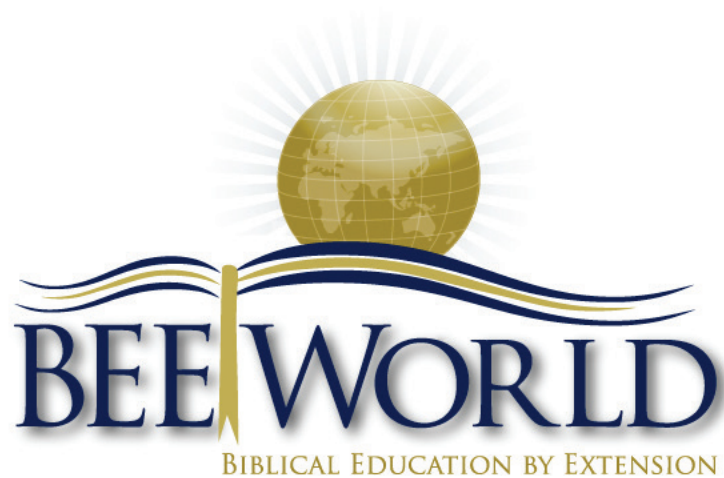


# Life of Christ

## Volume 2



## **LIFE OF CHRIST, VOLUME 2**

© 2012 BEE World

Every attempt has been made to provide correct information. However, the publisher does not guarantee the accuracy of the book and does not assume responsibility for information included in or omitted from it.

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the NET Bible®, ©1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org) All rights reserved. This material is available in its entirety as a free download or online web use at <http://net.bible.org>. Scripture quotations marked as NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible, © 1960, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the King James Version.

All rights reserved. This publication is protected by copyright, and except for brief excerpts for review purposes, permission must be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or likewise.

For information regarding permissions or special orders, please contact:

BEE World  
International Headquarters  
990 Pinon Ranch View, Ste. 100  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907

ISBN: 978-1-937324-17-9

First Edition

Printed in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11152012

# Contents

<b>Life of Christ, Volume 2</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Unit 1: The Journey Continues</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Lesson 1: His Mission Expands</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Topic 1: Going to Glory.....	6
Topic 2: The Mission of the Seventy-two.....	7
Topic 3: Crucial Lessons on Spiritual Living.....	9
Topic 4: Warnings.....	12
Topic 5: Final Accountability.....	14
Topic 6: Knowing, Being, and Doing.....	17
<b>Lesson 1: Self Check</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Lesson 1 Answers to Questions .....	20
Lesson 1 Self Check Answers.....	22
<b>Lesson 2: Lessons on Discipleship</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Topic 1: The Wicked Servant.....	24
Topic 2: Warnings to the Nation.....	30
Topic 3: Parables of the Lost.....	37
Topic 4: The Stewardship of Money.....	45
Topic 5: Matching Events.....	48
<b>Lesson 2: Self Check</b> .....	<b>49</b>
Lesson 2 Answers to Questions .....	51
Lesson 2 Self Check Answers.....	53
<b>Lesson 3: The Coming of the Kingdom</b> .....	<b>55</b>
Topic 1: Sin, Faith, and Duty.....	56
Topic 2: Ten Lepers.....	57
Topic 3: He Will Come Like Lightning.....	59
Topic 4: Three Tests of a Faithful Life.....	62
Topic 5: Let the Children Come.....	65
Topic 6: The Raising of Lazarus.....	66
Topic 7: Matching Events.....	69
Topic 8: Knowing, Being, and Doing.....	70
<b>Lesson 3 Self Check</b> .....	<b>90</b>
<b>Unit 1 Exam: Life of Christ, Volume 2</b> .....	<b>92</b>
Lesson 3 Answers to Questions .....	96
Lesson 3 Self Check Answers.....	99
Unit 1 Exam Answers .....	100
<b>Unit 2: His Ministry Concludes</b> .....	<b>101</b>
<b>Lesson 4: His Ministry Concludes</b> .....	<b>102</b>
Topic 1: What Must One Do to Inherit Eternal Life?.....	103
Topic 2: The Promise of Reward.....	109
Topic 3: The Passion Predicted.....	110
Topic 4: True Greatness.....	111
Topic 5: Sight to the Blind and Salvation to the Tax Collector.....	112
Topic 6: The Parable of the Rejected King.....	114
Topic 7: Knowing, Being, and Doing.....	117
<b>Lesson 4 Self Check</b> .....	<b>118</b>
Lesson 4 Answers to Questions .....	120
Lesson 4 Self Check Answers.....	122
<b>Lesson 5: The First Coming of the King</b> .....	<b>123</b>

Topic 1: Anointing for Burial .....	124
Topic 2: The First Coming of the King .....	126
Topic 3: Warning and Condemnation.....	129
Topic 4: Parables of Rejection .....	132
Topic 5: Give to Caesar .....	138
Topic 6: Matching Events.....	139
Topic 7: Knowing, Being, and Doing.....	139
<b>Lesson 5 Self Check .....</b>	<b>140</b>
Lesson 5 Answers to Questions .....	142
Lesson 5 Self Check Answers.....	144
<b>Lesson 6: The Discourse on the Mount of Olives .....</b>	<b>145</b>
Topic 1: Whose Wife Will She Be?.....	146
Topic 2: Confrontation with the Pharisees.....	147
Topic 3: The Close of His Public Ministry .....	151
Topic 4: The Olivet Discourse.....	157
Topic 5: Matching Events .....	165
<b>Lesson 6 Self Check .....</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Unit 2 Exam: Life of Christ, Volume 2 .....</b>	<b>168</b>
Lesson 6 Answers to Questions .....	173
Lesson 6 Self Check Answers.....	175
Unit 2 Exam Answers .....	176
<b>Unit 3: The Last Supper and the Upper Room Discourse.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Lesson 7: The Judgments at the Second Coming.....</b>	<b>178</b>
Topic 1: The Parable of the Wicked Servant.....	179
Topic 2: The Parable of the Ten Virgins.....	180
Topic 3: The Parable of Talents.....	184
Topic 4: The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats .....	189
Topic 5: Matching Events .....	193
<b>Lesson 7 Self Check .....</b>	<b>194</b>
Lesson 7 Answers to Questions .....	196
Lesson 7 Self Check Answers.....	198
<b>Lesson 8: The Last Supper.....</b>	<b>199</b>
Topic 1: Judas the Betrayer.....	200
Topic 2: Preparation for the Passover .....	201
Topic 3: Foot Washing and Humility .....	207
Topic 4: Foot Washing and Fellowship .....	208
Topic 5: Betrayal.....	209
Topic 6: The Passover Meal .....	210
Topic 7: The New Covenant .....	213
Topic 8: The New Commandment.....	216
Topic 9: The Four Questions .....	216
Topic 10: Matching Events .....	225
Lesson 8 Lesson Notes.....	226
<b>Lesson 8 Self Check .....</b>	<b>227</b>
Lesson 8 Answers to Questions .....	229
Lesson 8 Self Check Answers.....	231
<b>Lesson 9: The Upper Room Discourse .....</b>	<b>233</b>
Topic 1: The Vine and the Branches.....	234
Topic 2: Preparation for Hardship .....	241
Topic 3: The Ministry of the Spirit.....	241
Topic 4: Their Sorrow Will Turn to Joy .....	242

Topic 5: Christ Has Overcome the World .....	243
Topic 6: The Lord's Prayer .....	243
<b>Lesson 9 Self Check .....</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>Unit 3 Exam: Life of Christ, Volume 2 .....</b>	<b>249</b>
Lesson 9 Answers to Questions .....	253
Lesson 9 Self Check Answers .....	255
Unit 3 Exam Answers .....	256
<b>Unit 4: The Consummation .....</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>Lesson 10: His Trials .....</b>	<b>258</b>
Topic 1: The Battle in the Garden .....	259
Topic 2: The First Trial—Trial Before Annas .....	264
Topic 3: The Second Trial—Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin .....	267
Topic 4: The Third Trial—Before the Sanhedrin .....	269
Topic 5: The Fourth Trial—First Trial Before Pilate .....	270
Topic 6: The Fifth Trial—Before Herod .....	276
Topic 7: Matching Events .....	277
<b>Lesson 10 Self Check .....</b>	<b>278</b>
Lesson 10 Answers to Questions .....	280
Lesson 10 Self Check Answers .....	282
<b>Lesson 11: The Crucifixion and Burial .....</b>	<b>283</b>
Topic 1: The Sixth Trial .....	284
Topic 2: Golgotha .....	286
Topic 3: Awesome Wonders .....	294
Topic 4: Burial .....	296
Topic 5: Matching Events .....	298
Lesson 11 Lesson Notes .....	299
<b>Lesson 11 Self Check .....</b>	<b>300</b>
Lesson 11 Answers to Questions .....	302
Lesson 11 Self Check Answers .....	303
<b>Lesson 12: The Resurrection and Ascension .....</b>	<b>305</b>
Topic 1: The Resurrection .....	306
Topic 2: Evidence for the Resurrection .....	307
Topic 3: The Road to Emmaus .....	314
Topic 4: Behind Locked Doors .....	319
Topic 5: A Fishing Trip With the Disciples .....	321
Topic 6: Parting Words .....	325
Topic 7: Matching Events .....	329
<b>Lesson 12 Self Check .....</b>	<b>330</b>
<b>Unit 4 Exam: Life of Christ, Volume 2 .....</b>	<b>332</b>
Lesson 12 Answers to Questions .....	336
Lesson 12 Self Check Answers .....	338
Unit 4 Exam Answers .....	339
<b>Finished at Last! .....</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>Appendix: Matching Events .....</b>	<b>341</b>

# Life of Christ, Volume 2

---

## Continuing Your Study

You have done well. The first part of your study of Jesus' great life is behind you. Now we begin the second half of this twenty-four-lesson course.

At the end of the first half, Jesus had reached the midpoint of His ministry on earth. And two years into life with the disciples, Peter had made his great confession: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!" Jesus was transfigured before them, and in this course, we will see Him begin His final journey toward Jerusalem.

This journey ultimately would culminate in His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. During this, His final year of life, He devoted His time almost exclusively to the training of the Twelve. He told many of His most famous parables while on this final journey to glory.

## Course Introduction

The life of Jesus of Nazareth is, without question, the greatest life ever lived. In four short years of ministry, He not only launched a movement that changed history, but He revealed God the Father. The Holy Spirit knows, even if we sometimes do not, that the best way to communicate spiritual truths is to clothe them with flesh and blood. In the incarnation of the Son of God, God became man, and lived life as God intended men to live.

This course follows the chronology suggested by Johnston M. Cheney and Stanley Ellisen in their unique translation and seamless presentation of the four Gospels, *Jesus Christ: The Greatest Life*.

*The Greatest Life* is a valuable resource to follow during this study. It is available for purchase at major retailers (ISBN: 978-0-967986-40-1).

## Course Organization

### Units of Study

The lessons are grouped into four units:

Unit 1: Lessons 1-3

Unit 2: Lessons 4-6

Unit 3: Lessons 7-9

Unit 4: Lessons 10-12

As you plan your study schedule, decide a date you want to complete each unit. You can then divide this time into study periods for each lesson.

We suggest that you try to do a lesson a week, or three lessons per month. The lessons vary in length, but you should allocate about four hours per lesson. You can do this if you study about one hour each day. At this rate, it will take you approximately eight months to complete the course. Many desire to speed this up and do two or three lessons per week.

## **Lesson Organization**

Please give careful attention to each part of the lesson:

1. Title
2. Lesson outline
3. Lesson objectives
4. Lesson assignments
5. Lesson development

The title, outline, and objectives provide a preview of the lesson. Your mind will be more alert and receptive, and you will learn better because of this preview.

The lesson assignments describe how and in what order to complete the lesson.

The lesson development follows the lesson outline. Its comments, suggestions, and questions all help you reach the lesson objectives. Be sure to check your answers with the ones given for the study questions. These will fix your attention once more on the main points of the lesson. This procedure is designed to make your learning more effective and long-lasting.

Make special note of the maps, charts, and other illustrations because they will help you identify with a part of the early church, sharing its problems, and letting the tremendous truths of these letters grip your heart. Also, you will find these illustrations useful in your preaching and teaching.

# Unit 1: The Journey Continues

---

## Unit Introduction

Here we reach the turning point in the life of Christ. *Life of Christ, Volume 1* focused on His coming to earth, but beginning with Luke 9:51, we will focus on His going to glory. Christ came into the world and presented His credentials. Each of the Gospels points to the recognition of Christ's identity by relating Peter's confession and the divine confirmation that was visible in the transformation that followed.

Now the scene shifts, and we see Jesus resolutely set His face toward Jerusalem. Some have misunderstood Luke 9:51 to teach that Jerusalem was His ultimate destination, but we must note that Jerusalem was only a necessary way station on the road to His ascension. His true journey, covered most fully in Luke 9:51-18:15, was from Galilee to Glory.

The road from Galilee to Jerusalem can be described as merely a geographical journey, but the journey from Galilee to glory is also a metaphor for the spiritual journey of all disciples. Just before Jesus set out on His journey from earth to heaven, He extended an invitation to anyone who wanted to follow Him (Lk 9:23). He was to be the "pioneer of salvation" for those many sons whom He would bring to glory (Heb 2:10). As His disciples following Him along that literal road, they would encounter many experiences which would call for and produce the metaphorical road to discipleship.

Those of us who have chosen to follow Him no longer travel a literal road. However, we are involved in a moral and spiritual process that will culminate in glory. Therefore, this journey is both literal and metaphorical, both geographical and spiritual.

Why was it necessary for Jesus to stop at Jerusalem? It was no closer to heaven than any other place. However, Jerusalem's role in Christ's road to glory was not merely historical and geographical; it was moral, spiritual, and redemptive. It was Jerusalem that had killed the prophets, so it was in Jerusalem that the one Prophet must accomplish the final phase in the plan for salvation.

Suppose a man who was born very poor but later rose to a position of great leadership and authority writes his autobiography. What kind of life journey do we expect him to describe? Will it explain step by step how he journeyed from his poor place of birth to the rich home he probably has now, and all the different directions he traveled along the way? No. We understand that his intention is to describe a journey from obscurity and insignificance to the highest position in the land.

Keep in mind the fact that Christ's goal was not Jerusalem, but to "be received up into glory." This fact helps us comprehend the parables He told and miracles He performed. For example, when we read stories about people who reach the end of the journey sooner than they expected and find the door shut because they were ill-prepared, we need to remember that this also speaks of our journey to glory. The incidents and teachings in stories like this are intended to prepare us, as disciples, for that event.

Finally, keeping this metaphor in mind clarifies a perplexing thing about Christ's journey. He did not travel directly from Samaria to Jerusalem. First, he traveled to Bethany, then Perea, then back to Galilee several times. From there, he went to Samaria again, to Perea, and then on to Jericho, Bethany, and finally Jerusalem.

Critics of the gospel have sometimes complained that Luke did not know his geography very well because that is not a route anyone would take to Jerusalem. But it is important for us to understand that we are reading about the events that marked specific points in Jesus' story, not about a strict geographical route from one location to another. Luke's point is not to describe a direct progression from Samaria to Jerusalem, but to retell the key events in Christ's final journey from earth to heaven, metaphorically describing our journey toward that goal as well.



Thus, from June, AD 32 to April, AD 33, Jesus and His disciples embarked upon the final tour of Israel. In Lesson 1, we note that Jesus had set His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem to achieve His life purpose. Leaving His home, the Savior and His band launched an itinerant ministry of some ten months, during which some of His most-noted parables were told.

The journey had begun with a mission to Samaria (Lk 9:52-56), which marked Christ's outreach beyond ethnic Jews. It would end with His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when He presented Himself as the King Messiah.

His earlier Galilean ministry was marked primarily by miracles, but the final tour was characterized by His teachings. During this entire journey, Jesus instructed His disciples and equipped them for their work after He was gone. He gave the crowds a final opportunity to respond, and He rebuked and warned the leaders for their rejection.

In Lesson 1, we will consider the mission of the seventy-two and the discussion on discipleship that follows.

In Lesson 2, the cost of discipleship is taught through many parables. The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son emphasize the grace and love of God for the disciple.

In Lesson 3, the incredible resuscitation of Lazarus and the leaders' negative response will be studied.

## **Unit Outline**

Lesson 1: His Mission Expands

Lesson 2: The Cost of Discipleship

Lesson 3: The Raising of Lazarus

# Lesson 1: His Mission Expands

---

## Lesson Introduction

Jesus had completed the part of the plan that involved His coming to earth, and now He turned His eyes resolutely on bringing the rest of the plan to fruition. He would not lose His focus. He was going to glory, and getting there required a final stop in Jerusalem.

Until now, this course has focused on Jesus' coming to earth, but beginning with Luke 9:51, we will discuss His going to glory. The scene shifts, and we see Jesus resolutely set His face toward Jerusalem: a necessary way station on the road to His ascension. His true journey, covered most fully in Luke 9:51-18:15, was from Galilee to glory.

In Topic 1, as Jesus begins His journey to Jerusalem, He sends an advance party to Samaria to make arrangements in a suitable village or town for an overnight stay. The disciples are enraged by the inhospitality they find in the village, and they demand that Jesus call fire down on the city.

In Topic 2, to set right the problem of a full harvest with only a few workers (Mt 9:37-38), Jesus gathers seventy-two of His disciples and sends them out on a preaching tour similar to the earlier tour of the Twelve. The invasion of Satan's domain wages intensely, and the disciples' power over the forces of evil marks the validity of the offer of the kingdom.

Topic 3 brings us to a study of some crucial lessons on the spiritual life through several famous stories and teachings. Jesus explains to a questioning lawyer how to receive a reward in the coming kingdom, telling him that he must love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. Jesus illustrates this with the parable of the Good Samaritan. Next, Mary and Martha illustrate two approaches to the Christian life: contemplation and service. They challenge us to move from "doing" to "being." Finally we sit with Jesus as He teaches His disciples how to pray.

Topic 4 begins with Jesus directly confronting the forces of evil by healing a deaf man who cannot speak. He then rebukes His generation for wanting a sign and yet being unable to read the evidence all around them. After being invited to a Pharisee's house, Jesus gives one of His most direct rebukes of these leaders for their hypocrisy in cleaning the "outside of the cup" according to their traditions, but ignoring the cleansing of their inner lives.

Finally, in Topic 5, Christ's teaching on final accountability for our lives comes to our attention. He tells His disciples that every secret word will one day be revealed and warns them to be ready for His return, which could happen at any moment.

