some time he had been eager to see Jesus (Luke 9:9). Herod was both wicked and ruthless. He thought that Jesus would entertain him by performing some miraculous signs.

B. Herod's Interrogation (23:9-10):

1. Questioning by Herod (23:9): *He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer:* Jesus not only refused to perform a miracle before Herod, he refused even to answer his questions. Herod had had his opportunity to hear God's Word from John. He had showed no sign of repentance. He deserved no answer from Jesus.

2. Accusations by the observers (23:10): *The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him:* Jesus' enemies followed the proceedings from Pilate's court to Herod's palace. They wanted to make sure that Herod did not find this man innocent. So they kept shouting accusations against Jesus.

C. Herod's Mockery (23:11): *Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate:* Herod was probably too scared to condemn Jesus to death. His conscience still bothered him about the execution of John. Yet to show his contempt for this captive, he and his bodyguards began to subject the helpless prisoner to ridicule. If Jesus was a king, let him wear a gorgeous robe! In that garb Jesus was sent back to Pilate across town.

D. Herod's Friend (23:12): *That day Herod and Pilate became friends--before this they had been enemies:* Luke does not say why Herod and Pilate had been enemies prior to this occasion. Perhaps the answer is found in Luke 13:1 where Pilate had ordered several of Herod's subjects to be executed. Things changed after the trial of Jesus. Pilate had honored Herod by sending Jesus to him for trial. These rulers realized that they were of kindred spirit when each saw the shameful manner in which the other treated Jesus.

III. Condemnation by Pilate (23:13-25):

A. Pilate's Intention (23:13-16):

1. Results of Pilate's examination (23:13-14): *Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people 14 and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him:* Pilate summoned the people as well as the Sanhedrin in order to make a public announcement. Pilate declared that his examination of Jesus had revealed no evidence that he was a revolutionary as charged by the Sanhedrin.

2. Results of Herod's examination (23:15): *Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death:* Pilate defended his opinion about the guilt of Jesus by suggesting that Herod had examined the accused independently and had come to the same conclusion. Besides being innocent of the chief charge against him, Pilate states that he could find not other offenses that would warrant the death sentence.

3. Action contemplated (23:16): *Therefore, I will punish him and then release him":* If Jesus was innocent of all charges, why would Pilate punish him? He probably operated by the principle, Where there's smoke, there's fire. Jesus must be guilty of something, or his own countrymen would not have brought him into court. The punishment here envisioned is scourging, a terrible beating of the naked back with a whip.

B. Crowd's Demand (23:18-23):

1. They demanded the release of Barabbas (23:18-19): ***With one voice they cried out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" 19 (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.):*** Even scourging was too lenient in the minds of the crowd. They wanted Jesus dead. Because of the holidays, Pilate proposed to the crowd that he would release either Jesus or Barabbas, the dangerous criminal. Luke here abbreviates the account. See Mark 15:6-11. Pilate was probably convinced in his own mind that, given the alternative, the crowd would surely retract the demand for Jesus' death. Pilate was wrong. The crowd demanded the release of Barabbas. Barabbas had committed capital crimes. He had led an insurrection or rebellion against the Romans and their supporters, and he had committed murder.
2. They insisted on the execution of Jesus (23:20-21): ***Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. 21 But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!":*** Pilate still was determined to release Jesus. But why? Luke does not say. Although Pilate was a ruthless pagan, yet he seems to have realized that Jesus was of far more noble character than his accusers. The crowd was constantly prompted by their religious leaders during all these proceedings. Crucifixion was more than death, it was torture. That is what they wanted for Jesus. The crowd was quickly becoming a mob. Pilate faced a riot if he did not give them what they demanded.
3. They shouted for the crucifixion of Jesus (23:22-23): ***For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him". 23 But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed:*** Pilate again tried to reason with the crowd. For the third time he pronounced Jesus innocent of any capital crime. Pilate thought that scourging Jesus would be a compromise with the crowd, especially since he had found Jesus innocent. Here the issue was decided by who could shout the loudest. This crowd would not submit to reason. Here is a victory for injustice.

C. Pilate's Decision (23:24-25): ***So Pilate decided to grant their demand. 25 He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will:*** John 19:12 indicates that the crowd accused Pilate of not being Caesar's friend. That was the worst charge that could be made against a Roman official. Pilate allowed himself to be pressured by this implied threat into delivering over to death a man that he had found to be innocent. This is the most shocking travesty of justice history has ever recorded. Pilate released Barabbas, the infamous rebel-murderer. But the innocent Jesus he gave over to them to be crucified. Luke omits the story of the scourging and mockery to which Jesus was now subjected. See Matt. 27:27-31; Mark 15:16-20; John 19:1-3.