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Going to Glory

Topic 2: The Mission of the Seventy-two

Topic 3: Crucial Lessons of Spiritual Living

The Lawyer

The Good Samaritan

The Good Part

Teach Us to Pray

Topic 4: Warnings

The Last Condition is Worse Than the First

The Sign of Jonah

Hypocrisy of the Pharisees

Topic 5: Final Accountability

Nothing Can Be Hidden

On Guard Against Greed

Be Ready

Topic 6: Knowing, Being, Doing

## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Explain why revenge is not a tolerable motivation in New Testament Christianity
- Explain how delegation was a critical principle Jesus employed when training and preparing His men
- Apply three key principles for spiritual growth: being a good neighbor, balancing “doing” and “being,” and persisting in prayer
- Consider how warnings Christ gave to three different groups apply to us
- Understand the value of living our lives in view of the Lord’s return

## Topic 1: Going to Glory

As Jesus concluded His third year of public ministry, a great turning point in His life began. It was April, AD 32, and the final year of His life was upon Him. He had told His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, be turned over to the authorities, and be executed. But He also told them that He would rise on the third day. At that time, their uncomprehending minds could not take this in.

But now, in determination, Jesus bade farewell to Galilee. This final journey, from Galilee to Jerusalem for His final Passover, was leading Him to the completion of His life’s ultimate purpose. This was a time rich in occasions that inspired some of Jesus’ most memorable teachings.

Jesus’ home during these few last days would naturally be at Capernaum, His own city. While He was there, organizing a departure from which there would be no return, many memories must have flooded His mind. He must have felt much sorrow. He would leave some faithful hearts behind Him; but how few! Galilee had rejected Him.

At Nazareth, the mountain village of His childhood, with all the memories of His boyhood and His mother’s home, they had treated Him with such violence and outrage that He could not visit it again.

With such thoughts in His heart, He started out on a twelve-month journey from the scene of His rejected ministry.

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 8:19-22 and Luke 9:51-62.

As Jesus continues on His road from Galilee to glory, we are not precisely sure of the route He chooses. However, it seems that He crosses the bridge at the southern extremity of the Sea of Galilee and passes through the Valley of Megiddo on His way to Samaria and, from there, on to Perea, Jericho, and Jerusalem.

Jesus does not travel alone. On this journey, He is accompanied by His apostles and a large group of other disciples (Lk 9:52). He realizes that any village upon which such a large crowd would descend will need adequate advance notice in order to accommodate them. He sends out an advance party to Samaria to make practical arrangements in some suitable village or town for their overnight stay.

But on entering Samaria, the advance party is met with hostility. The Galileans in the north, in going south to the festivals at Jerusalem, usually take the Samaritan route, and as of yet, they have met with no such inhospitality. But the teacher and His disciples on their way to a feast in Jerusalem are not welcome in Samaria (Lk 9:53). So, when the Samaritans are asked to prepare quarters for the Messiah, their national prejudices are raised and they do not want Him there. To them, He is merely a stereotypical Jew traveling to a Jewish feast through their land. Asking no further questions, they shut Him out!

Instead of arguing with them, Jesus quietly goes to a different village.

At Jerusalem, He would suffer and die for those Samaritans who rejected Him, too.

In Acts 8:5-25, it is recorded that when the Samaritans heard why He had died, many of them believed on Him. Perhaps some of those new believers were from this hostile village.

### **QUESTION 1**

The hostility of the Samaritans disturbed the disciples. Peter and John were enraged and demanded that fire from heaven be called down upon the rejecting village. Which of the following best describes their response?

- A. In view of the fact that Jesus was the Son of God, the undignified manner of the Samaritans merited that Peter and John should immediately insist on Jesus' right to be treated with respect (Phil 2:3-8).
- B. Revenge is sometimes a righteous desire, and this appears to be one of those times (Ex 21:24).
- C. Based upon 2 Kings 1:10-12, we might conclude that the disciples were justified in their desire to call fire down upon the Samaritans.
- D. Based upon the teaching of Jesus in Luke 6:27-31, we might conclude that the disciples had poor memories.

## **Topic 2: The Mission of the Seventy-two**

### **June, AD 32**

The band of trained and equipped disciples has expanded. From a group of many, Jesus selects seventy-two and sends them out on a mission that apparently covers all of Galilee and Samaria. The commands given to this missionary group are similar to those that were issued for the Twelve in Mark 6:7-13. They are neither to take sandals nor stop and greet travelers on the way. This mission is so urgent that the local proprieties must be ignored.

The message is that the kingdom of God is at hand, a direct offer of the kingdom to the nation.

However, Jesus anticipates even more rejection than He had already encountered in His ministry in Nazareth and Galilee. Even at Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida in the green plain, whose fields He

had traversed with His apostles, performing deeds of mercy and speaking words of love—even there, they have rejected Him. They prefer the white sepulchers of Pharisaic sanctity to the light Christ had extended to them, and would rather feed on the ashes of shallow Levitical ceremonial traditions than feast on the Bread of Life that was being offered to them.

Even Sodom and Gomorrah would have repented from their filthy deeds had they seen the mighty works that had been done in these little cities and villages near the Galilean sea (Mt 11:23). And, therefore, Jesus cries, “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!” and to Capernaum, “His own city,” a woe that was still deeper!

The chronology of this entire unit, which we have called “The Great Galilean Ministry,” is the subject of differing opinions. We have chosen to follow the chronology found in *The Greatest Life*. This assumes that Luke’s account of the events from Luke 9:51-18:15 is intended as a strictly chronological narrative, an assumption which, though debatable, is probable.

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 11:20-30 and Luke 10:1-24.



It was with a heavy heart that our Lord left Galilee, rejected yet again. Now the Samaritans, who were formerly open to Christ’s teachings, had turned away as well.

We do not know if Jesus led His group to Perea to proceed south to Bethany from there, or whether He simply went straight south, through Samaria. In view of the Samaritans’ apparent hostility, it may be that He took a route south through Perea, where the locals had not turned against Him. If these assumptions are true, we may surmise that the seventy-two were sent out from Perea, and would have traveled all over Samaria and Galilee. It is also likely that some of the pairs went into Judea as well.

### **QUESTION 2**

Compare the mission of the Twelve with the mission of the seventy-two. What was a crucial difference between them?

- A. The seventy-two were to shake the dust of their feet when they were rejected, and this is not mentioned to the Twelve.
- B. The seventy-two were told to pronounce judgment on the cities, and the Twelve were not.
- C. The mission of the Twelve was only to the lost sheep of Israel, while the mission of the seventy-two had no geographical restrictions.
- D. The mission of the Twelve healed the sick, while the mission of the seventy-two did not.

### QUESTION 3

When the disciples returned, Jesus rejoiced, telling them that He saw Satan falling from heaven like lightning. Based upon Isaiah 14:4-23; Luke 10:17-20; and Revelation 12:31; 20:13-15, what is the significance of Christ's vision of the fall of Satan?

- A. Jesus saw the mission of the seventy-two as a key event in the cosmic battle with Satan. Even though the actual fall is a future event that will occur during the days of the great tribulation, Jesus saw it now in a prophetic vision.
- B. He had supernaturally glanced back in time to His viewpoint as the pre-existent Son of God and watched the time at which Satan had been cast out of heaven
- C. He marveled at the surprising results of their mission.
- D. He had personally engaged Satan while they were on the mission, and Satan had been cast down.

### QUESTION 4

Why did Jesus encourage the disciples to be more joyful over their salvation than they were at their recent ministry success?

- A. Because He did not want them to focus of the excitement of what *they* had done, but on what *God* had done and was doing through them.
- B. Because eternal salvation was obviously of greater value to them than ministry success.
- C. Because God had hidden revelation from the wise and revealed it to infants.
- D. Because of the disciples' faithfulness, their eternal heavenly reputations and reward had been enhanced.

Luke 12:48 says, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be required." The judgments pronounced upon Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, three cities that witnessed more than half of Jesus' recorded miracles, should serve as a warning to us. Tyre and Sidon saw only one miracle.

## Topic 3: Crucial Lessons on Spiritual Living

### June, AD 32

As Jesus journeyed south into Judea, He was met by a legal expert who stood up to test Him. We have no reason to believe that this man was insincere. Indeed, it was common for rabbis to involve one another in logical argumentation over matters of the law.

And this man's question was innocent enough. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" However, our Lord's response has perplexed interpreters for centuries. Instead of explaining the gospel to him, Jesus told him to do good works, to love God, and to love his neighbor.

### The Lawyer

#### Assignment

- Read Luke 10:25-37.

## QUESTION 5

Please read the following verses Jesus quoted in His encounter with the lawyer: Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 4:1; Luke 10:25-28 . In those passages, to what does “life” refer? Does it refer to final entrance into heaven and being born again, or does it refer to an abundant life now?

For a suggested answer to this question, look at the lesson note about the lawyer.

### Lawyer

The lawyer Jesus encountered may have been a believer. He wanted to know how to “inherit eternal life.” By the way Jesus answered, it seems that Jesus did not understand him to be asking about how to go to heaven. If that was Jesus’s understanding of the question, He would have told him what He told Nicodemus, that whoever believed in Him would not perish, but have eternal life (Jn 3:16). Elsewhere in the Bible, the “inheritance” is often obtained by works, but we know that salvation is obtained by faith alone (Rom 4:5; Eph 2:8-9). An inheritance is a reward, not a gift (Col 3:24).

## QUESTION 6

Based on how Jesus answers the lawyer’s question, what do you think Jesus understands to be the lawyer’s real question? Is he asking about how to get to heaven when he dies, or is he asking about an enriched experience of life with God now? Please read Colossians 3:24 and consider this in your answer.

## The Good Samaritan

The lawyer was now confronted with a challenge: He must choose either eternal life or his possessions. Seeing this, he tried to get around the issue by a petty argument with Jesus about the definition of the word “neighbor.” “Who is my neighbor?” he asked.

Jesus responded with the parable of the Good Samaritan.

In Luke 10:36-37, Jesus turned the question around. The real question, He said, is not “Who is my neighbor?” but rather, “Am I acting like a good neighbor?”

## QUESTION 7

What is the real lesson taught by the parable?

- A. Our neighbor is the person who lives closest.
- B. Our enemies are not our neighbors.
- C. The Samaritan was good and the religious leaders were bad.
- D. The identity of my neighbor is not as important as my acting like a good neighbor.



## The Good Part

### Assignment

- Read Luke 10:38-42.

Jesus arrived in Bethany, a small village just outside Jerusalem. Two sisters, Mary and Martha, lived there with their brother Lazarus. They were friends of Jesus, who visited them three times during His final journey.

The Scriptures do not say what brought Jesus this far south, but whatever the reason, it was in their home that a second crucial spiritual lesson was taught—one that would become one of the most-remembered stories in the Gospels.

The siblings' home appears to have been a wealthy one. It was Martha who received Jesus on His arrival in Bethany, so apparently, the home had come into her possession. It was not uncommon in Israel for a devout, wealthy woman to receive a well-known teacher into her home.

After Jesus' arrival, Martha, acting naturally as the head of the house, was rushing around preparing dinner. Mary, however, was so enthralled in the presence of Jesus in her home, she found a place at His feet to sit and listen to His words. These words are not recorded in Scripture for us, but we know they were words of life.

Hours passed as Martha prepared the meal, Mary sat still, listening and living. At last, Martha's irritation overflowed, and she interrupted the teaching, asking Jesus why Mary wasn't helping. Mary was just sitting there, doing nothing useful. Martha clearly felt justified in her claim to her sister's help. After all, she had a house full of company!

But the Lord gently rebuked her. Mary had chosen the only thing that was necessary, He said. She had chosen the good part.

While Martha desired to honor Christ by serving Him, Mary honored Him by forgetting all else *but* Him.

This account directly confronts us and our restless, incessant activity. Sometimes we become so occupied with service for Lord that we forget to get to know the Lord we serve. Too many of us have substituted service for Christ for relationship with Him. We see here that sometimes, the highest honor we can give someone, especially Christ, is to be so absorbed in Him that we are oblivious of others.

### **QUESTION 8**

After reading the account in Luke 10:38-42, reflect on this incident. Where have you substituted “doing” for “being”? What would have to change in your life to correct this? What resolutions do you need to make in order to bring about this change? Record your responses in your Life Notebook.

## **Teach Us to Pray**

### **Assignment**

- Read Luke 11:1-13.

### **QUESTION 9**

What was it that prompted one of Christ's disciples to ask about prayer?





## QUESTION 10

Which of the following are true regarding the Lord's Prayer? *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. It is given as a prayer for believers as children of their Father.
- B. It suggests a guarantee that this prayer will be answered.
- C. It reminds us that the priority in prayer is giving honor to God
- D. Its danger is that it can become a mere mechanical exercise to ease the conscience.

## QUESTION 11

Reflect on how the parable of the friend at midnight challenges you. What is a key for receiving answers to prayer? What issues in your life might be resolved by bold, persistent prayer? Record your responses in your Life Notebook.

## Topic 4: Warnings

### June, AD 32

Jesus now traveled north again to Galilee for a final circuit of His home province, presumably moving through Perea. During this leg of His journey, He again encountered Satan, rebuked an unbelieving generation, and angered His enemies.

He also issued three warnings:

1. A warning to the believers: There must be a life change after a demon has been cast out, or the individual will be worse off.
2. A warning to the nation: You will only be given the sign of Jonah.
3. A warning to the Pharisees: Because of your hypocrisy, destruction awaits you.

## The Last Condition Is Worse Than the First

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 12:43-45 and Luke 11:14-28.

## QUESTION 12

What are the key lessons learned from this incident? *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. The womb that bore Christ is blessed.
- B. A nation that fights against itself will be destroyed.
- C. Demon possession must be followed by a life change.
- D. Those who fail to replace the negative with the positive will be ruined.

## The Sign of Jonah

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 12:39-42 and Luke 11:29-36.

The crowds and Christ's opponents were all clamoring for a sign. However, they had already been given three years of signs. He rebuked them, calling them an evil generation.

### QUESTION 13

Luke stresses that this demand for a sign came "as the crowds were increasing" (Lk 11:29). What does this tell you about the people?

- A. They were actively responding to the many miracles that were occurring.
- B. Their hearts were open, but not yet convinced.
- C. His popularity with them revolved more around curiosity and superficial enjoyment than substance.
- D. Their hearts were hard.

Jesus pointed out that the Queen of Sheba and the men of Nineveh were Gentiles who responded to truth—the queen to Solomon and the men to Jonah. Now, He tells His listeners, someone greater than either Solomon or the queen is here. Therefore, this generation has even greater guilt. Mentioning a Gentile queen who responded would have sharpened the point and roused their anger.

The sign of Jonah is a metaphor Jesus used to signify the great sign of His resurrection: Like Jonah in the belly of the whale, Jesus would be in the tomb for three days.

## Hypocrisy of the Pharisees

### Assignment

- Read Luke 11:37-54.

The sharpest confrontation in Luke's gospel occurred when a Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him. Jesus failed to perform the required ceremonial hand washing before the meal, and the Pharisee was shocked.



Jesus responded with an extensive rebuke. The corruption of the Pharisees was internal, yet they focused only on the outward performance of their righteousness. Their internal condition, which was what truly counted, remained soiled. Therefore, the extravagant outer display that Jesus called "washing the outside of the cup" was completely useless.

When a lawyer spoke up in defense of the Pharisees, realizing that Jesus' rebuke applied to lawyers as well, Jesus pronounced three woes on the lawyers also.

### QUESTION 14

We easily criticize these hypocrites and view their concerns as ludicrous, but often there are areas in which our behavior is similar to theirs. For instance, perhaps we might offer communion and partake of the sacraments without reflecting and confessing our sins. Reflect upon instances in your life or the life of your church where you see externals given priority over internal spiritual reality. Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

## Topic 5: Final Accountability

### June, AD 32

Jesus warned His listeners about the final results of their (and our) lives. What will happen when we stand before the King at the last day? How will our lives be evaluated?

He drew attention to three items in particular:

1. Things that are said in secret
2. Greed
3. Refusal to live life with its end in perspective

### Nothing Can Be Hidden

#### Assignment

- Read Luke 12:1-12.

#### QUESTION 15

Why should the disciples watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees?

Jesus told the disciples who had believed on Him, (Jn 2:11), and were therefore saved, to fear the One who, “after the killing, has authority to throw you into hell.” How could it be that Jesus was threatening His believing disciples with hell? What follows is a suggestion of how this difficult passage might be handled.

The word translated “hell” is “gehenna.”

#### **Gehenna**

*Gehenna* in the both Old Testament and New Testament times referred to the Valley of Hinnom, just south of Jerusalem. This valley had been desecrated by the sacrifice of children to Molech (2 Kgs. 16:3; 23:10). As an accursed place, it was used only for the city garbage, and was a place where worms gnawed and fires burned. Because of its negative associations, Jeremiah said that God’s judgment upon the nation would occur there (Jer 19:6 ). The term *gehenna* is used thirteen times in the New Testament, and although it is usually translated “hell,” some scholars believe it actually refers to that burning garbage outside the city. If that is correct, *gehenna* is also a metaphor for the judgment on Jerusalem and those who had not repented at John’s and Jesus’ teachings, which would occur in AD 70 with the Roman destruction of the Temple.

## QUESTION 16

Based on 2 Kings 16:3; 23:10 and Jeremiah 19:6-9, what would have been Jesus' and His disciples' probable understanding of the meaning of *gehenna*?

- A. Some kind of eventual judgment
- B. A judgment after death
- C. A place for children who had been sacrificed to Molech
- D. A place where departed saints go after death

Throughout the ministry of both John and Jesus, the people were warned of the judgment that would come to Jerusalem if they did not repent and accept the offer of the kingdom of heaven (Mt 3:7-10; Lk 20:9-18; 21:20-24). Those who did not repent would face both this temporal judgment and a judgment before Christ.

In this passage, Jesus seems to be saying that they should fear God, who can kill a person not only by bringing upon them the sin unto death (Acts 5:1-6; 1 Cor 11:28-32; 1 Jn 5:16-17), but after that, toss the dead body in the garbage pit outside of Jerusalem to be burned with the rubbish, totally disgraced. If this interpretation is correct, casting body and soul into *gehenna* may be a metaphor for a negative evaluation of one's life work.

Elsewhere in the Gospels, Jesus repeatedly speaks of a judgment after death that applies only to the believer's works, not his eternal destiny, and results in either reward or rebuke (Lk 19:12-27). Indeed, fire is used as a metaphor for this judgment as well (1 Cor 3:15). This is not the same thing as Jesus threatening His believing disciples with hell.

## QUESTION 17

Which of the following passages also speak of a judgment of the believer's works after death? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. 1 Corinthians 3:15
- B. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11
- C. 1 John 2:28
- D. Revelation 2:26-29

In the passage that follows, Luke 12:6-12, Jesus encouraged those who acknowledged Him, calling them His friends and reminding them that God watches over them. The only thing they needed to fear was being too timid to openly identify with Christ.

## On Guard against Greed

### Assignment

- Read Luke 12:13-21.

Jesus now changed the subject from the Pharisees' error of hypocrisy to warn the crowd against the sin of greed.

## QUESTION 18

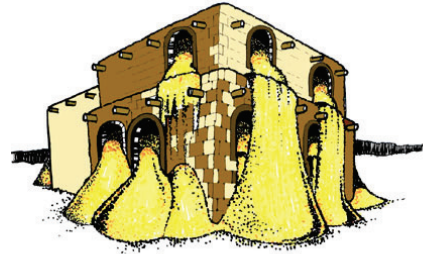
A man came out of the crowd and asked Jesus to mediate between him and his brother, something rabbis were often asked to do. He wanted Jesus to force his brother to divide the inheritance with him. Refusing to get involved, Jesus brought deeper issues to light. What were they? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. The issue of possessions might come between the brothers.
- B. One's life does not consist merely of possessions.
- C. Materialism can destroy relationships.
- D. Dividing up inheritances was not His responsibility.

To illustrate the problem of greed, Jesus followed up with the parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:16-21).

## QUESTION 19

In Luke 12:16-21, the landowner refers to himself and his belongings only one or two times. *True or False?*



The problem with this rich fool was not that he had a good harvest, which was a gift from God. The problem lay in his selfish intentions. He said it was his own harvest, so he would keep it for himself. This man was rich with possessions but poor toward God. As a result, God called him a fool and told him that the gift of the harvest he treasured would be taken away. No one would be able to enjoy it.

## QUESTION 20

Have you ever received an unexpected amount of money or some other blessing? What was your first reaction? Was it to claim the blessing and say, "This is mine"? What should your reaction be, and what commitment will you make now in anticipation of the next time God blesses you in this way?

## Be Ready

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 24:43-44 and Luke 12:22, 32-40.

Jesus continued His discussion of the relationship between the use of money and the kingdom. He told His listeners that one great obstacle to following Him is fear. We allow our possessions to become so valuable to us that we are afraid of giving them away (Lk 12:22-40). Jesus explained that giving one's possessions away is really just sending them ahead. Far greater treasure will result from this temporal investment.

After using the parable of the rich fool to warn His listeners about greed (Lk 12:13-21), now He described greed's opposite: generosity. He then exhorted His followers to be prepared, using the imagery of a burning lamp and a thief in the night.

## QUESTION 21

In order to prepare ourselves for the Lord's return, this passage mentions several things we should do in order to be ready. List them.

## **QUESTION 22**

What is the most amazing statement in this section?

- A. Sell your possessions and give to the poor.
- B. The Son of Man will come completely unexpectedly.
- C. We should be watching expectantly.
- D. Jesus will wait upon us as we recline to eat.

## **Topic 6: Knowing, Being, and Doing**

### **QUESTION 23**

Reflect on several situations in the life and ministry of Christ. Write out what you learn about God from observing Him in Christ.

### **QUESTION 24**

Consider one of Christ's character qualities that impressed you. Why did it impress you? How might you develop it in your own life?

### **QUESTION 25**

Read Luke 10:25-37. In this incident, Jesus interacts with a man who is convinced that he can obtain eternal life through works. How do you think you would have responded in this situation? Compare your approach to the one Jesus used. Why is Christ's approach so wise? Think about the next time you will share your faith with someone who thinks that salvation can be earned. How can you help them understand this issue? What questions would you ask, and what Scriptures would you use?

## Lesson 1: Self Check

### QUESTION 1

Based on the viewpoint expressed in the lesson note about the lawyer, the lawyer could not possibly have been a believer because he was asking about how to inherit eternal life. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 2

The real lesson taught by the parable of the Good Samaritan is:

- A. Our neighbor is the person who lives closest.
- B. Our enemies are not our neighbors.
- C. The Samaritan was good and the religious leaders were bad.
- D. The identity of my neighbor is not as important as my acting like a good neighbor.

### QUESTION 3

Luke stresses that this demand for a sign came “as the crowds were increasing” (Lk 11:29). What does this tell you about the people?

- A. They were responding to the many miracles that were occurring.
- B. Their hearts were open, but not yet convinced.
- C. Jesus’ popularity with them revolved more around curiosity and superficial enjoyment than substance.
- D. Their hearts were hard.

### QUESTION 4

Which of the following passages might also be speaking of a judgment of the believer’s works after death? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. 1 Corinthians 3:15
- B. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11
- C. 1 John 2:28
- D. Revelation 2:26-29

### QUESTION 5

The key lessons learned from the incident about demons and the kingdom of God are: (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Blessed is the womb that bore Christ.
- B. A nation that fights against itself will be destroyed.
- C. Demon possession must be followed by a change of life.
- D. Those who fail to replace the negative influence that has left with positive influences and habits will be ruined.

### QUESTION 6

When Jesus told the lawyer to “do this and you will live,” He meant that if the lawyer kept the Ten Commandments, he would live eternally. *True or False?*

### **QUESTION 7**

The sign of Jonah is a metaphor Jesus used to signify the great sign of His resurrection: Like Jonah in the belly of the whale, Jesus would be in the tomb for three days. *True or False?*

### **QUESTION 8**

Peter and John were enraged at the hostility of the Samaritans and demanded that fire from heaven be called down. Evaluate their response.

- A. In view of the fact that Jesus was the Son of God, the undignified manner of the Samaritans merited that Peter and John should immediately insist upon Jesus' right to be treated with respect (Phil 2:3-8)..
- B. Revenge is sometimes justified, and this appears to be one of those times (Ex 21:24).
- C. Based on 2 Kings 1:10-12, we might conclude that the disciples were righteous in their desire to call fire down upon the Samaritans.
- D. Based on Jesus' teaching in Luke 6:27-31, we might conclude that the disciples had poor memories.

### **QUESTION 9**

The disciples were prompted to ask Jesus how to pray because they were impressed with the teaching He gave to the multitude on the subject. *True or False?*

### **QUESTION 10**

In this lesson, it was suggested that having one's body and soul cast into *gehenna* may be a metaphor for a negative evaluation of one's life work at the judgment seat of Christ. *True or False?*



## Lesson 1 Answers to Questions

### QUESTION 1

- D. Based upon the teaching of Jesus in Luke 6:27-31, we might conclude that the disciples had poor memories.

### QUESTION 2

- C. The mission of the Twelve was only to the lost sheep of Israel, while the mission of the seventy-two had no geographical restrictions.

### QUESTION 3

- A. Jesus saw the mission of the seventy-two as a key event in the cosmic battle with Satan. Even though the actual fall is a future event that will occur during the days of the great tribulation, Jesus saw it now in a prophetic vision.

### QUESTION 4

- A. Because He did not want them to focus of the excitement of what *they* had done, but on what *God* had done and was doing through them.

### QUESTION 5: *Your answer*

### QUESTION 6: *Your answer*

### QUESTION 7

- D. The identity of my neighbor is not as important as my acting like a good neighbor.

### QUESTION 8: *Your answer*

### QUESTION 9: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

He observed Christ praying. Jesus always taught by demonstration. He lived His teachings in front of them. If a church or mission is prayer-less, it is probably related to the fact that prayer is not a priority in the lives of the leadership.

### QUESTION 10

- A. It is given as a prayer for believers as children of their Father.
- C. It reminds us that the priority in prayer is giving honor to God
- D. Its danger is that it can become a mere mechanical exercise to ease the conscience.

### QUESTION 11: *Your answer*

### QUESTION 12

- B. A nation that fights against itself will be destroyed.
- C. Demon possession must be followed by a life change.
- D. Those who fail to replace the negative with the positive will be ruined.

### QUESTION 13

- C. His popularity with them revolved more around curiosity and superficial enjoyment than substance.

### QUESTION 14: *Your answer*

### QUESTION 15: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

It is pointless to live a hypocritical life. One day, the difference between what we say publicly and what we say privately will be revealed. Disciples should be very open and not two-faced about the way they live.

### QUESTION 16

- A. Some kind of eventual judgment [Gehenna was not viewed as hell, but was a place of temporal judgment. Gehenna was a garbage dump outside Jerusalem. To be thrown into gehenna after death probably meant having your whole life disgraced, similar to the disgrace of being tossed into the garbage heap in the Valley of Hinnom (gehenna) and burned.]

### QUESTION 17

- A. 1 Corinthians 3:15
- B. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11
- C. 1 John 2:28
- D. Revelation 2:26-29

**QUESTION 18**

- A. The issue of possessions might come between the brothers.
- B. One's life does not consist merely of possessions.
- C. Materialism can destroy relationships.

**QUESTION 19:** False

**QUESTION 20:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 21:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

(1) give to the poor; (2) store up treasure in heaven; (3) keep the lamps burning, be prepared; (4) watch expectantly for the Lord's return; (5) be ready.

**QUESTION 22**

- D. Jesus will wait upon us as we recline to eat.

**QUESTION 23:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 24:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 25:** *Your answer*

## Lesson 1 Self Check Answers

**QUESTION 1:** False

**QUESTION 2**

D. The identity of my neighbor is not as important as my acting like a good neighbor.

**QUESTION 3**

C. Jesus' popularity with them revolved more around curiosity and superficial enjoyment than substance.

**QUESTION 4**

- A. 1 Corinthians 3:15
- B. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11
- C. 1 John 2:28
- D. Revelation 2:26-29

**QUESTION 5**

- B. A nation that fights against itself will be destroyed.
- C. Demon possession must be followed by a change of life.
- D. Those who fail to replace the negative influence that has left with positive influences and habits will be ruined.

**QUESTION 6:** False

**QUESTION 7:** True

**QUESTION 8**

D. Based on Jesus' teaching in Luke 6:27-31, we might conclude that the disciples had poor memories.

**QUESTION 9:** False

**QUESTION 10:** True

# Lesson 2: Lessons on Discipleship

---

As the final journey to glory continues, Jesus expounds more and more on the cost of discipleship. Those who have chosen to go with Him must be instructed regarding their own journeys through life. Using parables, Jesus emphasizes both believers' final judgment and the Lord's ultimate love and unconditional acceptance, even for those who may have gone astray.

In Topic 1, the parable of the wicked servant focuses our attention on the consequences of a life of disobedience that the carnal Christian will one day face.

In Topic 2, Jesus addresses the nation. He says they are like a fruitless fig tree. He also addresses believers who have not fully committed themselves to follow His way of life. When they apply for entrance into the wedding feast on the last day, the door will be shut tight.

In Topic 3, Jesus compares wayward believers to a lost lamb or a lost coin. His love for those who have believed in Him is unfathomable. Even when we are faithless, He remains faithful and continues to seek us and bring us back to Himself.

In Topic 4, we hear the third parable regarding "lost" believers: the famous parable of the prodigal son and his loving father. Through it, we see that no matter how far we have fallen, the door of return to fellowship is always open because of the incredible grace of Christ.

With Topic 5, two parables to believers regarding the subject of money conclude the lesson. Wealth, Christ says, should be used wisely; we should invest it in people and not spend it frivolously on ourselves.

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: The Wicked Servant

Topic 2: Warnings of Impending Judgment

The Fruitless Fig Tree

A Door Shut Tight

Dinner at the Pharisee's Home

The Messianic Banquet

Counting the Cost

Topic 3: Parables of the Lost

The Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin

The Parable of the Pursuing Father

Topic 4: The Stewardship of Money

The Parable of the Unjust Steward

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

Topic 5: Matching Events

## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the importance of treating fellow Christians with love and respect
- Examine the eternal consequences of unbelief and understand fully God’s displeasure with sin, even and especially the sin of true Christians who live unfaithful lives
- View the wonderful love the Father has for those of us who fail, seeking after us to bring us to restored fellowship with Him
- Learn from Jesus’ parables about the Father’s unfailing love and unconditional acceptance for believers who have gone astray
- Put your everyday actions into eternal perspective, assessing them diligently

## Topic 1: The Wicked Servant

**June, AD 32**

Jesus continued the theme of placing material possessions into the proper perspective.

Jesus always stressed that a mark of discipleship is our love for our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Indeed, He told us that “Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples—if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35). How we treat our fellow Christians is so important to Christ that He issued a warning in this parable regarding the sobering consequences that will come to the believer who treats other believers poorly.

### Consequences of Unfaithfulness

#### Assignment

- Read Matthew 10:34-36; 24:45-51; and Luke 12:41-53.
- Read the article “The Parable of the Wicked Servant.”

### Parable of the Wicked Servant

If a wise servant is saved, there is no exegetical basis for implying that an evil servant is not. They are, after all, both “servants.” In fact, the Greek text indicates that instead of evaluating two different servants, this story really only examines one, who may conceivably follow two different courses in life. Then Lord says, “But if that evil slave should say to himself...” (Mt 24:48). He is speaking of that same servant, the wise one of the preceding verses. The point is that a servant, a believing Christian, can become either wise or foolish, good or bad, spiritual or carnal.

This servant is not an unbeliever; a non-Christian could hardly be called a servant of Christ. An evil son is still a son. He genuinely believes in the return of his master. He is like the Christian who has simply begun living carelessly because his Lord’s return seems distant and delayed. This parable simply acknowledges a common fact of Christian experience: Some servants of Christ are faithful and wise, and some, who start out serving their master well, become indolent.

This servant’s actions earn him the title “evil servant.” He drinks with drunkards, beats his fellow

servants, and is completely unprepared for his master's return. When his master does return, this servant is cut in pieces and assigned a place with the hypocrites where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt 24:51). Interpreters understandably have difficulty imagining that this could be the experience at the judgment of any truly born-again child of God. Part of the problem is the extreme phrases used: "cut him in two" and "weeping and gnashing of teeth." The latter is simply Eastern symbolism for profound regret. The former is a metaphor for judgment.

What is the specific nature of this judgment? We must remember that these are parables, full of metaphors that are not to be taken literally. When the Lord returns, he does not literally beat unfaithful servants. These words mean that He rebukes their unfaithful lifestyle and gives them no inheritance in His kingdom. The phrase "cut him in two" could suggest "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph 6:17). This initial impression is reinforced when we read that, when the Lord returns in judgment, "from His mouth extends a sharp sword" (Rev 19:15). The Word of God is an instrument capable of "cutting" in a judgmental sense, a fact that is further affirmed by Hebrews 4:12:

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (NASB)

When the Lord returns to judge the wicked servant, the instrument of that judgment will apparently be the Word of God. It is able to pierce to the heart of a man, to cut to the inner being, and discern underlying motivations. As a result, all is revealed:

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (Heb 4:13, NASB)

At this moment, the stern warning of our Lord will have pointed meaning:

There is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. (Lk 12:2-3, NASB)

This passage is not teaching that, when we appear before Him, all our sins will be publicly announced to others. To speak in the dark is to speak in the "locked room." The Greek word for this is *tameion*, and referred to the innermost apartment, in contrast to a public room. Ancient Near-Eastern roofs were often terraces. Someone speaking from a rooftop had the greatest possible publicity with those in the street. However, there is no other place in Scripture where we are told that our sins will be revealed to others. Therefore, the metaphor should probably not be pressed beyond the point that there will be a public display of our sins in the presence of our Lord.

The servant in Matthew's account is not literally cut in pieces, but his secret motivations are exposed. His work is burned up (1 Cor 3:15), and he draws back "in shame at the Lord's coming" (1 Jn 2:28). Because this is a parable, these metaphors should not be taken literally. Rather they point symbolically to literal, sober truths. Paul used similar metaphor when he spoke of coming to discipline the carnal Corinthian believers "with a rod" (1 Cor 4:21). Like the statement about being cut to pieces at the future judgment, this does not speak of a literal rod, but of a severe rebuke.

Our Lord affirms that the unfaithful servant will be assigned a place with the hypocrites. The Greek word for this, *hypokrites*, has several meanings, one of which is "an actor." He claims to be a servant of his master but he is merely acting; he does not live like it. It can be used of non-Christians, but Christ also uses it to describe true Christians who judge their brothers while ignoring their own sin (Mt 7:5). Barnabas and Peter were charged with hypocrisy by Paul (Gal 2:13), and Peter speaks of "newborn babes" who are to put hypocrisy aside (1 Pet 2:1-2).

This parable's parallel passage in Luke helps us identify these "hypocrites," whom he calls "the

unbelievers” (Lk 12:42-46) The Greek word here is *apistos*. It does not mean “unbeliever” in the sense of “non-Christian.” Here it means “unfaithful.” This usage is common, and fits the context of the parable well.

The fact that *apistos* is rendered *hypokriton* (hypocrisy) in the parallel passage in Matthew proves that *apistos* should not be translated “unbeliever,” but “unfaithful” (Mt 12:51; compare Lk 12:46). A hypocrite is one who says one thing but does another. This man was not an unbeliever; he believed in his master and that his master was coming back. His hypocrisy was not that he professed Christ and inwardly denied Him, but that, while he assumed the role of a servant, he did not take care of the other servants. He ended up serving only himself. It is for this that the unfaithful Christian will be judged.

Christians are capable of unfaithfulness and of leading hypocritical, carnal lives. They will be in the kingdom, but not at the wedding feast! The unfaithful servant will not be “at the table,” though, as a servant, he will be saved. Therefore, this parable has no relevance to those who do not know Christ and who have not begun the process of serving Him. The matter at hand here is that the servant who begins to serve will continue serving until his Lord returns.

### QUESTION 1

In the parable of the wicked servant, of whom did our Lord tell the story?

- A. A wicked servant and a faithful servant
- B. Two faithful servants
- C. Two wicked servants
- D. One servant who may be either wicked or faithful

When the Lord returns, the unfaithful believer, whom He calls a hypocrite (Mt 24:51), who beat his fellow servants will experience four sobering consequences for his carnal lifestyle: He will be “cut in two” (Mt 24:51); he will be “beaten” (Lk 12:47); he will be assigned a place with the “unbelievers” (other hypocritical believers); and he will experience “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt 24:51).

Can it possibly be that such a punishment could be administered to a child of God? In view of the fact that this man was a servant of Christ, we are led to believe that he was a believer. It is not likely that Jesus would call a non-believer one of His servants. This is confirmed by the fact that, in Luke, this parable is part of the Lord’s answer to Peter about whether or not negative consequences might fall upon the truly-believing disciples at the judgment seat (Lk 12:41). Furthermore, this servant had been put in charge of everything his master owned. That is hardly the level of trust that the Lord would place in an unbeliever.

### QUESTION 2

Based on what you read in “The Parable of the Wicked Servant,” it appears that carnal Christians may face a stinging rebuke at the final judgment. *True or False?*

In a parallel passage, Luke 12:46, instead of saying the wicked servant is cast among the “hypocrites,” Jesus says they will be cast among the “unbelieving. Does this mean that this servant is cast into hell? Although it is true that the word Greek word *apistos* can be translated “unbelieving,” it should probably be translated “unfaithful” in this context.

Greek scholar A.T. Robertson offers this explanation:

Not “the unbelieving,” though that is a common meaning of *apistos*, but “the unreliable,” or “the untrustworthy.” Here Matthew 24:51 has “with the hypocrites,” the same point. (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1933. Under the entry “Luke 12:46.”)

The fact that *apistos* is rendered *hypokriton* (hypocrisy) in the parallel passage in Matthew (Mt 12:51; compare Lk 12:46) proves that *apiston* should not be translated "unbeliever," but "unfaithful."