II. Procession to the Cross (23:26-32):

A. Participants in the Procession (23:26-27):

1. Jesus led the procession (23:26a): ***As they led him away...*** Public executions were carried out outside the city. Those condemned to be crucified were compelled to carry their own cross. Scholars are divided on whether this refers only to the crossbeam (the upright having already been set in place) or to the entire cross. Jesus carried his own cross for a time (John 19:16-17). Due to all that he had been through in the preceding 24 hours, Jesus was physically exhausted. He fell beneath the heavy burden.
2. Simon followed Jesus (23:26b): ***they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus:*** When Jesus fell, the soldiers then seized one of the crowd watching the procession and compelled him to carry Jesus' cross. Cyrene was located to the west of Egypt in what is today Libya. Many Jews lived in north Africa at this time. Simon may have been visiting relatives in the outlying areas around Jerusalem. Simon later became a

Christian. He had two sons, Rufus and Alexander (Mark 15:21), one of whom is mentioned in Paul's letter to the Romans (Rom 16:13).

3. The crowd (23:27): ***A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him:*** Not everybody in Jerusalem opposed Jesus. In the huge crowd that followed the crucifixion procession to the place of execution were some of his loyal followers. In that crowd also were women who were not necessarily followers of Jesus, but who were moved emotionally by the pitiful sight of his physical condition.

B. Prediction during the Procession (23:28-31):

1. Their misplaced sorrow (23:28): ***Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children:*** Disregarding for the moment his personal agony, Jesus addressed these women who were weeping as daughters of Jerusalem. Unless these women and their children repented, they faced a bleak future of God's judgment. Mere sympathy for the suffering of Jesus will not save them. Their city and its temple faced total destruction within a few short years. Of this Jesus had warned again and again in his teaching. Even on his way to the cross he was moved to give one last warning to the citizens of Jerusalem. Note the absence of self-pity in our Lord!

2. Their overwhelming suffering (23:29-30):

a. They would see their children suffer (23:29): ***For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!':*** The sufferings of the city of Jerusalem would be so severe in AD 68-70 when the Romans attacked, that women would be considered blessed if they were childless. The Romans would show no mercy to the inhabitants of the place, including women and children. Better not to have children, than to be compelled to watch those children suffer the agonies of war.

b. They would wish to hide themselves (23:30): ***Then "they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!":*** In AD 70 during the Roman attack the citizens of Jerusalem would wish they were dead. Better dead than to fall into the hands of the Romans to be taken as slaves, raped or slaughtered. The same wish will be on the lips of the unsaved in the great day of the Lamb's wrath (Rev 6:16-17).

3. Their certain fate (23:31): ***For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?":*** Jesus here makes use of a common proverb. If green wood is made to burn, how much more dry wood. The green wood here represents Jesus; the dry wood represents those who have rejected him. If God has not spared Jesus, then the divine judgment will surely fall in full measure upon those who have sentenced him to die.

C. Companions in the Procession (23:32): ***Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed:*** Jesus marched to the cross with two condemned criminals, as though he himself were a criminal.

III. Crucifixion (23:33-49):

A. Scene of the Crucifixion (23:33): ***When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left:*** Jesus was crucified on a hill called Golgotha, which means Skull. The gross injustice of the whole affair is seen in the fact that he died between the two criminals, as if he were one of them. Yet, from another point of view, perhaps it was appropriate. Jesus had always been the friend of sinners. Furthermore, prophecy indicated that Messiah would be reckoned with the transgressors (Isa. 53:12).

B. Forgiveness from the Cross (23:34):

1. Prayer for their forgiveness (23:34a): ***Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing":*** Jesus made seven statements from the cross, but only three of them are recorded by

Luke. Jesus was put on the cross at 9:00 AM. Before noontime he made this statement and the one recorded in v. 43. In his first word from the cross, Jesus prayed for those who were executing him. He asked for their forgiveness on the grounds that they did not realize that they were crucifying their Savior, their Messiah and the Son of God. Jesus taught his disciples to forgive their enemies, and here he sets the example for them. Here again is a fulfillment of prophecy (Isa. 53:12). Was Jesus' prayer answered? For forty years God delayed the destruction of Jerusalem, giving thousands of those who were responsible for his death an opportunity to find forgiveness through the gospel.

2. Response to his forgiveness (23:34b): ***And they divided up his clothes by casting lots:*** The custom of the Roman soldiers was to divide among themselves the garments of the crucifixion victims. This they did by casting lots, which in this case probably refers to throwing dice. Jesus' headgear, sandals, belt and outer garment were divided among the four soldiers (John 19:23). They gambled for possession of the seamless tunic. This is another fulfillment of prophecy (Ps. 22:18).

C. Mockery at the Cross (23:35-39):

1. Mockery by the leaders (23:35): ***The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One":*** The religious leaders--chief priests, scribes and elders--however, were unmoved by the sight of his agony or by his words of forgiveness. They continued their propaganda campaign against Jesus even as he was dying. They sneered at his claims to be mankind's Savior. They gloated over his helpless condition. Note that these rulers were not addressing Jesus directly. That was beneath their dignity. Clearly they were playing to the crowd. Surely, they shouted, this man would be able to save himself if he were really God's Chosen One or Messiah!

2. Mockery by the soldiers (23:36): ***The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself":*** The four Roman soldiers joined the Jewish rulers in mocking Jesus. Under the hot sun for several hours, no doubt, made Jesus very thirsty (Matt. 27:47-49). Apparently periodically during the ordeal the soldiers would offer the victims liquid to moisten their lips and wet their throats. The soldiers used one such occasion as an opportunity to express their contempt for Jesus. A king should not allow himself to be so battered and abused. If he really were the king of the Jews he should come down from the cross.

3. Mockery by the notice (23:38): ***There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS:*** Pilate had caused a notice to be attached to the cross above Jesus' head. This title or accusation was written in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The words may have been slightly different in the three languages, for the four Gospels have given differing versions of it. The four agree, however, that Pilate referred to Jesus as "King of the Jews." Pilate hated the Jews and their leaders. He mocks them, and Jesus as well, by placing this inscription over his cross. This is what would happen to anyone pretending to be a king among the Jews.

4. Mockery by the criminals (23:39): ***One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!":*** One of the two criminals joined the soldiers and the Jewish religious rulers in mocking Jesus. If Jesus were really the Messiah as his followers claimed, he should be able to save himself and the two criminals as well. While at first both criminals mocked him (Matt. 27:44; Mark 15:32), by this time one of them grew silent. His faith was growing.

D. Salvation at the Cross (23:40-43):

1. He rebuked the other criminal (23:40): ***But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?":*** The three men on crosses were about to die. Should not this criminal be showing more respect for God in view of the fact that shortly he will meet his Maker? Is this any time to be hurling insults at a man of God?

2. He confessed his own guilt (23:41): ***We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong":*** The second criminal admitted his own guilt. The two criminals had committed acts worthy of death by crucifixion. But Jesus was guilty of no such crime.

3. He asked Jesus for salvation (23:42): ***Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom":*** The second criminal addresses the one in whom he now believes as Jesus, i.e., Savior (Luke 1:31; 2:21). He believes that Jesus someday will have a kingdom. When? At his death? Maybe. But probably the criminal believed that Jesus would have a kingdom at the end of the age. Whenever he received that kingdom, he asked that Jesus might remember him, i.e., include him in his kingdom.

4. He received the Savior's promise (23:43): ***Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise":*** The believing thief received more than he asked for. He had asked for a blessing in the distant future. He would receive a blessing that very day. He had asked to be remembered; he received assurance that he would be with Jesus, in his immediate presence. Paradise is heaven (2 Cor 12:2, 4; Rev 2:7). The argument is sometimes raised that since this thief was saved without being baptized, that therefore baptism is not necessary for our salvation. This argument fails to note that the criminal was saved before the death and resurrection of Jesus. The command to "Repent and be baptized" is part of gospel age preaching. The church today in the gospel age has no authority to hold out hope on any other grounds. If God wishes to save a person without baptism that would be an exceptional case known only to the Lord.

E. Signs at the Cross (23:44-45):

1. Darkness at the scene (23:44-45a): ***It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour: 45 For the sun stopped shining:*** Counting from 6:00 AM, the sixth hour of the day would be 12:00 noon, the brightest and hottest time of the day. From noon until 3:00 PM when Jesus actually died, darkness covered the land of Palestine. Darkness symbolizes the judgment of God upon the sins of mankind. Jesus bore the sins of all mankind on the cross. He was dying the death that is the wages of human sin (Rom. 6:23). He was our substitute. No one could see the sun through the thick, supernatural darkness that enveloped the land.

2. Rending of the temple curtain (23:45b): ***And the curtain of the temple was torn in two:*** During the darkness the veil in the temple was torn in two. This was the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies inside the temple (Heb. 6:19; 9:3; 10:20). The Holy of Holies symbolizes heaven. Through the death of Christ the way to heaven is now secure to all who put their faith in Christ (Heb. 10:19-20). The other Gospels make clear that this veil was torn from top to bottom. This signifies that the tearing of this huge curtain was a miracle.