One of the greatest sources of confusion in biblical interpretation is the failure to distinguish between becoming a Christian and being a disciple. A good portion of the Synoptic Gospels deals with the latter, while the gospel of John deals with the former. Becoming a Christian happens through the agency of believing and is without cost (Rev 21:6). Being a disciple, on the other hand, can cost us everything (Lk 14:26).

## Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 10:34-36; 24:45-51; and Luke 12:41-53.
- Please read "Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth."

## Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth

In Matthew 22, an interloper appears at the celebratory feast that inaugurates the millennial kingdom. Jesus rebukes him with sobering words.

But when the king came in to see the wedding guests, he saw a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. And he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?" But he had nothing to say. Then the king said to his attendants, "Tie him up hand and foot and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!" For many are called, but few are chosen. (Mt 22:11-14)

What does this mean? The man addressed is apparently already in the kingdom and therefore probably born again. But how then can Jesus say, "Throw him into the outer darkness"?

Although the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" is sometimes applied to the experience of the non-believer in hell, in other cases, it seems to be applied to the experience of the carnal believer at the judgment seat of Christ. It must be remembered that parables like this one contain figures of speech. There is no literal "weeping and gnashing of teeth," just as there will be no literal "binding" and "tying up" and casting." Rather, these Oriental symbols evoke ideas of a severe rebuke followed by profound regret. These believers will experience great grief ("weeping") and will be angry with themselves—or despairing—because of their wasted lives ("gnashing of teeth").

The Orientals were much more expressive of grief than many Westerners, and strong images were used to portray it. In fact, it was customary to hire professional mourners at a burial. The poetic symbolism used by Jeremiah in the book of Lamentations illustrates this Hebrew custom. The drastic emotion displayed by Jeremiah and the extreme figures of speech he uses to describe it far exceed what many outside of the Middle East would consider normal. Often, Hebrews would also wear a black garment called "sackcloth," made of goat's hair, coarsely woven and similar to a grain sack (Gen 37:34; Jer 6:26).

Tearing the garment from top to bottom signified grief and distress to the Hebrews. The capacity of the Hebrew for tears was immense, though the psalmist probably is using hyperbole when he speaks of flooding his bed every night with tears." Loud cries and beating one's breast are frequently signs of grief associated with weeping (Ruth 1:9; 2 Sam 13:36; see also Amos 5:16). In cases of personal tragedy, sprinkling ashes, dust, or dirt upon oneself and then wallowing in it was a common way to express despair (2 Sam 1:2; 13:19, 31; Ezek 27:30; Est 4:1-3).

Strong phrases like "weeping and gnashing of teeth" portray extreme pictures to the Western mind



and cause us to associate them with words like "hell" when, to the more emotionally demonstrative Oriental, the implied meaning is closer to "strong remorse."

The phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" is found seven times in the New Testament. Even though it is used on some occasions of the experience of the unsaved in hell (Mt 13:42, 50; Lk 13:28), it is also used on four occasions of the saved who are in the kingdom (Mt 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30). The notions of "heaven" or "hell" simply do not apply to the semantic interpretation of the words. The fact that the nonbeliever can experience profound regret in hell in no way implies that the true Christian cannot experience profound regret in the millennial kingdom (there will be no remorse in heaven). We are repeatedly told that, when the Lord comes, He will reward us "good and bad" (2 Cor 5:10) and that some may draw back in shame at His coming (1 Jn 2:28). Some Christians are going to be saved "but only as one escaping through the flames" (1 Cor 3:15). It seems that these verses adequately explain the experience of profound regret for the unfaithful Christian, which Matthew calls "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 22:13).

Two other uses of the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" are significant for our discussion.

I tell you, many will come from the east and west to share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Mt 8:11–12)

He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world and the good seed are the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one." (Mt 13:37–38)

Notice that "the sons of the kingdom" in Matthew 8:11 are defined as "the people of the kingdom." The word "people" in verse 37 is the same Greek word used for "sons."

These sons are completely different from the sons of the evil one (Mt 13:38), who will be cast into the furnace of fire in hell, where there will also be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt 13:42). There is no furnace of fire in the place mentioned Matthew 8:11-12 or in Matthew 22:1-11.

Returning to the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22, note that it is not to the unsaved that this fate occurs but to "sons of the kingdom" (Mt 8:12), who are the "wheat" (Mt 13:38), to whom the calling naturally belongs. The man thrown out of the wedding feast in Matthew 22 is a "friend" who had accepted the invitation and had taken his place. The personal slaves of the lord of the house were the ones asked to value their rich privileges lest they lose them and fall under his displeasure. The apostles regularly called themselves slaves. It was to his *own* bondservants (not an enemy's, i.e., Satan's) that the lord had entrusted his talents.

According to the Lord, all Christians are called to participate in the wedding, but only some will enjoy it, that is, attend it. This is apparently the meaning of the proverb "Many are called but few are chosen." This ancient proverb, used three times in the apocryphal Ezra (an early Jewish prophetic work), simply means that, while all Christians are invited to the banquet, only those wearing the wedding garment are chosen to participate in it. This proverb does not necessarily say, as some interpret it, that "all are invited to be saved, but only the elect will be."

Christians who fail to persevere to the end, living a carnal lifestyle, will experience three consequences at the future judgment: (1) a stinging rebuke (Mt 24:45-51); (2) exclusion from the wedding banquet (Mt 22:1-14; 25:1-13); and (3) millennial disinheritance (Mt 25:14-30).

### QUESTION 3

According to “Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth,” what does this phrase in Matthew 24:51 probably mean? *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. An experience of strong regret
- B. Eternal damnation
- C. A negative consequence for an unfaithful life
- D. An eternity of wailing and crying

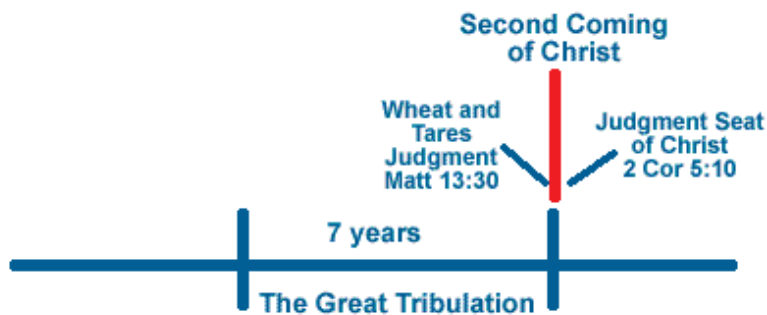
But what of the other expressions of judgment? We are told that this man will be whipped with many lashes (Lk 12:47-48). We must remember that this is a parable and that these are figures of speech. Technically this figure of speech is called a hypocatastasis, or “implication.” In this case, there is an implied resemblance between a whip and something else. What is that something else?

### QUESTION 4

Based on “The Parable of the Wicked Servant” (placed earlier in the lesson), which of the following do you think are true statements? *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. Unfaithful believers will be beaten by Christ when He returns.
- B. All believers will be judged by the Word of God and their success or failure to live up to it.
- C. Unfaithful believers will receive a stern verbal rebuke.
- D. Unfaithful believers will literally be whipped.

It may be helpful here to clarify that Scripture speaks of several definite judgments in the future. While we cannot be certain of the exact time that these judgments will take place, the chart below suggests a probable chronology.



In the diagram above, there are two judgments: one on non-believers (Mt 13:30), called “the judgment of the wheat and the tares” and one on believers (2 Cor 5:10), called “the judgment seat of Christ.” In the diagram, we have indicated that both occur at the time of Christ’s second coming to earth, which is when He will set up His kingdom. It is also possible that the final judgment, or judgment seat of Christ, will occur about seven years earlier, at the rapture of the church before the tribulation begins.

## **Judgment Seat of Christ**

Following the rapture of the Church, believers will stand before the *bema*, the judgment seat of Christ, to be recompensed for their deeds within the Body, whether good or worthless. Salvation is not the judgment issue here; rather, it is the works of the believer. The works that were done in the flesh will be burned up; there will be no reward, and the believer will be saved with no works to show for it (1 Cor 3:15). One whose works are acceptable by the Lord will be rewarded. This reward is not in terms of salvation, for that has been established. Rewards are spoken of in terms of crowns (1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8).

P. P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1989).

It will certainly be disturbing to some sincere, spiritually sensitive Christians to hear that such a woeful consequence could befall a true believer at the judgment seat of Christ. We must remember that these warnings are not addressed to the sincere believer, who may fail often but always gets back into the battle and presses on. No, these warnings are addressed to the Christian who lapses into carnality, takes the grace of God for granted, and persists in a hypocritical lifestyle in spite of the great blessings Christ has poured on him.

Are we to imagine that this grief and remorse will last for all eternity? Certainly not! There is a cycle to all grief. Since we will then be in our resurrection bodies, it is likely that the period of remorse will be brief. We are told that He will “wipe away every tear” and that “there shall no longer be any crying, mourning or pain” (Rev 21:4). No believer will go into eternity full of remorse regarding his failure in this life. However, there will be differences in intimacy with Jesus Christ. Everyone’s cup will be full, but the cups will be different sizes.

## **Topic 2: Warnings to the Nation**

### **June, AD 32**

Christ now addressed the people in general, warning them that judgment was imminent. He declared that those who could not see this to be true are hypocrites. They could interpret the signs of nature to discern whether a storm was coming. How then could they not read the mighty signs performed right before their very eyes, which indicated that a storm was rising all around them? Israel’s rejection and murder of her prophets had always been followed by judgment, and she was about to reject the greatest Prophet ever sent to her. These people, He said, are like a fig tree that never bore any fruit.

Ultimately, there will be a final accounting. Many who hear His words and fail to respond will find the door shut against them when they try to enter the kingdom. However, faithful disciples will experience a joyous wedding banquet as they sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom.

## **The Fruitless Fig Tree**

### **Assignment**

- Read Luke 12:54-59; and Luke 13:1-9.

## QUESTION 5

Why did Jesus call the people hypocrites?

- A. They claimed to be looking for the Messiah, yet when Jesus presented signs that He was the One, they could not (or would not) discern their significance.
- B. They claimed to live good, moral lives, but they did not do so.
- C. They followed the Pharisees instead of the commands of Jesus.
- D. They were spiritually unable to see.

## QUESTION 6

What is the central message of the parable in Luke 12:57-59?

Some see no need to set things right with Christ now. They do not believe, or do not realize, that the case they will one day present to the court is totally without merit (Rom 2:1-3, 2:13-19).

## QUESTION 7

It is likely that Jesus warned the nation of eternal damnation in Luke 13:1-9. *True or False?*

As a result of Israel's unbelief, Jesus announced in this passage that the entire nation would experience a catastrophe. What kind of consequence would this be? As discussed in an earlier lesson, it is likely that this refers to a temporal judgment, not eternal damnation. He was comparing this judgment to what happened to the eighteen people upon whom the tower of Siloam fell (a temporal judgment). He apparently had the Roman invasion of AD 70 in mind.

Were it not for the intercession of the Son of Man, that judgment would have been executed immediately. The sentence had already been passed, but the caretaker pled for more time (Lk 13:8).

Often in the Old Testament, the fig tree is used as a metaphor for the nation of Israel.

## QUESTION 8

When we look at the terrible sin rampant in the world, it is amazing that God does not judge the world immediately and bring this chaos to an end. This should have happened to Israel long ago. For some reason, God has delayed this judgment. Why?

## A Door Shut Tight

### Assignment

- Read Luke 13:10-35.
- Read "The Shut Door."



## The Shut Door

In Luke 13:22-30, Luke introduces the parable of the shut door and the eschatological banquet in response to the question posed in verse 23, "Lord, will only a few be saved?"

Saved from what? Knowing that the word "saved" can imply salvation from final damnation, a temporal catastrophe, or even from disease (healing), we must consider the context to determine the sense here. The chapter opens with a warning to the nation that unless they repent, they too will perish in a temporal judgment, just as the Galileans did (Lk 13:1-5). These Galileans were offering sacrifices in the Temple in Jerusalem, possibly at the time of the Passover (the only time when animals were slaughtered). In a bloody attack, Pilate killed them while they were sacrificing, mixing their blood with that of the animals. Jesus makes this application:

He answered them, "Do you think these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered these things? No, I tell you! But unless you repent, you will all perish as well! Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower in Siloam fell on them, do you think they were worse offenders than all the others who live in Jerusalem? No, I tell you! But unless you repent, you will all perish as well!" (Luke 13:2-5)

The word "perish" refers to perishing in the same manner as the Galileans and those who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell, a temporal perishing. The thought is once again directed at the nation, warning them that they are headed for a national catastrophe (Titus' siege of Jerusalem in AD 70) unless they repent.

He then follows this warning with another about the fig tree not bearing fruit and as a result being cut down (Lk 13:9). Once again, with the judgment on the fig tree, a temporal judgment on the nation of Israel is indicated.

We then are presented with the case of a woman who is saved from her disease, on the Sabbath day. The official leaders are indignant, which illustrates the point of Jesus' stories: The nation is in sin, the leaders are unrepentant and very few are being helped because of this. But although judgment may be coming upon the nation, this one woman receives healing.

This naturally leads to the question in verse 23. "Lord, will only a few be saved?" Considering verses 5 and 23 at the same time makes this logical flow more evident.

Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower in Siloam fell on them, do you think they were worse offenders than all the others who live in Jerusalem? No, I tell you! But unless you repent you will all perish as well! (Lk 13:4-5, NET)

Someone asked Him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" (Lk 13:23)

Saved from what? This probably refers to salvation from hell.

However, the Lord does not answer the question directly. Instead, He directs the people's focus to the personal significance of this coming national catastrophe. The fact that God does judge His people in the course of time should lead them to focus on their own lives, not the consequences others will face. This same teaching technique is also found in Acts 1:6 where the disciples, after forty days of post-resurrection teaching on the subject of the kingdom of God, ask, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). As in Luke 13:24, the Lord does not directly answer this broadly-applicable question, but applies the discussion directly to their lives, "He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth'" (Acts 1:7-8).

The references to an eventual judgment on the nation suggest a possible judgment on disciples who, like the covenant people of old, could become unfaithful. There is nothing in the context, however, to suggest that this is the judgment of eternal damnation, nor is there any suggestion of such a thing in the parable of the banquet to follow.

So instead of directly answering their question regarding the number of the saved from the coming national catastrophe, He exhorts His hearers to strive to enter by the narrow door (Lk 13:24). This entrance can be reached only with the full expenditure of all our energies. If salvation from hell is meant, then Jesus is teaching that our final salvation is based upon works (see Eph 2:8-9). Obviously, entering the banquet by the narrow door here has nothing to do with going to heaven when one dies.

Notice the tense of the verbs. We are to *strive* now (present tense). Then at the eschatological banquet we *will seek* (future tense) to enter. Our striving now apparently determines what will happen when we stand outside the door seeking entrance into the banquet. The image to follow describes a large group of believers who are in the kingdom and now seek entrance into the festive celebration that launches the reign of David's Greater Son.

Those who believe that entering through the narrow door (Lk 13:24) refers to entrance into personal salvation are confronted with the problem that striving and obedience are necessary conditions of entrance in this passage. A question arises: "How much obedience is necessary for acceptance?" Furthermore, it is possible, that the lawless will be in the kingdom but will be called "least" there (Mt 5:19) where lawless false prophets are said to be in the kingdom. Even though they had faith in Jesus' works on the cross (they were in the kingdom, saved) they had made no preparation for their final entrance into the kingdom, and entrance into greatness (Mt 5:20) by living out the Sermon on the Mount now.

As the Christian journeys toward the kingdom of the end times, he must continually choose either the broad or the narrow way (Mt 7:13-14). Entering by the narrow gate involves the call to discipleship and results in a rich life now and abundant access to the kingdom. This striving is not the struggle to believe, but is a struggle to be faithful and requires committed discipleship. The Greek word for "strive" is *agonizomai* and was also used of the athlete in the games, agonizing through self-discipline and self-denial to obtain the reward in the ancient Olympic games (1 Cor 9:27). This entrance, in contrast to the final entrance into heaven, is achieved by man's ability (albeit by God's enablement, Phil 4:13). It is obtained by what man is able to do (Lk 13:24). Salvation from hell is apparently not in view here. There is, of course, another kind of salvation found in Luke's writings: finding one's life in the sense of the rich life that comes through self-denial and committed discipleship (Lk 9:24; Mk 8:25).

Those standing outside the door protest. They had attended meetings where Jesus preached. Does this not satisfy the requirements for entrance to the banquet? Many nominal church members today labor under the same delusion. But only the great ones in Israel's history, Abraham, David, Job, and many others, can be found behind this shut door. This is a gathering of the firstborn, and the believers outside are called "evildoers" and not permitted into this fellowship. They will be cast out from this community of the faithful even though they request entrance to the celebration.

"I do not know where you are from" (Lk 13:27) is our Lord's sobering response to those who are shut out. The point seems to be that obedience, not just acquaintance, is necessary for entrance to the celebration. This is likely an example of the Jewish ban formula, which caused disobedient students to be temporarily banned from the presence of their teacher. Like the five foolish virgins in the parable of the Ten Virgins, their request is denied (Mt 25:1-13). In this instance, it is because they are evildoers, that is, they have committed acts that violate standards of right conduct. This is not just a few incidents of failure, but is a description of the life of the permanently carnal Christian. The message is clear: Sitting at the table in fellowship with Jesus may have signified their belief in Him, but believing in Jesus is not enough to qualify one for entrance into the celebratory feast which inaugurates the kingdom. Only committed discipleship, striving to enter, qualifies one for this

reward. Time is short. Believers cannot wait forever to make a decision to enter the narrow door, the life of discipleship.

Deciding against the narrow door will result in being cast out. “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out” (Lk 13:28, NASB). Cast out of what? If one says they were cast out of the kingdom, that means they were *in* it. One cannot be cast *out* of a location which he is not already *in*.

There is no easy explanation, but perhaps one dictionary explains it best: “expulsion from the community,” or to “expel someone from a group.” If this is correct, then what group? Conceivably the reference is to these carnal believers being cast out of the total group of those seeking entrance. Only the faithful are then admitted. Also, the word can be softened a bit and translated “led out,” with no connotation of force (Mt 12:20; Mk 1:12). The following verse makes clear they are being excluded from the celebratory banquet that inaugurates the messianic reign.

What of those remaining? “And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at table in the kingdom of God” (Lk 13:28-30). A great multitude of faithful saved people will gather from all over the world. Here, the Lord refers to people who are not only in the kingdom, like those who are saved yet outside the door of the banquet hall, but those who recline at the table in the kingdom. The Greek phrase rendered “recline at the table” is a term that refers to reclining at a banquet. Most Bible scholars relate it specifically to the messianic wedding banquet in this verse and connect it with Matthew 8:11.