F. Victory at the Cross (23:46): *Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last:* Luke omits the third, fourth, fifth and sixth statements of Jesus from the cross. Jesus wanted all present to hear the words of his seventh saying. Note that he calls God Father even to the very end. He did not "give up" on God during his six hours of ordeal on the cross. Jesus placed his spirit--that part of man which does not die--in the hands of the loving Father. At death the spirit of the believer leaves the body to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23). Having said these words, Jesus died.

G. Observers at the Cross (23:47-49):

1. Opinion of the centurion (23:47): ***The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man":*** A centurion normally had a hundred soldiers in his command. Apparent this centurion had been placed in charge of the crucifixion detail. He observed the heroic way Jesus had died, without bitterness toward his enemies. He observed the unusual darkness that had covered the land for three hours. He saw how Jesus handled the taunts and jeers. He witnessed Jesus' undying faith in his Father. This battle-hardened soldier was softened by what he saw that day. He began to praise or glorify God by acknowledging that Jesus was a righteous, i.e., innocent, man. He confessed that Jesus was God's Son (Matt. 27:54; Mark 15:39).

2. Distress of the people (23:48): ***When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away:*** The curious crowds which had stood there for six hours watching the three men die were moved by what they saw. The darkness and the earthquake

(Matt 27:51-52) made them finally realize that a great travesty of justice had been done that day, and they had been a part of it by allowing their religious leaders to manipulate them into the crying out for Jesus' death. They returned to their homes beating their breasts in self-reproach, blaming themselves for what had happened.

3. Grief of the disciples (23:49): ***But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things:*** At first those who knew Jesus stood apart from the crowds that day, perhaps for reasons of personal safety. As the hours passed, a small group of Jesus' followers approached the cross. The only apostle known to have been present was John (John 19:26-27). The women included Mary the mother of Jesus (John 19:26-27); Mary's sister Salome, the mother of James and John; Mary the wife of Cleopas (the mother of James the Less and Joses), and Mary Magdalene. See Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40-41; John 19:25. What courage these women displayed, to draw near to the cross, something most of the male disciples were unwilling to do.

IV. Burial of the King (23:50-56a).

A. Joseph's Request (23:50-52):

1. Petitioner (23:50):

a. He was a member of the Council (23:50a): ***Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council...*** Joseph was a member of the council or Sanhedrin, the supreme governing body of the Jewish religion.

b. He was an upright man (23:50b-51a): ***a good and upright man 51 who had not consented to their decision and action.*** Joseph must not have been present when the crucial vote against Jesus was taken. (Those present had unanimously agreed to condemn Jesus; Mark 14:64; 15:1).

c. He came from Arimathea (23:51b): ***He came from the Judean town of Arimathea:*** Arimathea was a town about 20 miles northwest of Jerusalem. It is called a Judean town to distinguish it from the several Gentile cities located in Palestine at this time.

d. He was a man of faith (23:51c): ***And he was waiting for the kingdom of God:*** Joseph believed in the concept of the kingdom of God as preached by John and Jesus. He believed that the reign of God in human hearts was already being established. He ardently hoped for that reign to be established more and more. For some time Joseph had been a secret disciple of Jesus (John 19:38; Matt. 27:57).

2. Petition (23:52): ***Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body:*** It took courage for Joseph to ask permission to give the body of Jesus an honorable burial. Under Roman law, those condemned to die had lost the right to be buried. Add to this the fact that Pilate hated the Jews. He had but a few hours earlier refused the request of the Jewish leaders to change the inscription on Jesus' cross (John 19:20-22). Furthermore, by this action Joseph was openly proclaiming to the world, including his former colleagues in the Sanhedrin, that he was a disciple of Jesus.

B. Joseph's Actions (23:53-55):

1. Description of his work (23:53):

a. Preparation of the body (23:53a): ***Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth...*** Again Luke abbreviates the story. See Mark 15:44-45. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead. He checked with the centurion to make sure that Jesus had been pronounced dead at the scene. Only then did he grant the body to Joseph. Nicodemus, another secret follower of the Lord, assisted Joseph (John 19:39-42). The body of Jesus was treated according to the burial customs of the Jews (John 19:40). This means that the corpse would first be washed. Then it was tightly wrapped in linen, with a mixture of spices sprinkled between the wrappings.

b. Placement of the body (23:53b): ***and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid:*** Joseph's tomb was new, it had never been used. This was unusual in that land where family tombs have been used repeatedly over the centuries and are still used to this day. Joseph, a man of wealth, had intended to use this new tomb for his own burial. Here again a Scripture is fulfilled (Isa.