In the last scene, the carnal believer’s experience of weeping and gnashing his teeth was described. Here, we are concerned with rankings in the kingdom. The Lord summarizes the second scene by saying, “And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last” (Lk 13:29). This phrase is commonly used in the Gospels to describe rankings among believers based upon their faithfulness in their Christian walk. There is a difference between being “in the kingdom” and being “at the table.”

So in answer to the original question, “Will only a few be saved from the coming destruction?” the Lord says, “Don’t worry about what may happen to others.” Instead, the reality that God judges the nation should cause you to focus on your own life and to strive to enter the narrow way so that you might be saved from exclusion from the messianic banquet. Your response to His call to discipleship has eternal effects on your role in the coming kingdom. If you choose the broad way, you will be excluded from a great future. Only by choosing the narrow way throughout your life will you recline at table with the great ones of Israel’s history, and thus find final salvation in the fullest sense.

In this section and the following, Jesus resumed the theme of the shortness of time. We must not delay—judgment is near! We have already been told that while there was little time left, He would demonstrate that those who believe can be saved instantly. But like a burden-bearer or a slave under a yoke, an old woman meandered into the synagogue one Sabbath day while Jesus was teaching the Word.



Callous disregard of human suffering was typical of the Pharisees, and it was manifested by this leader of the synagogue. Willing to release his oxen from a stall and lead them to water on the Sabbath, he was indignant that the Son of God should do good on the Sabbath, healing this woman who had been bent in half for eighteen years. Jesus justly embarrassed him, calling him a hypocrite in front of the people.

For this hypocrite and others like him, arrival at the door of the kingdom will yield a shocking surprise: it will be shut tight, and they will not be permitted to enter!

The parable to follow seems to describe just one event, but actually Luke appears to be bringing two events from the gospel of Matthew into one brief paragraph.

### **QUESTION 9**

As Jesus moved south to Jerusalem, one of His disciples asked, “Lord, will only a few be saved?” Based on your reading of the article “The Shut Door” (placed earlier in the lesson), explain Jesus’ answer to this question.

### **QUESTION 10**

It appears that Luke 13:26-28 does not refer to eternal damnation but to exclusion from the joy of the messianic banquet. *True or False?*

## **Dinner at the Pharisee’s Home**

### **Assignment**

- Read Luke 14:1-24.

Luke now relates an event which occurred while Jesus was dining at the home of a Pharisee. He notes that “they were watching Him closely” (Lk 14:1-2). Why? It appears that they had deliberately planted a man with dropsy there to see if Christ would heal him on the Sabbath. It is worth noting that none of Christ’s critics (until modern times, two thousand years later) doubted that He worked miracles. The Pharisees simply ascribed these works to the devil.

#### **Dropsy**

The word Luke used in this passage is a technical term common to Greek physicians for "dropsy." Dropsy is not a disease in itself, but is the symptom of heart, kidney, or liver disease and causes water to collect in the limbs, on the surface of the body, or in the abdomen. This condition indicates that the disease is in an advanced stage, and the condition can be cured only if the disease itself is curable.

Bromiley, G. W. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 1:994.

Once again, He challenged their hypocrisy by pointing out they would pull an ox or donkey out of a pit on the Sabbath, but would not allow healing. The Pharisees held that such religious keeping of God’s law earned them merit, and gained them salvation by works. What angered the Pharisees about Christ was that He said their merit was useless and even hypocritical. The Pharisees were not prepared to give up their worthless merit. They declared that Jesus was wrong, and that His concepts of God and salvation were wrong as well.

Three parables follow. The first two address attitudes at an earthly banquet, and the third talks about the Messianic banquet.



## QUESTION 11

What are the key lessons taught in the first parable (Lk 14:7-11)? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. When some people are invited to a feast, they cannot humbly enjoy the feast as a gracious gift given to them independent of their own importance.
- B. The reason some like to attend wedding feasts is that it gives them an opportunity to advertise their own imagined merit and distinction.
- C. It is better for the host to give you an unexpected distinction or honor than to assume it for yourself.
- D. Those who elevate themselves will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be elevated.

## QUESTION 12

Record in your Life Notebook how you might apply the parable in Luke 14:12-14.

## The Messianic Banquet

The third parable Jesus told at the Pharisee's house was suggested by the second. This is the parable of the great Messianic banquet.

### Assignment

- Read Luke 14:15-24.

The host of this great banquet invited many guests, but they all made excuses for not being able to attend. So the host issued another summons, which was (and still is) a customary practice among wealthy Arabs. Among these tribes, refusing the second summons would be an insult equivalent with a declaration of war. Yet this invitation was also refused.

## QUESTION 13

Think carefully about this parable. Match the items with the correct parallel.

<i>Item in Parable</i>	<i>Probable Significance</i>
Those in the streets and alleys	Rejoicing and satisfaction in the kingdom
Those in the roads and country lanes	The prophets
Messianic banquet	Those whose experience in this world was one of suffering and a lack of fulfillment
The host	The Lord Jesus Christ
The guests	Gentiles outside the city
The servant	The outcasts of the Jewish community

Those who rejected the invitation are those who enjoy the Creator's gifts, but view the Creator Himself as a bore. They have no wish to feast with Him. This life and its pleasures are quite satisfactory, and they have no interest whatsoever in the life to come. But one day, all wrongs, including theirs, will be righted. Those who are outcasts now will feast and be completely compensated for their sufferings here. Concerning those who declined the invitation, Jesus says, "None of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner." The door is eternally shut. The pleasures of this life were more attractive to them than fellowship with Christ, and they will suffer forever because they declined His free offer of salvation.

## **Counting the Cost**

### **Assignment**

- Read Luke 14:25-35.

### **QUESTION 14**

Two lessons are taught in your assignment. Summarize them in your own words.

When Jesus said one must hate one's family (Lk 14:26) and even one's own life in order to be a disciple, He was using hyperbole, or overstatement, to make a point. The point was that, in comparison to love for Him, all other loves are virtually hatreds. This kind of hyperbole is occasionally used in the Old Testament to stress a secondary love rather than a first love (e.g., Gen 29:31, compare Mt 10:37).

Building a tower requires planning, studying blueprints, gathering materials, and much labor and time. It would be foolish to build without considering what it would cost to finish the job. Such a builder would be a laughingstock, and that kind of disciple would be a fool.

## **Topic 3: Parables of the Lost**

### **June, AD 32**

The Pharisees were upset. How, they wondered, could someone who claimed to be the "Son of Man," the Messiah, condescend to receive sinners and tax collectors, eating and having fellowship with them? This was unthinkable. Beginning in Luke 15:1-3. Jesus answered their objections with three well-known parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son.

In our study of these parables we should consider two questions:

#### **Who are the sinners?**

To the Pharisees, "sinners," or "the people of the land," included all non-Pharisaic Jews; those who did not keep the Torah in a precise fashion; and those who deliberately flouted the Torah. Thus, for the rabbis, who would not eat with "the people of the land," to call someone a sinner generally said nothing about whether or not they considered that person saved. We should not, therefore, assume that the title "sinners" refers to those who are not born again in the sense of modern theology; sinners were all people who did not keep the Torah according to the Pharisees' precise interpretation.

#### **Are these sinners saved or not?**

To Jesus, all men and women were sinners, but also objects of God's love and compassion. According to Jesus, many sinners and prostitutes had believed in Him and were therefore born again (Mt 21:31). Therefore, inviting a sinner to Jesus' table fellowship could mean inviting either the unsaved "people of the land" or sinners who had believed in Him. The early Christians referred to themselves as sinners (Jas 3:8), and Paul said he was the greatest sinner of all (1 Tim 1:15).

Jesus customarily ate and drank with all kinds of people, often those who were either on or beyond the borders of respectable society. These people lacked not only social respectability, but also religious uprightness, proper covenant behavior, and loyalty to the traditions and aspirations of Israel. This brought about great animosity from the Pharisees. Was this particular dinner party composed of those who had believed on Jesus, or was it a time in which He was sharing His message with the unsaved?

## The Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin

We can only tell whether a group of sinners refers to the saved or unsaved by careful examination of the context.

### Assignment

- Read Luke 15:1-10.
- Read “The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin.”

### The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin

Just as 1 Corinthians 13 is the classic New Testament chapter on love and Hebrews 11 is the classic chapter on the life of faith, Luke 15 is the classic chapter on repentance. The three parables it contains are familiar and much loved. They are, of course, the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost coin, and the parable of the lost son.

#### The Parable of the Lost Sheep

The three parables of Luke 15 are introduced in verses 1-3. There we see the Pharisees and scribes complaining that Jesus "receives sinners and eats with them" (Lk 15:2). They are scandalized by the fact that He accepts them into table fellowship. No self-respecting Pharisee would condescend to do this. In response to their criticism, Jesus proceeds to tell these stories, beginning with the parable of the lost sheep.

The shepherd of this parable clearly owns all one hundred sheep, a fact which is verified by the question, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep...?" (Lk 15:4) and the words "my sheep" (Lk 15:6). As was frequent in Palestine, especially in the southern region called the Negev ("the dry"), this shepherd is leading his flock from grazing place to grazing place in the sparsely-inhabited territory described as "the wilderness." Then he realizes that one of his sheep has wandered away from the flock.

The shepherd, rightly alarmed, immediately leaves the ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness and goes after the lost one. From the perspective of a Middle Eastern shepherd, this can only mean that he felt the flock was reasonably safe and would stay together.

He recovers the lost sheep, lifting it lovingly to carry it back to the flock on his shoulders (Lk 15:5). When he returns home after the day's grazing, he invites his friends and neighbors to his house for a party so that they can share his joy in having found his lost sheep.

Our Lord's application of this story is crystal clear: "I tell you, in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine *righteous* people who have no need to repent" (Lk 15:7). The italicized word is key to this parable. The ninety-nine sheep represent people who are "righteous" and who therefore do not need to repent.

However, many interpret this passage differently, and transform the "ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent" are transformed into "ninety-nine unrighteous persons who only think they need no repentance!"

Plainly stated, the parable of the lost sheep is not about eternal salvation at all. It is about a Christian who wanders away from God's flock and pursues the pathway of sin. His restoration to fellowship with his Savior and Shepherd, as well as to fellowship with the Lord's people who remained faithful, requires repentance. When the recovery of a straying believer occurs, the Great Shepherd is filled with joy, and heaven itself rejoices with Him. And so, of course, should God's people also (Lk 15:25-32).

## The Parable of the Lost Coin

Our Lord's second parable in Luke 15 both reinforces and complements the first. If the Shepherd Himself is concerned for any of His sheep that stray, so also should the church be. As has often been suggested, the woman in this parable is very naturally taken as representing the church itself.

Once again, it is obvious that the woman is the owner of the coins. One of them becomes lost (Lk 15:8), but the other nine do not! The woman knows exactly where they are. She is looking for the one lost coin, not the other nine.

In order to find it, however, she must light a lamp and use a broom to sweep the house (Lk 15:8). Her home is both dark and dirty, and she believes the lost coin may be found in some dark nook or cranny, buried under considerable dirt or trash. By comparison here, the church lives in a world that contains more than enough moral darkness and spiritual filth (compare with 2 Pet 1:19 "as a light that shines in a dark place").

Born-again Christians do indeed go astray in this world of darkness and filth, but they still retain their identity and value to God, just as a lost coin is still valuable in a dark corner, buried under trash. The church is responsible to recognize that value, as the woman did, and to help the Christian return to fellowship with other believers so that the church's value as a whole may be properly utilized for God. A church is always richer when a straying Christian returns to the fold.

The recovery of such a Christian is a source of joy to the church and to its heavenly "friends and neighbors," the angels of God (Lk 15:9-10). That the angels are intimately concerned with what happens in the church is clearly indicated by passages like Ephesians 3:10; 1 Corinthians 11:10; Hebrews 1:14; Hebrews 12:22-23; and other texts. Indeed, 1 Corinthians 11:10 in particular implies that the angels watch Christian practices and activities (compare also Lk 24:6-7). Employing the imagery of the Lord's parable, we might say that whenever the church gathers, the angels are invited—and in fact, attend as unseen guests! So when the church rejoices over a backslidden believer who has been recovered, it does so in the presence of the angels who are there to share that joy (Lk 15:10)!

### Conclusion

There is nothing at all in either parable about eternal salvation. In fact, Luke 15 as a whole is a celebration of one of the most joyous experiences that the church can have—the recovery of one of God's precious sheep and valued coins for both God and His congregation. May the Lord grant this joy repeatedly in churches all over the world!

[Adapted from Zane C. Hodges, "The Ninety-nine Righteous Sheep: Repentance in Luke 15:1-10," in *Grace in Focus* September-October, 1998.]

## QUESTION 15

Based on our study of these parables and their contexts, we may conclude that "sinners" in Luke 15:1-3 probably refers to whom?

- A. The unsaved
- B. Both the unsaved and the saved
- C. Non-Pharisees
- D. The saved

The element of *possession* in these parables gives the answer to our query. The sheep and the coin belonged respectively to the shepherd and the woman, and the prodigal was "my son." This seems to show that the parables speak of believers, owned by the Father. They are sons or members of His family who have backslidden; they are lost in the sense that even though they are true Christians, they are not living like it.

The ten silver coins are most likely the woman's *ketubah*, or dowry—the only money she brings into the marriage that is technically hers, even if the marriage is dissolved. That she has only ten coins (about ten days' wages) suggests that her father's family is not well-to-do; she would presumably have married into a household equally poor." (Keener, Craig S. *IVP Background Commentary*. Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic. 1994)

"The woman's lamp is a small, hand-held oil lamp, which emits little light but is more helpful than the small window that may or may not be in her wall. The rough stone floors of poor homes had many crevices between the stones, into which coins and fragments of pottery fell so often that archaeologists can now use coins in those crevices to date when people lived in these homes. By sweeping with a broom, she might hope to hear the coin rattle against the floor." (Keener)

## The Parable of the Pursuing Father

### Assignment

- Read Luke 15:11-32.
- Recent research has revealed significant cultural perspective on this much-loved parable. Read the article "The Prodigal Son."

### The Prodigal Son

The very title by which the church knows this parable tells its story: There was once a son who wandered away from his father! The New Testament does not disclose any sense in which unsaved people may be considered "sons of God." It follows, therefore, that this son represents a Christian who has gone astray, just like the lost sheep and the lost coin do.

#### The Request

The youngest son requests his inheritance while his father is still alive and in good health. Surely anywhere in the world, this is an outrageous request, but specifically in traditional Middle Eastern culture, it is unthinkable. The son is not just a young man headed "out into the world to seek his fortune." In Middle Eastern culture, this request means, "Father, I am eager for you to die!" A traditional Middle Eastern father would strike the boy across the face and drive him out of the house. But that is not what he does—which brings us to a second point.

#### The Father's Gift

The son's inheritance is substantial. This wealthy, well-respected family employs house servants and slaves, herds both fatted calves and goats, and owns a house large enough to host a crowd that will eat an entire calf in one evening. They can afford to hire professional musicians and dancers for that banquet. Transferring this significant inheritance is a serious matter that the father should only address as he approaches death.

Five times in this parable, the father does not behave like a traditional oriental patriarch, and the first occurs here: He does not reject his son, but instead, grants his request.

According to verse 10, the prodigal then gathers all he has and sells his part of the family farm. This displays their horrendous family breakdown, shaming the family before the entire community. First-century Jewish law provided for the division of an inheritance in the father's desired timing, but did not grant the children the right to sell until after the father's death.

Yet the father again breaks with the expected norms, allowing the son's immediate, ungracious ownership and selling of the property even though he knows that it will bring shame to their family.

In the contemporary West, Jesus is often accused of having used an oriental patriarch as a model for God in this parable. However, from the opening lines we can see that He has broken all the bounds of Middle Eastern fatherhood in creating this image of a father. No human father is an adequate model for God. Knowing this, Jesus elevated this parental figure beyond his human limitations and reshaped him for use as a model of God.

## **The Hurried Sale**

Anger in the village rises against him because he has shamed his father and his entire extended family by offering a large portion of the family farm for sale with a healthy father still farming it! The prodigal does not care about customs or the Jewish laws that did not permit such a sale. He concludes the deal in a few days and leaves town as quickly as possible.

## **The Qetsatsah Ceremony**

The Jerusalem Talmud informs us that, at the time of Jesus, Jews had a method of punishing any Jewish boy who lost the family inheritance to Gentiles. It was called the "*qetsatsah* ceremony." A violator of community expectations, such as the prodigal son, would face this consequence if he ever dared to return. The ceremony was simple. The villagers would bring a large earthenware jar, fill it with burned nuts and burned corn, and break it in front of the guilty individual, shouting that the person is cut off from his people. From that point on, the village would have nothing to do with the wayward individual. The prodigal son knows that this ceremony will be his consequence if he ever tries to return home.

## **Expensive Living**

The prodigal takes up a new lifestyle that the Bible calls "loose" or "riotous" living, and his inheritance vaporizes quickly. However, we only know he was a spendthrift; Jesus gives no hint as to the prodigal's spending weaknesses. However, the Greek adjective used to describe his lifestyle in this phrase does not imply immorality, a detail which has been preserved for eighteen centuries by Syriac and Arabic translations. The older son publicly accuses his brother of spending the money on harlots near the end of the story, but he has just arrived from the field and knows nothing. He clearly wants to exaggerate his brother's failures.

## **The Son Becomes a Pig Herder**

For a Jew, no fall from favor could be more completely catastrophic. Becoming a pig herder is the extreme opposite of enjoying the father's favor and blessing. Pork was an unclean meat that no Jew faithful to the Law would touch. But the prodigal's money is spent, and even though he naturally desires to return home, he has broken the rules. He knows that the *qetsatsah* ceremony awaits him if he returns to the village. So he sinks further, taking a despised job. From the Pharisees' point of view, no man could be more lost.

But working as a pig herder does not meet the young man's needs. The text deliberately affirms, "No one gave him anything." As a pig herder, the prodigal is fed, but not paid.

## **The Prodigal Repents**

Even in the far country where the prodigal squanders his resources, he is fully conscious of his sonship. We are told,

But when he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" (Lk 15:17-19)

Are these the words of an unsaved person? Hardly.

From his lowest point in the corner of the pigpen, the prodigal is still fully aware that he is his

father's son. He realizes as well that his actions have destroyed his right to the privilege of such a lofty status. As he plans his return, he decides that he will tell his father to reduce him to the level of a hired servant—not because he is not a son, but because he feels no longer worthy of the privilege of that position.

The prodigal resolutely walks the path homeward, knowing that he returns as an empty-handed failure who insulted and offended his family and community at his departure. He steels his nerves for his humiliating entrance into the village. He braces himself to endure the shame of the *qetsatsah* ceremony and the painful interview with his father that he knows will follow.

## **The Father's Amazing Love**

But what of his father?

From the beginning, the father knows his son will fail. And so he waits with loving pain in his heart. Day after day, he watches down the crowded village street, looking toward the distant road that his son had taken when he disappeared, wearing that arrogant smile and carrying such high hopes. The father yearns for his son's return. Despite his son's betrayal, he still loves him.

It seems forever. Perhaps some days it is a hopeless wait. Surely the father's wife and other son must notice those far-off glances, and perhaps they consider him foolish to wait so lovingly for such a thankless son.

But one day, a small, downtrodden figure appears on the road, just as the father has pictured him so many times. There is nothing left of the arrogance or wild dreams. For a moment, perhaps the father thinks he is just imagining this scene once again.

But no. It is his son! The father cannot contain his joy, and in that moment, he breaks the mold of Middle Eastern patriarchy for the third time. He does not sit waiting in grand isolation in the house to hear what the wayward boy might have to say for himself. He grabs up the bottom edge of his long robes in his hand and runs down the road toward his pig-herding son, caring nothing for the humiliation of running in public in those long robes or the fact that it should only be the mother, not the father, to run and shower the boy with kisses. He must reach his son. So he runs.

He does not wait to hear the prepared speech. Instead, he falls on his son's neck and kisses him in welcome! The love the father demonstrates is not a response to the wayward son's confession. Rather, out of his own compassion, he abandons all dignity and empties himself, assumes the form of a servant, and welcomes his estranged son with love and emotion.

The son cannot believe that this welcome is truly for him. And his words have been prepared and rehearsed repeatedly with every step of his walk home. They must be spoken.

"Father," he says. "I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (Lk. 15:21, NASB). In his contrite, genuinely repentant heart, he underestimates the fullness of his father's forgiving grace.

## **The Banquet**

Brushing aside all notions of his son's unworthiness, the father says, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet" (Lk 15:22, NASB). The father orders a banquet. He says, "Let us eat and celebrate, because this son of mine was dead, and is alive again—he was lost and is found!" (Lk 15:23-24) Both in terms of his treatment of the prodigal and his direct announcement, the father proclaims the returning young man is his son.

Instead of the rebuke the son expects, the father is throwing a banquet in celebration of his return! Imagine the son's feelings of undeserved blessing at how his father is restoring him. We hear an echo of his emotions in 1 John 3:1, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God" (NASB).

There are two reasons given for the banquet. The first is offered by the father, and the second, by a little boy in the courtyard of the home.

*Because my son was once dead and is alive again.*

The prodigal is not just now becoming his father's son. On the contrary; this same son had been "dead" and "lost," but is now "alive" and "found." These words do not mean that this son had somehow literally lost his life. Instead, they describe his period of separation from his father. The father has grieved as deeply as if his son had died because he had totally lost contact with him. Now their reunion gives glorious new birth and the opportunity for joyful rediscovery of the father-son experience. Any father who has long been separated from a son whom he loves dearly can fully relate to the emotion of these words.

In returning to God, particularly after a long separation from Him, many repentant Christians experience a deep sense of unworthiness. They feel that they have disgraced the Christian name, and they are all too aware of bringing disrepute to God, their heavenly Father. Such Christians need reassurance of the full and gracious acceptance God extends to them when they return. Their forgiveness is complete, and they need not feel as if they are forever second-class Christians, as if they now serve God as mere hired servants. Instead, they should be encouraged to enjoy all the privileges of sonship, which are symbolized in the story by the robe, the ring, and the sandals.

But we see that, although the prodigal returns to the full experience of sonship, he does not recover the possessions he has foolishly squandered. Restoration for the straying Christian is real, but the loss of time, potential, and opportunity is equally real. The portion of life that is spent away from God and the rewards that might have been earned during that time are permanently lost.

*Because he has received him back safe and sound.*

The older son comes in from the field and on hearing the music, he calls to a *pais*. This Greek word can mean three things. The first is "son," which does not fit this text. The second is "servant," which also does not fit because all the servants are probably busy in the house serving at the huge banquet. The third option is "young boy." Middle Eastern Syriac and Arabic versions have always chosen this third alternative.

As the older son approaches his family home, he encounters a crowd of young boys, not old enough to recline with the elders at the banquet, who are outside the house dancing to the music and boisterously enjoying the occasion.

The older son asks one of them what the party is all about, and the lad replies, "Your brother has returned, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he got his son back safe and sound" (Lk 15:27).

The word translated here as healthy is the Greek word *hugaino*. This literally means "in good health." But in the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint), this same Greek word appears fourteen times, and without exception, it is translated from the Hebrew word *shalom*, or *peace*. When a first-century Jew used the word *hugaino*, he or she mentally translated the Hebrew word *shalom*, which includes "good health" but means much more.

Jesus probably used the word *shalom* in the story. The point is that, rather than holding a *qetsatsah* ceremony of rejection, the entire community has come to participate in the joy of restored fellowship between the father and the prodigal—*shalom*.

The young boy's report that the father received his son and plans to eat with him reminds the listener that the father has clearly evolved into a symbol for Jesus, who also receives sinners and eats with them.



## The Older Son's Anger

The older son is furious at this *shalom*, this unconditional acceptance. His younger brother should be punished, but instead, their father has honored him with a banquet! The older brother is so angry he takes the radical step of breaking his relationship with his father: he refuses to go into the banquet.

For a son to be present and to refuse participation in such a banquet is an unspeakable public insult to his father. A modern equivalent might be the case of a son who has a heated public shouting match with his father in the middle of a wedding banquet. A shouting match is not unthinkable—but not in public at such a banquet.

## The Father's Response to the Older Brother

For a fourth time, the father deviates from the expectations that would have been placed on a traditional patriarch. For the second time, he offers a demonstration of unexpected love. Only this time, he offers it to the law keeper rather than the lawbreaker. Amazing grace holds true for both sons.

The father could logically and acceptably explode in anger and order a thrashing for the public insults. But no! The father again embraces public humiliation to come out and appeal to his son, urging him to join in the banquet (Lk 15:28). And in this we see the fifth time this remarkable father's role of patriarch is transcended. His goodness, love, forgiveness, care, joy, and compassion have no limits. Jesus presents God's generosity by using all the imagery that His culture provides.

If the older son accepts the love the father now offers him, he must change his attitude toward his brother and treat him with the same loving acceptance their father has extended. And here we see Jesus' point in the telling of this story: Just as the older son needs to become compassionate like the father in the parable, so the Pharisees, who have criticized Jesus for eating with sinners, must change their attitudes toward those "sinners" and welcome them with the love of God. Is the son willing? Are the Pharisees willing? We are not told. But the more important question remains: "Are we willing?"

[This article is adapted from Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke*, combined edition (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmann Publishing Co. 1983) and Zane C. Hodges, "The Ninety-nine Righteous Sheep: Repentance in Luke 15:1-10," in *Grace in Focus* September-October, 1998; and Hodges, "Lost Son, Not Lost Sonship," in *Grace in Focus*, November-December, 1998.]

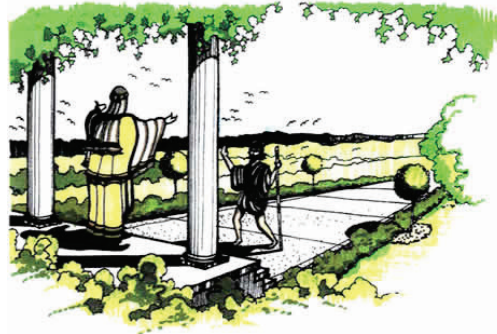
## QUESTION 16

"The Prodigal Son" (placed earlier in the lesson) identifies a number of cultural contradictions exhibited by the prodigal's father. Which of the following contradicted first century norms in a Jewish peasant village? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. The father granted the prodigal the freedom to own and to sell his portion of the estate, knowing that this right would shame the family before the community.
- B. The father took the bottom edge of his long robes in his hand and ran to welcome his pig-herding son.
- C. The father had a private celebration for the return of his son.
- D. In painful public humiliation, the father came out and entreated the older brother to join in the banquet.
- E. The father, after disowning his son, fully accepted him back when he repented.

## QUESTION 17

Although it could probably be improved, the picture at right accurately represents the father's acceptance of his estranged son. *True or False?*



## Topic 4: The Stewardship of Money

July, AD 32

After addressing the issue of restoring lost Christians to fellowship with the Father, Jesus turned to another issue regarding discipleship: the proper use of money. Not only must His followers remain in fellowship with the Father, but they must always be wise stewards of that which God has entrusted to them.

To illustrate the principle of wise stewardship, Jesus began with the parable of the unjust steward (Lk 16:1-13). Unlike the prodigal son, who foolishly squandered his wealth, the unjust steward looked wisely to take care of his future.

When the Pharisees sneered at this teaching, Jesus rebuked their love of money (Lk 16:14-18) and pointed out that while they could enjoy all their wealth in this world, like the rich man in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31), one day, those who use wealth selfishly in this life will have eternal regrets.

## The Parable of the Unjust Steward

### Assignment

- Read Luke 16:1-13.

The steward began a program of debt reduction. The first debtor owed a hundred measures of oil and the steward told him to reduce it to fifty. The second owed a hundred measures of wheat. The steward told him to reduce it to eighty.

#### One Hundred Measures of Wheat

One "measure" of wheat was one "cor." In modern times, this is about four hundred liters, or ten to twelve bushels.

#### One Hundred Measures of Oil

The standard liquid measure, the "bath," was equal to 33.1 liters. Thus one hundred baths of oil would be about 3,310 liters or 875 gallons, the yield of nearly one hundred fifty olive trees. At that time, this much oil would be priced at one thousand denarii. If an average laborer was paid one denarius for a day's work, this debt was the equivalent of over three years' salary. The debtor is clearly not the average laborer since he was allowed to accumulate such a large debt.

## QUESTION 18

In Luke 16:7 the manager seems to be cheating his master out of money. Yet in Luke 16:8, the master actually commends the manager for this action. Furthermore, Jesus Himself used this seemingly unethical act as an illustration to His disciples on how they were to use money to make friends for eternity. How would you explain this seeming contradiction?

## QUESTION 19

Which of the following items are legitimate lessons we can learn from this parable? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. One consideration at the judgment seat of Christ will be our level of faithfulness in small things.
- B. God will hold us accountable for how we handle other people's possessions.
- C. We should always invest our time and money with a view of how that investment will be viewed in eternity future.
- D. Often, men of the world are more willing to set aside immediate benefits in exchange for future gain than are Christians who can trade delayed gratification for achieving an eternal benefit.
- E. At times, it may be legitimate to invest the property of others in improper ways, if such an investment may have an excellent eternal benefit.

Christ's point is that God's children, who have a heavenly future, should be more diligent in assessing the long-term effects of their actions than the non-believer, who does not know God or even care about eternity while he is protecting his temporal welfare.

## The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

### Assignment

- Read Luke 16:14-31.

The Pharisees, who loved money and would not have been willing to set it aside for future benefit, had been listening to this parable, and they sneered (literally, "they turned their noses up") at Jesus. His message was hitting too close to home! Luke 16:14-18 forms a bridge between the parable of the unrighteous steward and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31). However, the logic is difficult to follow. There are three distinct parts to this section.

1. Luke 16:14-15 – condemnation of the Pharisees for their self-justification.
2. Luke 16:16-17 – a perplexing statement that the kingdom is coming and people are forcing their way into it.
3. Luke 16:18 – a stern warning about divorce.

How are these themes related? The common thread is that the authority of the kingdom should influence one's values.

## QUESTION 20

Match the Scripture with the corresponding possible explanation.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Possible Explanation</i>
Luke 16:14-15	The kingdom raises the standards of obedience.
Luke 16:16-17	The authority to make statements about the kingdom does not lie with the current Jewish leadership, but with Jesus.
Luke 16:18	The kingdom causes a person to renounce divided loyalties.

What does it mean that men “force” their way into the kingdom? The Greek can be rendered two ways: “enter forcibly themselves,” or “are forced to enter.” Matthew says the kingdom “suffers violence” (Mt 11:12-13) and that men take it by force. Some understand it to mean that “all act violently against the kingdom.” That is, the kingdom is subject to widespread opposition.

Others understand the term to mean that “everyone forces his way into it”; they are trying to bring the kingdom in by revolutionary means. If this is the correct understanding, Jesus is rebuking the Zealots in this passage.

Others translate it as “all are urged insistently to come in,” that is, not “forced.” This view fits the context well. Jesus was attempting to morally persuade His hearers to enter into the experience of kingdom life. The time of fulfillment had come. It was time to respond!

## QUESTION 21

What is the most likely reason the saying regarding divorce is placed here?

- A. Because Jesus opposed the Pharisees’ teaching on divorce.
- B. Because Jesus wanted to prevent adultery.
- C. Because many were remarrying after divorce, and Jesus wanted to prevent it.
- D. Because Jesus wanted to establish that moral authority resides in Jesus’ teaching and not in that of the Pharisees.

## QUESTION 22

What misunderstanding does Jesus address in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31)?

## QUESTION 23

Based on the parable, which of the following statements is true?

- A. The rich man missed salvation because he did not believe in Christ.
- B. The rich man missed salvation because he was not generous enough with his money.
- C. The rich man revealed that he was unsaved by the fact that he did not give money.
- D. There is always a remote possibility that one may have a second chance in the afterlife.

This parable profoundly challenges all of us. Here we have a graphic contrast: a rich man, who possessed incredible benefits in this life and lost them all in the next; and a poor man, Lazarus, who had nothing in this life yet achieved a place of honor in heaven. Lazarus’s wretched poverty was exacerbated by being covered with sores that were licked by dogs. The rich man’s callous indifference to the plight of the poor

resulted in a dramatic reversal of fortunes at the last day. Then it was Lazarus who had everything, and the rich man did not even have a drop of water, just as he refused to give Lazarus a crumb.

The name Lazarus comes from a Hebrew name that means “my God has helped.” Symbolically, Lazarus was someone dependent on God for his salvation, while the rich man trusted in wealth. In the last day, the dependent faith of Lazarus was rewarded.

## **Topic 5: Matching Events**

Before proceeding further with our lesson, let’s take time to review some of the events and the related Scriptures we have been studying in the life of Christ.

### **QUESTION 24**

To help you memorize these events, we have compiled a list of important events in the life of Christ. Take a moment to review events 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 29, 32 in the chart “Matching Events” in the appendix. Cover the event descriptions on the left and see if you can identify the associated Scriptures on the right.

## Lesson 2: Self Check

### QUESTION 1

What does the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” in Matthew 24:51 probably mean? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. An experience of strong regret
- B. Eternal damnation
- C. A negative consequence for an unfaithful life
- D. An eternity of wailing and crying

### QUESTION 2

Based upon the article on the parable of the wicked servant, which of the following are true statements? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Some believers will be beaten by Christ when He returns.
- B. Some believers will be judged by the Word of God and their failure to live up to it.
- C. Some believers will receive a stern verbal rebuke.
- D. Some believers will literally be whipped.

### QUESTION 3

Based upon the parable about the rich man and Lazarus, which of the following statements do you think are true?

- A. The rich man missed salvation because he did not believe in Christ.
- B. The rich man missed salvation because he was not generous enough with his money.
- C. The rich man revealed that he was unsaved by the fact that he did not give money.
- D. This is always a remote possibility that one may have a second chance in the afterlife.

### QUESTION 4

Based upon your reading of the article on the shut door, it appears that Luke 13:26-28 does not refer to eternal damnation but to exclusion from the joy of the messianic banquet. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 5

In the parable of the wicked servant, about whom is the story our Lord tells?

- A. A wicked servant and a faithful servant
- B. Two faithful servants
- C. Two wicked servants
- D. One servant, who may be either wicked or faithful

### **QUESTION 6**

Based on the discussion of the parable of the lost sheep in your lesson, which of the following correctly identifies the character of the lost lamb?

- A. The lost one was one who was probably originally saved, but because he wandered from the flock, he lost his salvation. The shepherd however, continues to seek him.
- B. The lost one was actually never saved to begin with. This is proved by the fact that he wandered into a path of sin.
- C. The lost one is a genuine Christian who fell into sin and wandered from the rest of the sheep.
- D. The lost lamb refers to the Pharisees.

### **QUESTION 7**

When the Pharisees referred to those Jesus ate with as sinners, it was a reference to their state of eternal salvation. *True or False?*

### **QUESTION 8**

The parable of the lost coin illustrates the loving concern of the Father to always seek non-believers and bring them to saving faith in Christ. *True or False?*

### **QUESTION 9**

The punishment for a Jewish boy who lost the family inheritance to Gentiles was a *getsatsah* ceremony. This would be enacted if he ever attempted to return to his home village. *True or False?*

### **QUESTION 10**

One of the lessons of the parable of the prodigal son is that true Christians cannot fall into a state in which they are no longer worthy of being called sons of God. *True or False?*

## Lesson 2 Answers to Questions

### QUESTION 1

D. One servant who may be either wicked or faithful

### QUESTION 2: True

### QUESTION 3

- A. An experience of strong regret
- C. A negative consequence for an unfaithful life

[When we speak of the final judgment, we often neglect the truth that we will receive rewards and consequences for both good and bad deeds (2 Cor 5:10-11).]

### QUESTION 4

- B. All believers will be judged by the Word of God and their success or failure to live up to it.
- C. Unfaithful believers will receive a stern verbal rebuke.

### QUESTION 5

- A. They claimed to be looking for the Messiah, yet when Jesus presented signs that He was the One, they could not (or would not) discern their significance. [They were certainly able to see, or Jesus would not have rebuked them. Their lack of discernment was not a problem of inability, but of unwillingness.]

### QUESTION 6: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

There is a day of judgment coming for all individuals. The verdict against us can be nothing but guilty, and the sentence is eternal (Jn 3:18-19, 36). We should settle our case before the Judge here in this life before it comes before the final, heavenly Supreme Court.

### QUESTION 7: False

### QUESTION 8: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Because of the intercession of the caretaker, the Lord Jesus, God has extended His grace. The only reason God has not yet acted is that He desires more people to have a chance to turn to Him (see 2 Pet 3:9).

### QUESTION 9: *Your answer*

### QUESTION 10: True

### QUESTION 11

- A. When some people are invited to a feast, they cannot humbly enjoy the feast as a gracious gift given to them independent of their own importance.
- B. The reason some like to attend wedding feasts is that it gives them an opportunity to advertise their own imagined merit and distinction.
- C. It is better for the host to give you an unexpected distinction or honor than to assume it for yourself.
- D. Those who elevate themselves will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be elevated.

### QUESTION 12: *Your answer*

### QUESTION 13

<i>Item in Parable</i>	<i>Probable Significance</i>
Those in the streets and alleys	The outcasts of the Jewish community
Those in the roads and country lanes	Gentiles outside the city
Messianic banquet	Rejoicing and satisfaction in the kingdom
The host	The Lord Jesus Christ
The guests	Those whose experience in this world was one of suffering and a lack of fulfillment
The servant	The prophets

### QUESTION 14: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

(1) To be a disciple, one must have no higher priority than following Christ, and (2) before choosing to be Christ's disciple, one must calculate the cost and evaluate what is involved in finishing well.