53:9). The tomb was in a garden very near the hill where Jesus was crucified. In ancient times believers built a huge church over what they believed was the crucifixion hill and the tomb. This church is known as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

3. Urgency of his work (23:54): ***It was Preparation Day and the Sabbath was about to begin:*** This was the Jewish name for what we call Friday. The Sabbath began at sundown. No travel or work was permitted on the Sabbath.

4. Observers of his work (23:55): ***The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it:*** Nothing in the text suggests that the women assisted in the interment of Jesus' body. Perhaps they refrained out of modesty; preparing the naked corpse would be more appropriate for the male disciples. Nonetheless, they were keenly interested in observing from a distance. They followed Nicodemus and Joseph as they transported the body the short distance to the Garden tomb. They wanted to know exactly where the tomb was located and how the body was laid.

King Eats in Jerusalem

Luke 23:56-24:53

I. Revelation to the Women (23:56-24:12):

A. Women Away from the Tomb (23:56):

1. Work of the women (23:56a): ***Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes:*** The women returned to their places of lodging and began to prepare additional spices and perfumes to be taken to the tomb of Jesus. They were unable to complete their preparations before the beginning of the Sabbath.

2. Rest of the women (23:56b): ***But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment:*** The women strictly obeyed the command of the Law and rested through the Sabbath. Saturday at 6:00 PM the Sabbath ended, the stores open. Two of the female followers went to the bazaars to purchase still more spices (Mark 16:1). All was made ready so that they could depart for the tomb before sunrise the following day, the first day of the week.

B. Women Returning to the Tomb (24:1): *On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb:* At dawn on the first day of the week they made their way back to the tomb to complete the work that Joseph and Nicodemus had started on Friday afternoon. The custom was to bind spices to the corpse so as to prevent odor when the body began to decompose. It was still dark when the women left their homes (John 20:1), but by the time they arrived at the tomb the sun had risen (Mark 16:2).

C. Women outside the Tomb (24:2): *They found the stone rolled away from the tomb:* The women apparently had not heard about the sealing of the tomb and the posting of the guard by the authorities (Matt 27:62-66). On the way to the tomb they worried about who would roll away the stone (Mark 16:3). They need not to have worried. During the night an angel of God had rolled that stone away (Matt 28:2).

D. Women in the Tomb (24:3-8):

1. They found the tomb empty (24:3): ***But when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus:*** Most tombs of that period had two rooms. The outer room provided space for a few mourners to gather; the inner room contained the deceased. The important thing here is that the tomb was empty!

2. They encountered angels (24:4): ***While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them:*** While the women were reflecting on the meaning of the empty tomb, suddenly two men--obviously angels--stood beside them. Their garments were dazzling, reflecting the fact that they had just descended from the realm of beauty, splendor and

purity. Apparently one of those angels was the spokesman and the more prominent of the two, for Matthew (28:3,5) and Mark (16:5) do not even mention the second angel.

3. They received a gentle rebuke (24:5): ***In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?":*** The fear of these women at the sudden appearance of such striking figures in the crowded confines of a tomb is understandable. Realizing they were in the presence of angels, they bowed their faces to the ground in humility and, perhaps, to shield their eyes from the dazzling sight.

4. They heard a glorious announcement (24:6a): ***He is not here; he has risen!*** The angels delivered a mild rebuke to these women. While they meant well in coming to the tomb with their spices, they were manifesting lack of faith in the promises of their Master to rise again the third day. The true explanation for the empty tomb is then announced: He is risen!

5. They received a pertinent reminder (24:6b-7): ***Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again"***: The angels gently but firmly reminded the women of the predictions which Jesus had made while he was in Galilee. These predictions are found in Luke 9:22, 44; 18:31-34.

6. They recalled the predictions of Jesus (24:8): ***Then they remembered his words:*** The angels jogged the memories of the women. They now recalled how on at least three separate occasions (if one takes into account all the Gospels) Jesus had plainly predicted his arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection. Since these women often traveled with the disciples of Jesus, they probably had heard at least one of these predictions directly from the lips of the Lord. They now realized that Jesus had not merely been alluding to the resurrection at the end of time. The empty tomb and the angels' announcement made clear what Jesus had meant.

E. Women Leaving the Tomb (24:9-11):

1. They reported their discovery (24:9): ***When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others:*** Luke abbreviates much of what happened at this point, leaving it to Matthew and John to fill in the details (See Matt. 28:8-15; John 20:10-29). These women did as the angels directed them (Matt. 28:7; Mark 16:7). They reported what they had discovered to the eleven apostles and to as many of the other disciples as they could reach. For their obedience and faith, those women were rewarded that day by meeting the risen Lord himself (Matt. 28:9-10).