**QUESTION 15**

- D. The saved

**QUESTION 16**

- A. The father granted the prodigal the freedom to own and to sell his portion of the estate, knowing that this right would shame the family before the community.
- B. The father took the bottom edge of his long robes in his hand and ran to welcome his pig-herding son.
- C. The father had a private celebration for the return of his son.
- E. The father, after disowning his son, fully accepted him back when he repented.

**QUESTION 17:** False [The father did not stand at the door of his house, waiting for the son to approach. Instead, picking up the hem of his robes, he ran to greet his son and embraced him.]

**QUESTION 18:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

What the manager did was both commendable, according to his master, and a good illustration of making friends for eternity, according to Jesus. Therefore, what he did could not have been unethical or detrimental to the master's interests. The best solution seems to be that the manager was only reducing the debt by the amount of his own personal commission. Because this man was the manager, he was probably the one who set these unjustly high commissions anyway. He shrewdly calculated that by denying himself money now, it would so ingratiate him with the hearts of the debtors that he would receive help finding a decent job later.

**QUESTION 19**

- A. One consideration at the judgment seat of Christ will be our level of faithfulness in small things.
- B. God will hold us accountable for how we handle other people's possessions.
- C. We should always invest our time and money with a view of how that investment will be viewed in eternity future.
- D. Often, men of the world are more willing to set aside immediate benefits in exchange for future gain than are Christians who can trade delayed gratification for achieving an eternal benefit.

**QUESTION 20**

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Possible Explanation</i>
Luke 16:14-15	The kingdom causes a person to renounce divided loyalties.
Luke 16:16-17	The authority to make statements about the kingdom does not lie with the current Jewish leadership, but with Jesus.
Luke 16:18	The kingdom raises the standards of obedience.

**QUESTION 21**

- D. Because Jesus wanted to establish that moral authority resides in Jesus' teaching and not in that of the Pharisees.

**QUESTION 22:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

The Pharisees saw riches as a reward for holiness. Most Jews believed that wealth and good health were indicators of God's approval and that poverty or poor health were signs of God's disapproval. The parable demonstrated that this is not necessarily true.

**QUESTION 23**

- A. The rich man missed salvation because he did not believe in Christ. [In Luke 16:31 that the core of the rich man's problem was that he was not persuaded that Jesus was the Christ. Luke used the Greek word *peitho*, which means "to persuade, to have confidence," and is often a synonym for "to believe."

**QUESTION 24:** *See Matching Events chart*

## **Lesson 2 Self Check Answers**

### **QUESTION 1**

- A. An experience of strong regret
- C. A negative consequence for an unfaithful life

### **QUESTION 2**

- B. Some believers will be judged by the Word of God and their failure to live up to it.
- C. Some believers will receive a stern verbal rebuke.

### **QUESTION 3**

- A. The rich man missed salvation because he did not believe in Christ.

### **QUESTION 4:** True

### **QUESTION 5**

- D. One servant, who may be either wicked or faithful

### **QUESTION 6**

- C. The lost one is a genuine Christian who fell into sin and wandered from the rest of the sheep.

### **QUESTION 7:** False

### **QUESTION 8:** False

### **QUESTION 9:** True

### **QUESTION 10:** False



# Lesson 3: The Coming of the Kingdom

---

As the Jesus and His companions draw nearer to Jerusalem and Jesus' destiny, questions regarding the coming of the kingdom increasingly become the focus. When will the kingdom appear? What are the signs of its arrival? What are the conditions for entering the kingdom and obtaining a rich inheritance there?

In Topic 1, we will learn that any disciple who wants to experience the fullness of the kingdom must be completely obedient. Rewards and honor in the kingdom are gracious gifts God is not obligated to grant. After all, when a servant has completed his work, he has only done his duty and deserves no reward in return.

Topic 2 tells the story of the ten healed lepers. Only one comes back in gratitude and gives glory to God. Even though the King is nearing Jerusalem, His own people are becoming more and more distant from Him.

In Topic 3, we will consider how two distinct conversations, one addressed to the Pharisees and one to the disciples, address the coming of the kingdom from different perspectives. Jesus tells the Pharisees the kingdom is in their midst, but tells the disciples of a future visible form.

In Topic 4, Jesus encourages His people to pray for justice and assures them that when the kingdom comes, the just will be vindicated, and the unjust will be judged. In the final parable of this topic, we learn that in the kingdom there will be a great role reversal: Those who are now considered "just" may be revealed to be evil, and the rejected tax collector might reign with the king. We will also follow Jesus' controversial teaching on the grounds for divorce. While not directly related to our central kingdom theme, it is worthy of being addressed by all disciples.

In Topic 5, Jesus explains that dependent faith, like a child's, is the central condition for entrance into the kingdom.

In Topic 6, the resurrection of Lazarus manifests both the glory of God and the evil in the hearts of the Pharisees. Instead of rejoicing with Lazarus and his family, they see this miracle as a threat to their power, and they plot to kill the Lord of Life.

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Sin, Faith, and Duty (Lk 17:1-10)

Topic 2: Ten Lepers (Lk 17:11-19)

Topic 3: He Will Come Like Lightning (Lk 17:20-37)

When Will the Kingdom Arrive?

What Will Be the Sign of the Second Coming?

Topic 4: Three Tests of a Faithful Life (Lk 18:1-14)

Will He Find Faith? (Lk 18:1-8)

Humility (Lk 18:9-14)

Faithfulness in Marriage

Topic 5: Let the Children Come

Topic 6: The Raising of Lazarus

A Friend is Dead

“Lazarus, Come Out!”

Plotting to Kill Jesus

Topic 7: Matching Events

Topic 8: Knowing, Being, Doing

## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- List four elements involved in following Christ
- Understand the challenges as we strive to develop believing, grateful hearts
- Understand how the universal dominion of Christ will indeed one day come, though it has already begun in an invisible form
- Comprehend the importance of humility as a critical characteristic of a faithful life
- Discover how Jesus delays His answers to our prayers for help because He wants to show us His glory

## Topic 1: Sin, Faith, and Duty

### July, AD 32

With less than two months left before His death, Jesus continues His training of the Twelve with a series of profound exhortations related to the duty of a disciple who is worthy of the kingdom of God. Many desire to experience the kingdom richly and to cause them to stumble in any way is a terrible thing. A true disciple, then, must be willing to rebuke those who would cause their brothers to stumble, but forgive them when they truly repent.

Such demanding duties require great faith, and consequently, the disciples ask the Lord how their faith can be increased. Jesus replies that only a little faith is necessary, but one must be careful of arrogance even in this. Living by faith and seeing God work in wonderful ways can be viewed as a reward, or something deserved. Even after a servant has done all he is supposed to, he still deserves no reward; he has only done his duty.

### Assignment

- Read Luke 17:1-10.

The four exhortations given to His disciples in this section could either be an unconnected string of proverbs or a unit of thought in which each exhortation grows out of or is inferred by the previous one.

### QUESTION 1

What was Jesus' response to the disciples' question of how their faith could be increased?

- A. They should pray often and avoid speaking words that would convey unbelief.
- B. They should rehearse confrontation, since demanding duties like rebuking those who would cause their brothers to stumble requires great faith.
- C. Only a little faith was necessary, and humility was important overall.
- D. Great faith grows from small beginnings, and God would reveal each man's steps to him individually.

## QUESTION 2

Match the Scripture reference with the corresponding lesson or principle.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Lesson or Principle</i>
Luke 17:10	When someone sins against us, we should personally talk to our offender
Luke 17:7-8	God, in His grace, notices and commends our work.
Luke 17:6	The master's wishes always come first.
Luke 17:3	Christians will face a severe rebuke by God if they cause others to stumble.
Luke 17:1-2	The way to increase faith is to exercise the faith we have and see the results.
Luke 17:4	The disciple is always to forgive a repentant brother.

There are a number of key phrases in this section which, when explained, help to clarify the meaning of the various passages. Before answering the question below, read the definitions of the key words.

A **millstone** was a heavy, circular stone used in a grinding mill. The weight of the stone would drag anyone tied to it to the bottom of the sea.

The Greek word translated "**stumble**" or "scandalized" is best translated "enticed." It depicts entrapment in sin. The Hebrew words in the Septuagint mean "to bait" or "to lure" (Judg 8:27). The presence of temptation to defect from the faith cannot be avoided. Because Jesus is addressing the disciples, it is likely that we should infer that the temptations He mentions come from outside the community of faith.

When Jesus speaks of "**little ones**," He may be alluding to new disciples who need instruction, although it could also refer to the poor who hear the gospel. New disciples are likely the primary focus, but this remark is proverbial and could easily apply to any disciple who is led astray. It is not necessarily a reference to children; it is simply a tender way of saying that disciples need care and protection.

## QUESTION 3

If you were to assume that these four exhortations in Luke 17:1-10 were a unit and each one related to the others, how would you describe the sequential connection between each of them?

## Topic 2: Ten Lepers

Although the incident related in this topic is often called "The Ten Lepers," it is really about one man, a thankful Samaritan whose leprosy was healed by Jesus' loving touch.

As the King approaches Jerusalem, He continues His many acts of mercy. As He crosses the border from Galilee to Samaria, ten lepers meet Him and ask to be cleansed.

Jesus does not refuse them, and tells them to go to the priest to be declared clean again. Only one of the ten lepers, a Samaritan, returns to thank Jesus.

The story highlights the fact that Jesus accepts the outcast and the foreigner. It contrasts the ingratitude of the chosen people with the gratitude of a man who was an outcast not only because he was a leper, but even more so because he was a Samaritan.



## Assignment

- Read Luke 17:11-19.
- Read “Leprosy.”

### Leprosy

Leprosy was one of the most terrible diseases in the Ancient Near East. It might be compared to AIDS or Ebola today. Leprosy is a slowly progressing and intractable disease. It rendered its victims unclean so that contact with a leper defiled whoever touched him. Their burdens were needlessly increased. True, as wrapped in mourners garb the leper passed by, his cry “Unclean!” was to incite others to pray for him, but also to avoid him. No one was even to salute him; his bed was to be low, inclining towards the ground. If he even put his head into a place, it became unclean. No less a distance than 1.8 meters (six feet) must be kept from a leper; or, if the wind came from that direction, a forty-six were scarcely sufficient. One rabbi would not eat an egg purchased in a street where there was a leper. Another rabbi boasted that he always threw stones at them to keep them far off, while others hid themselves or ran away.

It began with little specks on the eyelids, then on the palms of the hands, and gradually spread over different parts of the body, bleaching the hair white wherever it showed itself, crusting the affected parts with shining scales, and causing swelling and sores. From the skin it slowly ate its way through the tissues, to the bones and joints and even to the marrow, rotting the whole body piecemeal.

The lungs, the organs of speech and hearing and the eyes were attacked in turn, till, at last, the disease brought a welcome death.

The emotional suffering inflicted on a leper was even more intense in that no human could ever touch him or come near him. It was into this situation that the Lord Jesus Christ brought His healing and compassionate touch.

## QUESTION 4

When has Jesus done something for you that you have taken for granted, failing to express your grateful heart to Him? Think of several examples, then describe a way you might encourage gratefulness to God on a more regular basis. Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

## Topic 3: He Will Come Like Lightning

### Summer, AD 32

Immediately after the healing of the ten lepers, the subject of the arrival of the kingdom is discussed. In the two paragraphs following, the first, Luke 17:20-21, is addressed to the Pharisees and the second, Luke 17:22-37, is addressed to the disciples.

It is highly probable that when Jesus sent the ten lepers to the priests, He was not only fulfilling the requirements of the Mosaic Law demanding that the priest certify that the leper was in fact clean (Lev 13:1-17), but He was also sending a message: “One doing the works of Messiah is here.”

If He was indeed the Messiah, the Pharisees wanted to know when He would establish His kingdom. Based on their general attitude of unbelief toward Jesus it is not likely that this question sprang from a disposition of faith. It was mere curiosity to see what this imposter would say.

### When Will the Kingdom Arrive?

Jesus is now traveling in central Israel, heading south.

#### Assignment

- Read Luke 17:20-37.
- Read “Identity of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

### The Identity of the Kingdom of Heaven

In scores of passages in the Old Testament, it was predicted that a greater Son of David would one day establish Israel in a global kingdom covering the entire earth (Isa 2:1-5; 11:1-16). This prediction is connected with promises God made to David that one day he would have a house, a throne, and a kingdom forever (2 Sam 7:12-16). What was Jesus’ view of these promises? Some have felt that Jesus came to reinterpret this kingdom and instead offer a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men or a future reign in heaven or on the new earth. Other Bible scholars believe that Jesus understood the promises in the same manner the Old Testament prophets probably did, as a literal kingdom of God upon the earth.

First of all, they point out, when Jesus first proclaimed that the kingdom was at hand, He never redefined it. Any Jewish person hearing Him would likely think in terms of the Old Testament promises of the restoration of the Davidic theocracy. If Jesus meant something else, would He not have said so? Furthermore, if Jesus had come to establish a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men, that would add nothing new. That kingdom had always been recognized by the people of God (Ps 37:31). Instead, He connected His offer of the kingdom to the Old Testament expectation of the political reign of the Messiah. Indeed, His favorite expression for Himself is “Son of Man,” a phrase lifted right out of Daniel 7:13-14. This passage describes the Son of Man as the Messiah coming on the clouds of heaven to set up His kingdom over all the nations.

Secondly, it has been observed that in the announcement of the angel Gabriel to Mary, he said that her Son “will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Lk 1:32-33). The same three promises that were made to David of a throne, a house, and a kingdom forever were repeated. Mary would have understood this as the predicted kingdom of the Messiah.

Thirdly, when Peter asked the Lord what reward the disciples would receive for following Christ, Jesus did not rebuke him, but gloriously affirmed their future. He said, “I tell you the truth, you who have followed me, in the age when all things are renewed, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious



throne, you also will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mt 19:28).

Finally, although much more could be said, consider Acts 1:6. After forty days of specific teaching on the subject of the kingdom of God, His disciples asked, “Lord, is this the time when you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” They still understood Him to speaking of the restoration of the Davidic throne. And instead of correcting them, He said, “You are not permitted to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.” If after forty days of teaching on this subject, Jesus was still unable to make clear to them that by kingdom He meant the spiritual reign of God in the heart, He would certainly be a poor communicator.

The Pharisees, realizing that Jesus’ healing of the lepers amounted to a claim to be the Messiah, now ask Him, “When will the kingdom of God arrive?”

Jesus warns the Pharisees not to miss the kingdom by looking for dramatic, apocalyptic signs of its coming. If they are focused on their own expectations of how events will unfold, they will miss the kingdom when it arrives under their noses, such as the evidence of the healing of the lepers.

When addressing the disciples in the next paragraph, Jesus asserts that the kingdom will indeed come in a visible universal form as predicted in the Old Testament. The new revelation, the “mystery form” is that it has already begun now, but until now has been arriving in a hidden form.

### **QUESTION 5**

Based on the discussion above and your own reading of Luke 17:20-37 what is a possible explanation for the apparent contradiction between Luke 17:20 and Luke 17:24?

- A. The passage does not literally refer to the second coming of Christ, but refers to His coming in the judgment of AD 70.
- B. The kingdom has begun in the present with the ministry of Jesus, but will be consummated in its predicted Old Testament form at the second coming of Christ.
- C. The kingdom is only a present spiritual reality in our hearts.
- D. The kingdom has no present form, only a future form.

There are three different views of Jesus’ statement that the kingdom of God is “within you.” Some feel it means that there will be no visible kingdom; the kingdom taught by Jesus was a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men. The second view is that He means that the kingdom is “in your grasp or power.” The final option is that He means that the kingdom is “in your presence” or “before you.”

### **QUESTION 6**

Which of the following are possibly objections to the second view? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. It never answers the question of when the kingdom will come.
- B. It suggests that the human power to repent can hasten the kingdom’s arrival.
- C. It contradicts Luke 5:31-32 and Luke 11:29-32.
- D. This is not a very clear way to say that the kingdom will come if you repent.

### **QUESTION 7**

Luke 11:52 would be a good passage to use in defense of the first view. *True or False?*

The Pharisees are the last people to whom Jesus would say, “The kingdom of God is inside you.” They were unbelieving and totally rejected His claims!

## What Will Be the Sign of the Second Coming?

### Assignment

- Read Luke 17:20-37.

The Pharisees made the mistake of concentrating on apocalyptic signs of the coming kingdom and totally ignoring the reality that the kingdom had already begun. But it would be equally wrong to make the opposite mistake and say that no future visible form of the kingdom was predicted in the Old Testament and affirmed in the New (e.g., Rev 20:4-7; Acts 1:6).

### QUESTION 8

Over the centuries and even today, many have claimed that they are the Christ in His second coming of Christ. How does Luke 17:23 refute those claims and give us a criterion for recognizing the Lord when He returns?

Jesus makes it clear that before His return, He must first be rejected by the current generation of Jews. This statement points specifically to the fact that His generation would examine His claims to be the Messiah and would repudiate them.

### QUESTION 9

Based on Luke 17:28-29, why is it that the future generation to which Christ returns will totally miss the signs of His arrival?

- A. They will be blinded by their involvement in shocking sin.
- B. Their generation will be completely ignorant of biblical truth.
- C. They will simply misread and misinterpret the signs.
- D. Their generation will be utterly indifferent to eternal truths.

### QUESTION 10

According to Jesus in the illustrations about Noah and Lot, in each case when was the righteous person taken?

- A. Before the judgment
- B. During the judgment
- C. After the judgment
- D. At the same time as the judgment

A problem of interpretation in this passage is the meaning of “taken.” Does it mean “taken in judgment” or “taken in deliverance”? The Greek word is *paralambano*. It is the same word Jesus used of “receiving” His people at the rapture of the church (see Jn 14:3). Many scholars today feel that Jesus is describing the removal and deliverance of the people of God, leaving those who do not know Him to suffer the judgments which will fall on the earth.

## **QUESTION 11**

There is a tendency in the study of prophecy to become so preoccupied with the details of the prophetic scheme that we forget the purpose for which prophecy is given: to warn and encourage us to live our lives in view of Christ's certain return. One day, we must all account for how we have lived our lives (2 Cor 5:10). Record in your Life Notebook ways that your life may fit the description of Luke 17:27-28. Write out some things you might do to correct the situation.

The disciples wondered, then, that if some would be left to experience the judgments, then where would they occur? (Lk 17:37). Jesus cryptically responded, "Where the dead body is, there the vultures will gather."

## **QUESTION 12**

There have been many different interpretations of this passage, and it is impossible to be certain. Which of the following is a probable interpretation?

- A. When judgment comes, it will be visible, universal and permanent. Vultures gather to feed off dead bodies.
- B. The location of judgment will be as plain as birds hovering over dead bodies.
- C. Just as people cannot miss a dead body, so people cannot miss the judgment of the Son of Man on His return.
- D. The gathering of vultures refers to the judgment on Jerusalem, and people should not wait around to be devoured.

The return of the Son of Man will be a terrible affair for those who are left. He will save some by means of the rapture (1 Thess 4:13-18) but permanently condemn others.