2. They were prominent disciples (24:10): ***It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles:*** Some of the more prominent female disciples who were at the tomb are here named. On Mary Magdalene and Joanna see comments on Luke 8:2-3. Mary the mother of James (the Less) is probably the wife of Cleopas. Compare Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40 and John 19:25.

3. They were not considered credible witnesses (24:11): ***But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense:*** What makes the Easter account so convincing is that the disciples of Jesus did not expect him to rise from the dead. They considered the reports of the women to be the figments of rich imagination, worthless stories.

F. Women Partially Vindicated (24:12): ***Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened:*** Alerted by Mary Magdalene, Peter (along with John; John 20:1-10) raced to the tomb to verify for themselves that the body was gone. He saw the strips of cloth still lying there in the tomb. The linen napkin that had covered the face was neatly folded (John 20:7). Surely this was not the work of grave robbers. Nor would disciples have unwrapped the body had they been of a mind to try to steal it from the tomb. Luke does not say that Peter immediately jumped to the conclusion that Jesus was alive. He simply went home to ponder what he had seen. Surely the thought at least crossed his mind that his Lord might have walked out of that tomb.

II. Revelation to Two Disciples (24:13-43):

A. Circumstances (24:13-16):

1. Their destination (24:13): ***Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem:*** The first appearance of the risen Lord recorded by Luke was to two men traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Apparently the two men lived in that village which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.
2. Their conversation (24:14): ***They were talking with each other about everything that had happened:*** As they were walking, the two disciples were talking about the things which had recently taken place in Jerusalem, viz., the crucifixion and the report of some of the female disciples that they had found the tomb empty that very morning.
3. Their companion (24:15-16): ***As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them: 16 But they were kept from recognizing him:*** One might guess that the two disciples were walking slowly, as people are prone to do when they are sad. Suddenly footsteps were heard behind them, those of Jesus. Why did the two disciples not recognize Jesus? Luke does not give the answer to that question. Perhaps he deliberately disguised himself, his voice, etc. Perhaps God temporarily restrained them from recognizing him. Perhaps he appeared in another form. Perhaps they were so grief-stricken their minds simply were not clearly focused. What is clear is that Jesus did not wish to be recognized in person, until he had made these two men see him in the Old Testament Scripture.

B. Dejection (24:17-24):

1. Question of Jesus (24:17): ***He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast:*** Jesus asked the men a question. That was often his method of teaching his disciples. He wanted them to rehearse the events of the past few days so he could teach them a lesson. The question caught the men off guard. Perhaps they were reluctant to share their most inner thoughts about these matters with a total stranger. They stood looking at each other in sadness, each one hoping the other would assume the responsibility of responding to the stranger.
2. Question of Cleopas (24:18): ***One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?":*** Finally, Cleopas, after an embarrassing pause, spoke up. He responded to the stranger's question with a question. Could this stranger be totally ignorant of the terrible tragedy of the past few days in Jerusalem? The question expresses both shock and perhaps rebuke. If he didn't know about the sad events, he should have known. Nothing further is known about the disciple named Cleopas. Some link him to the Clopas of John 19:25.
3. Explanation of the two (24:19-21):
 - a. Powerful ministry of Jesus (24:19): ***"What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people:*** Jesus continued to pretend that he did not know to what recent events Cleopas was referring. This forced Cleopas to review the facts about Jesus. Convinced that the stranger was totally uninformed, Cleopas gave a very basic summary of the facts. He refers to Jesus of Nazareth to distinguish him from many others who had the name Jesus. They described their Master as he popularly was known as a mighty prophet. Without question Jesus was indeed powerful in word and deed.
 - b. Shocking death of Jesus (24:20): ***The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him:*** The two disciples placed the blame for Jesus' death squarely on Jewish leaders. This is not anti-Semitism. It is a true reflection of the facts of history. Had not the Sanhedrin insisted, Pilate would never have ordered Jesus to be executed.
 - c. Overwhelming disappointment (24:21): ***But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place:*** Cleopas and his companion had dared to hope that Jesus might be Israel's deliverer both politically and spiritually. Even after Jesus died on the cross still these two had hoped for some miraculous intervention by God

to bring deliverance. Now it was the third day, and things had not changed for the better. Hope for deliverance was fading.

4. Confusion over recent events (24:22-24):

a. Report of the women (24:22-23): ***In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive:*** The two had not left Jerusalem before the women came with their report. The two men express skepticism regarding the report of the women to have seen angels. They regarded the appearance of the angels as only a vision.

b. Report of the disciples (24:24): ***Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see":*** The report of the women regarding the empty tomb was verified by some of the male disciples. Still at the time when these two had departed from Jerusalem no one had reported actually seeing Jesus.

C. Instruction (24:25-27):

1. Jesus mildly rebuked the disciples (24:25): ***He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:*** Jesus calls the two disciples foolish or dull. They had not carefully read their Old Testament. Nor had they listened carefully to the teaching of Jesus during his ministry when he explained the prophecies to them. They focused only on the prophecies of glory. Thus these disciples--and most of the people of that time--were slow to believe everything the prophets had spoken. They believed only as much Scripture as agreed with their preconceived notions.

2. Jesus asked a probing question (24:26): ***Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?":*** Most people at that time ignored the passages which indicated that Messiah would achieve glory only through suffering.

3. Jesus explained the Scriptures (24:27): ***And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself:*** Jesus then gave these two disciples a crash course in messianic prophecy. He began with the writings of Moses--Genesis through Deuteronomy. Then he interpreted for them the writings of the other Old Testament prophets. All of the Old Testament pointed forward to Christ.

D. Revelation (24:28-32):

1. Invitation to Jesus (24:28-29): ***As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther: 29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them:*** Still the two disciples had no clue that Jesus had joined them on the road. The Lord kept up his disguise when they reached the village of Emmaus. He pretended that he was traveling further. Since it was late in the day, the two disciples invited Jesus to stay with them for the night. Traveling after dark was vary dangerous. Perhaps they also hoped that the stranger might continue to teach them the Word of God. Jesus agreed to stay with the two.

2. Blessing by Jesus (24:30): ***When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them:*** As the trio sat down to eat, Jesus took over. He took the bread and blessed it and began to give it to them. Jesus' custom was to offer thanks to God for food prior to eating.

3. Recognition of Jesus (24:31): ***Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight:*** In the breaking of bread the disciples recognized Jesus. Why? Luke does not say. Perhaps they observed the nail prints in his hands as he handed them the bread. Perhaps they recognized him when he prayed in the same manner that they had heard him pray before so many meals in the past. In his resurrection body Jesus was able to appear and disappear at will. Almost before the two disciples realized what had happened, he was gone.

4. Conviction about Jesus (24:32): ***They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?":*** The two disciples reflected on

the way their hearts had been warmed, their minds illuminated, and their hope revived through the teaching of the stranger. Now they realized that the women had been right after all!

E. Excitement (24:33-35):

1. Excitement of the two (24:33): ***They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together:*** The seven-mile return trip to Jerusalem would be very dangerous after dark. But this news could not wait. They had to tell the other disciples what had happened. The term Eleven refers to the apostles whose number has been reduced by one through the suicide of Judas. Apparently the two disciples knew exactly where to find the Eleven. Other disciples had come together with the Eleven to share information about the exciting reports of that resurrection day.

2. Excitement of the eleven (24:34): ***And saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon":*** Before the two disciples could share their news with the Eleven and the other disciples, they were greeted with the news that the Lord had risen indeed and had made a special appearance to Simon Peter. By this time there had been so many sightings of the risen Lord (as reported in the other Gospels) that there was no doubt any longer that he was alive. The appearance to Peter, the leader of the group, confirmed the reality of the resurrection for the other apostles and disciples.

3. Report of the two (24:35): ***Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread:*** Finally the two from Emmaus got a chance to tell their story. We can imagine that the group bombarded the two with questions about everything Jesus had said and done.

III. Revelation to the Group (24:36-49).

A. His Appearance was Sudden (24:36): ***While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you":*** On Easter Sunday night, late in the evening, Jesus appeared to those who were gathered together in Jerusalem. For fear of the Jews the doors were locked (John 20:19). All of a sudden Jesus was there standing in their midst. His first words to the group put them at ease. By his death and resurrection Jesus had made possible true peace for all those who put their faith in him.

B. His Appearance was Disturbing (24:37): ***They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost:*** The sudden character of the appearance, and the fact that no one had seen Jesus enter the room may account for this reaction on the part of some. The text does not say that all of those present thought it was a ghost. Jesus had met with Peter and with the two Emmaus disciples earlier in the day.

C. His Appearance was Convincing (24:38-43):

1. He mildly rebuked them (24:38): ***He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?":*** Jesus asked the group two questions. He asks them why they are troubled by his appearance. Why do they continue to doubt the obvious, viz., that Jesus had arisen from the dead?

2. He showed them his wounds (24:39-40): ***Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." 40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.*** Jesus shows the disciples his hands and his feet. He wants them to observe the marks of his crucifixion. This was not a spirit body, it was the same body that had hung on the cross. He encouraged them to touch him. They could plainly see that Jesus had a body of flesh and bones. A spirit being--a ghost--could not have such a body.

3. He asked them for food (24:41): ***And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?":*** The disciples disbelieved for joy and continued for a while in this state. Only hours before these disciples had given up all hope. Now suddenly the greatest event in all history has occurred. Given these circumstances, most people would have taken some time to adjust their thinking. Modern believers can have more confidence in the

accounts of Jesus' resurrection precisely because the early disciples had to be absolutely sure before they allowed themselves to believe that Jesus could be alive. To help them along the path to unshakable conviction, Jesus asked if they had anything there to eat. Certainly a ghost would not need physical food, nor be able to consume it.

4. He ate a piece of fish (24:42-43): ***They gave him a piece of broiled fish; 43 And he took it and ate it in their presence:*** The fact that Jesus could take from one of them a piece of broiled fish again helped the disciples grasp that they were not in the presence of a ghost. Here is another manifestation of the patience of Jesus. By eating the fish Jesus supplied to the disciples proof positive that his body was real, the very same body which had been buried on the previous Friday.

III. Briefing for Mission (24:44-49):

A. Instruction in Scripture (24:44-47):

1. Principle of fulfillment (24:44): ***He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms":*** Luke here skips over some forty days of resurrection appearances (Acts 1:3) to the last day before the Lord ascended into heaven. Again the Lord was meeting with his apostles in an upper room in Jerusalem. Jesus again points out that everything which had happened was the necessary fulfillment of the plan of God revealed in Scripture. This he had explained to them even before the crucifixion. Here Jesus refers to the three great divisions of the Old Testament. In all three divisions there are prophecies pertaining to Jesus. To this day the Jews divide the Old Testament into (1) the Law, (2) the Prophets, and (3) the Writings, the largest book of which is Psalms.

2. Enlightenment of understanding (24:45): ***Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures:*** Jesus does for the entire group what he had already done for the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. His clear teaching gave them the key to understanding prophecies they had read all their lives. He wants them to see Christ in all the Scriptures.

3. Summary of prophecy (24:46-47):

a. Death and resurrection (24:46): ***He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day:*** Jesus' teaching from the Old Testament focused on three major themes. First, he showed them in the Scripture that Christ would suffer. He may have shared with them the prophecies in Pss. 22 and 69 and Isaiah 53. Second, he showed them from the prophecies that Christ would rise again from the dead on the third day.

b. Proclamation (24:47): ***And repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem:*** Third, Jesus showed from the Scriptures that after the resurrection the gospel should be proclaimed through all the earth to every nation. The gospel made clear that forgiveness of sins would be possible for those who repented--submitted themselves to Christ. This proclamation would be undertaken in the name of Christ, i.e., by his authority. The plan of reaching all nations with the gospel would begin with proclamation in Jerusalem. Many prophecies in the Old Testament stress that the Messiah would have a world-wide kingdom.

B. Commission for Service (24:48-49):

1. Their responsibility (24:48): ***You are witnesses of these things:*** This group of disciples had heard Jesus' teaching; they had seen with their own eyes his resurrection body; they had experienced in their own hearts the transforming power of the positive message that Jesus gave. They were therefore qualified, and must become, Jesus' witnesses.

2. His promise (24:49): ***I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high":*** The promise contained in this verse pertained primarily to the Eleven, soon to become again the Twelve (Acts 1:8). Just before he was arrested, Jesus had promised the Eleven that the Holy Spirit would come upon them to guide them into all truth. The apostles were told to remain in Jerusalem until they had been clothed with power from

on high. Ten days after Jesus ascended to heaven the Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles, and the age of Christ's kingdom was launched.

Ascension
Luke 24:50-53

A. Circumstances (24:50):

After the meal in Jerusalem, Jesus led his apostles out to the vicinity of Bethany on the Mount of Olives. There Jesus lifted up his hands and began to bless his disciples.

B. Description (24:51):

Luke gives further information about the events surrounding the ascension in Acts 1. Here Luke only says that Jesus left them and was taken up into heaven. Eventually a cloud surrounded him and he could no longer be seen. The New Testament Epistles tell us that he returned to heaven and there sat down at the right hand of God.

C. Joyous Worship (24:52-53):

In Acts 1 Luke tells how angels appeared immediately after Jesus ascended into heaven. They announced that some day Jesus would return to earth in like manner as they had seen him ascend. This announcement accounts for the great joy of the apostles. They worshiped him because they now realized fully that he was the Son of God. Back in Jerusalem the twelve stayed in the vicinity of the temple devoting themselves to praise. They were waiting for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Ten days later their wait ended in the glorious events of the day of Pentecost.