Furthermore, the kingdom will not come as soon as the disciples desire. Rather, the Son of Man will suffer first, and there will be a period between the first and second comings in which the disciples will face suffering and persecution. But when Jesus does come, there will be no doubt. He will come like lightning, from one end of the heavens to the other.

The return of the Son of Man is a serious event for both the saved and the unsaved. With a pointed exhortation to His disciples, Jesus warns out that "whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it" (Lk 17:33).

## **Topic 4: Three Tests of a Faithful Life**

### **Summer, AD 32**

For the ungodly, as the last section of this lesson indicated, the coming of Christ will be a terrible disaster. However, for the godly it will be a time of wonderful news; all wrongs that have been suffered will be made right.

Right after discussing the coming of the Son of Man and warning about our final accountability, Jesus speaks of three things: faith, prayer, and marriage. His selection of these items is intended to highlight three critical areas in which our lives will be evaluated by the coming King.

## Perseverance in Prayer

### Assignment

- Read Luke 18:1-8.

Throughout the ages, the righteous have suffered for their faith in Christ. There have been more martyrs for Christ in the past one hundred years than in all the preceding one thousand nine hundred years put together. One day, all tears will be wiped away and vindication will come (Rev 7:16-17).

### QUESTION 13

What is the central theme addressed in this parable? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. When we pray and God seems to be silent, we conclude that it is useless to appeal to Him.
- B. God does not care and does not hear all of our prayers.
- C. To give up on prayer is to assume that God is indifferent to justice.
- D. Continuing to believe God in face of circumstances that seem to show otherwise is a crucial ingredient in our final accountability.
- E. If an unjust judge will respond to vindicate an ill-treated widow, how much more will the just judge vindicate His people?

## Humility

### Assignment

- Read Luke 18:9-14.

The second crucial characteristic by which we will be evaluated at the final gathering is humility. If Christ is coming to execute judgment on all evil and unrighteous men, this leads naturally to the questions raised in this parable: who are the righteous, and who are the just?

### QUESTION 14

List as many contrasts between the Pharisee and the tax collector as you can.

## Faithfulness in Marriage

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 19:3-12 and Mark 2:2-12.
- Read the article “Teachings on Marriage and Divorce.”

### Teachings on Marriage and Divorce

Jesus’ teaching on divorce strongly affected perspectives on the sanctity of marriage and greatly elevated the status of women—results that have continued in ripple-effect to this day. Christians hold various views on how to interpret Christ’s words on this subject. The following comments are adapted from Darrel Bock’s commentary on Luke (*Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996. 1356-58).

Jesus lays out the standard, in effect saying that if you make a vow to marry and be faithful to your spouse before God, then breaking that vow and entering into another marital union can be called adultery because the original vow was not kept. Divorce is a violation of a three-way covenant between God, the husband, and the wife.

There were two schools of thought on the matter. The rabbinic school of Hillel was very liberal, allowing divorce for a number of reasons, including something as trivial as meal preparation. The other school of thought, represented by Shammai, taught that divorce was only allowable on the grounds of immorality.

In the passage in Luke 16:18, Jesus declares that divorce leads to adultery because it was always assumed that the person sought a divorce in order to remarry, and remarriage represented an act of unfaithfulness to the original vows. In absolute terms, Jesus says that the one who divorces and remarries commits adultery, but in addition, the one who marries a divorced person also commits adultery, even if this third person was not divorced.

This absolute standard seems harsh. However, the problem gets more complicated when we consider the other passages on divorce in the Gospels, which seem to qualify this absolute. While in Matthew, Jesus still says that to divorce a woman on unbiblical grounds causes her to commit adultery, in Matthew 5:32; 19:9 an exception clause is included, *porneia*, which is translated “immorality” and probably refers to any kind of sexual immorality. When *porneia* has occurred, divorce is allowed.

The purpose of divorce in the ancient world was to put one in a position to remarry. The assumption behind the notion that divorce results in adultery is apparently that divorce always leads to remarriage (Bock, p. 1358). It would appear that to qualify the right to divorce is to qualify the right to remarry by implication. Otherwise, why else divorce, since one could just be permanently separated?

Luke 16:18 gives us only the basic principle while Matthew gives us the fuller explanation. In Matthew, Jesus allows divorce on the grounds of sexual unfaithfulness, though the ideal, as passages such as 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 show, is that the marriage should be maintained if at all possible.”

“The implication of Matthew’s teaching seems to be that, if divorce is given because of unfaithfulness, the partner who was not unfaithful has the right to remarry. Jesus’ point here is that marriage is permanent, since it involves a vow. One should not try to figure out how to get out of marriage, for if one gets out of it, one suffers a moral fall.”

As Jesus journeys to Jerusalem, He continues to expound on the three crucial factors by which our lives will one day be evaluated when the Son of Man returns. He has already stressed the importance of steadfast faith and humility before God and man. These two qualities relate to our relationship to God and our relationships with others. He now addresses the most important human relationship, marriage, and challenges the current assumptions which made divorce and dismissing one’s wife such trivial matters.

## **QUESTION 15**

In your Life Notebook explain your own view of divorce and remarriage, with the scriptural basis for your belief.

## Topic 5: Let the Children Come

February, AD 33

Having discussed three tests of a faithful life and our final accountability when the kingdom arrives, Jesus now explains how the kingdom can be entered. As He often does, He uses a concrete illustration to demonstrate this truth. Apparently, many were bringing young children to Jesus and asking Him to pray for them. Seeing an opportunity to explain saving faith, He says that to enter the kingdom, we must come to Jesus in the same way that the children did.

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; and Luke 18:15-17.
- Read the article “Entering the Kingdom.”

### Entering the Kingdom

What does it mean “to enter the kingdom of God”? It doesn’t necessarily always mean “to go to heaven when I die.” It often means “to experience a rich life with God.” Michael Eaton suggests that in Matthew 5:20, entering the kingdom of God refers to “one’s ongoing experience of the powers of the Kingdom of God ... it refers to something continuing and progressive” (Eaton, Michael. *No Condemnation: A New Theology of Assurance*. Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995, p. 133). Another possibility is that it refers to entering into a kingdom way of living, not personal salvation. That way of living is the subject of the Sermon on the Mount.

This view should not surprise us. Jesus described the kingdom of heaven to one of His faithful servants as “the joy of your master” (Mt 25:21-23). Paul tells us that the kingdom of God is more than a geographical sphere, it is “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17), and that it consists not just in words but power (1 Cor 4:17). While it is debatable whether or not these Pauline references refer to the present experience of the kingdom or of the kingdom we will one day enter, the point is clear: The kingdom is more than geography; it is a rich experience of God; a way of life.

It has often been noted that equivalent expressions to “enter the kingdom” are “enter into life” and “enter into joy” (Mt 18:8; Mk 9:43). Yet “life” in both the Old and New Testaments is not a static experience, it is “to know Him” (Jn 17:3), a relationship which not only has an entry point, but an ongoing development. It is called “eternal life” (Mt 19:29; 25:46) or “life” (Mt 18:8, 9; 19:17; Mk 9:43, 45, 46).

Furthermore, while *eiserchomai* is the common Greek word for “to enter,” it also is used in the sense of “to experience.” To enter into the joy of your master is to experience the joy of kingdom life (Mt 25:21). To enter into temptation is to experience temptation (Lk 22:46); to enter into their labor is to experience their labor (Jn 4:38), etc. To “enter into” often means “to enter into an event or state,” or “to begin to experience an event or state.” The standard Greek lexicon ascribes this meaning in Matthew 5:20. We conclude that “to enter the kingdom” usually means “to enter into the kingdom way of living,” which leads to an abundant life and greatness in the kingdom (Mt 5:19).

Once this is accepted, a number of perplexing passages are clarified. Throughout the Gospels, the conditions for entering the kingdom seem to be contradictory. On the one hand, the only condition for entry is to be born again (Jn 3:3) but numerous other passages assert conditions involving various kinds of works in direct contradiction to the faith-alone gospel Jesus preached in John. For example, entry into the kingdom comes about through poverty of spirit (Mt 5:3); by enduring persecutions (Mt 5:10), living in a way that surpasses the works of the Pharisees (Mt 5:20); seeking (Mt 6:33); keeping the commandments (Mt 19:17); doing the will of God (Mt 7:13); vigilance, and preparedness (Mt 25:10); fidelity (Mt 25:21). Entrance can be hindered by wealth (Mk 10:23) or by the self-righteous (Lk 11:52); it can be entered only by going through tribulations (Acts 14:22); and through striving (Lk 13:24).

Entering the kingdom as an initial event is dependent on faith alone. Let us, then, make this proposal: Whenever entrance into the kingdom seems to be based upon works, it probably means entering into the kingdom way of living. When it is based on faith, it is the entry point, salvation from hell, in view.

In the Gospels, the phrase “entering the kingdom” can refer either to entering the experience of life under the rule of God, or to becoming a Christian, being born again. Determining the intended meaning depends on a simple rule: if the entrance discussed requires works, then entering a rich and full Christian experience is meant. If it is based on faith alone, then entrance in the sense of initial salvation is meant. The idea of entering into an experience is found elsewhere also; for example, when Jesus says, “Let us not enter into temptation,” He means “enter into the experience of temptation.”

### **QUESTION 16**

According to your reading, what does it mean to enter the kingdom as a little child?

- A. To invite Christ into one’s heart
- B. To adopt a humble attitude
- C. To be submissive to the lordship of Christ
- D. To trust Him based on need with no claims on Him

## **Topic 6: The Raising of Lazarus**

### **February, AD 33**

Traveling south, Jesus came to a place near where John had been baptizing. Messengers came to Him from Mary and Martha, who lived about three kilometers from Jerusalem in Bethany, with the news that their brother, Lazarus, was very ill. Yet instead of going to His friends immediately, Jesus waited two days. In the meantime, Lazarus died.

When Jesus at last arrives in Bethany, with only two months left in His public ministry, He performs His most stupendous sign: raising Lazarus from the dead.

This sign is only recorded in the gospel of John. Why do the Synoptic Gospels omit such an amazing miracle? One answer is that Lazarus was still alive at the time the Synoptics were written, his life would still have been endangered by the Pharisees. For this reason, the Synoptics are silent. But John was penned long after Lazarus died, around the year AD 90, and it would have been safe to include the story at this point.

### **A Friend is Dead**

#### **Assignment**

- Read John 11:1-16.

In John 5:28 Jesus predicted that one day the dead would hear the voice of the Son of Man and rise. He now fulfills that prediction as a prophetic anticipation of the time at the last trumpet when He will raise the dead to life. John’s gospel gives seven major signs designed “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name” (Jn 20:31). This final sign concludes John’s proof and ushers in the final chapter in our Lord’s life, His crucifixion and resurrection.

Indeed, the resurrection of Lazarus sets the stage for Christ's own resurrection, which would occur two months later.

### **QUESTION 17**

What do you think Jesus meant when He gave the illustration about walking during the day (Jn 11:7)?

### **QUESTION 18**

Which of the following are given as reasons in the text for Jesus' two-day delay to go to Bethany? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. So that God might be glorified
- B. So that the disciples' faith could increase
- C. So that the disciples might learn that being with Jesus was the best protection against danger
- D. So that His disciples might be exposed to danger with Him in Jerusalem and learn to trust

## **"Lazarus, Come Out!"**



### **Assignment**

- Read John 11:17-45.

Martha comes out of Bethany to meet Jesus on His arrival in a state of deep mourning and grief. As He often does in John's gospel, the Lord asserts that the only condition for receiving eternal life is to believe. The fundamental nature of the gospel's invitation to salvation is that it is a gift, without cost (Rev 21:6). Adding other requirements, such as repentance, baptism, sacraments, church attendance, or Lordship changes this nature.



### QUESTION 19

In the gospel of John, our Lord uses the phrase “I AM” twenty-one times. In seven of these “I AM” statements, He joins this declaration with some revealing metaphors. Match the verse with the metaphor.

<i>Verse</i>	<i>Metaphor</i>
John 6:35	Way
John 8:12	Vine
John 10:7	Light
John 10:14	Shepherd
John 11:25	Bread
John 14:6	Door
John 15:1	Life

### QUESTION 20

Knowing the Jesus had the power to do all things, why do you think He asked the people to lift off the stone and unbind Lazarus?

## Plotting to Kill Jesus

### Assignment

- Read John 11:47-57.

Amazingly, instead of falling on their faces in worship after seeing this stupendous manifestation of divine power, some of the Jews were hardened even further in their desire to kill the miracle worker.

### QUESTION 21

Which of the following statements explain the Jews’ twisted logic? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. They wanted such miracles to be done in Jerusalem, not an obscure village.
- B. They felt threatened politically.
- C. Their rejection was based on their biased opinions, not logic.
- D. They were simply good people who were confused.

### QUESTION 22

When Caiaphas said, "You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is more to your advantage to have one man die for the people than for the whole nation to perish" (Jn 11:49-50), he probably understood that he was making a prophecy of the reason for the Lord’s death. *True or False?*

## Caiaphas

Caiaphas was the surname of Joseph, a son-in-law of Annas who filled the post of high priest from about 18-36 AD (compare Jn 18:13). He is mentioned by Luke as holding office at the time of John the Baptist's preaching in the wilderness (Lk 3:2).

Caiaphas took a leading part in the trial and condemnation of Jesus. The chief priests (Sadducees) and Pharisees, who together constituted the Sanhedrin, assembled in Caiaphas's court or palace "that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill Him" (compare Mt 26:3, 4; Jn 11:49). The regal claims of the new Messiah and the growing fame of His works had made them fear both the vengeance of imperial Rome on their nation and the loss of their personal authority and prestige (Jn 11:48). But Caiaphas pointed a way out of their dilemma: They should bide their time until the people's momentary enthusiasm was spent (Mt 26:5). Then, by the single sacrifice of Jesus, they could both get rid of a dangerous rival and satisfy the concerns of Rome regarding a possible insurrection (Jn 11:49, 50; 18:14). The commentary of John on this (Jn 11:51, 52) indicates how the death of Jesus was indeed to prove a blessing not only for Israel but also for all the children of God; but not in the manner which the cold-blooded statecraft of Caiaphas intended. The advice of the high priest was accepted by the Sanhedrin (Jn 11:53), and they succeeded in arresting Jesus. (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia : 1915 Edition*, s.v. "Caiaphas")

The dilemma of these evil plotters is succinctly summarized by Adam Clark:

If we permit Him to work but a few more miracles like these two last (the cure of the blind man and the resurrection of Lazarus), He will be universally acknowledged for the Messiah; the people will proclaim Him king; and the Romans, who can suffer no government here but their own, will be so irritated that they will send their armies against us, and destroy our temple, and utterly dissolve our civil and ecclesiastical existence. Thus, under the pretense of the public good, these men of blood hide their hatred against Christ, and resolve to put Him to death. To get the people on their side, they must give the alarm of destruction to the nation: if this man be permitted to live, *we shall be all destroyed!* Their former weapons will not now avail. On the subject of keeping the Sabbath, they had been already confounded; and His last miracles were so incontestable that they could no longer cry out, *He is a deceiver.* (Clarke, Adam. "The Gospel of John" in *Adam Clarke's Commentary on The Bible*. Albany, OR: Ages Software, under the entry "John 11:48.")

## Topic 7: Matching Events

### QUESTION 23

To help you memorize these events, we have compiled a list of important events in the life of Christ. Take a moment and review events 8, 13, 19, 23, 41, 42, 45, and 46 in the Matching Events chart found in the appendix. Cover the event descriptions and see if you can identify the associated Scriptures.

## Topic 8: Knowing, Being, and Doing

### QUESTION 24

Why did Jesus weep, knowing that Lazarus would be raised from the dead? What does this tell you about the character of God? Imagine yourself in Mary's situation. Describe an incident in your life that parallels hers in some way. What were your feelings?

### Assignment

- Read the following articles from Robert Coleman's *Master Plan of Evangelism*, and then answer Question 25.

## I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE

John 13:15

### Demonstration

#### He Showed Them How To Live

Jesus saw to it that His disciples learned His way of living with God and man. He recognized that it was not enough just to get people into His spiritual communion. His disciples needed to know how His experience was to be maintained and shared if it was to be perpetuated in evangelism. Of course, in a technical sense, life precedes action, but in a thoroughly practical point of view, we live by what we do. One must breathe, eat, exercise, and carry on work normally if he is to grow. Where these functions of the body are neglected, life will cease to be. That is why the effort of Jesus to get across to His followers the secrets of His spiritual influence needs to be considered as a deliberate course of His master strategy. He knew what was important.

### The Practice of Prayer

Take, for example, His prayer life. Surely it was no accident that Jesus often let His disciples see Him conversing with the Father. They could see the strength which it gave to His life, and though they could not understand fully what it was all about, they must have realized that this was part of His secret of life. Note that Jesus did not force the lesson upon them, but rather He just kept praying until at last the disciples got so hungry that they asked Him to teach them what He was doing.

Seizing His opportunity when it did come, Jesus proceeded to give them a lesson which their hearts were prepared to receive. He explained to them some of the more basic principles of prayer, and then before He finished, He illustrated what He meant by repeating before them a model prayer (Lk 11:1-11; Mt 6:9-13). One might possibly think that such a practice was below the capabilities of these disciples—the idea of having to put words in their mouths to get them to pray—but Jesus would not take such an important matter as this for granted. Indeed, such elementary methods of teaching are often necessary to get people started in this discipline. But whatever it took, Jesus was determined to get this lesson across.

Thereafter He emphasized the life of prayer again and again when talking with His disciples, continually enlarging upon its meaning and application, as they were able to comprehend deeper realities of His Spirit. It was an indispensable part of their training, which in turn they would have to transmit to others. One thing is certain. Unless they grasped the meaning of prayer, and learned how to practice it with consistency, not much would ever come from their lives.

## Using Scripture

Another aspect of Jesus' life which was vividly portrayed to the disciples was the importance and use of the Holy Scriptures. This was evident both in maintaining His own personal devotion and in winning others to the Way. Often He would take special pains to impress upon His followers the meaning of some passage in the Bible, and He never ceased to use the Scriptures in His conversation with them. Altogether there are at least sixty-six references to the Old Testament in His dialogues with the disciples in the four Gospels, to say nothing of the more than ninety allusions to it in His speaking with others.

All this served to show the disciples how they too should know and use the Scriptures in their own life. The principles of Bible exhortation were practiced before them so repeatedly that they could not help but catch on to at least some of the rules for basic Scriptural interpretation and application. Moreover, the ability of Jesus to recall so freely Old Testament passages must have impressed the disciples with the necessity of learning the Scriptures by heart, and letting them become the authority for their pronouncements.

In everything it was made abundantly clear that the Word written in the Scriptures and the Word spoken by Christ were not in contradiction, but rather complemented each other. That which Jesus believed was also to be cherished by His disciples. Hence, the Scriptures, coupled with His own utterance, became for them the objective basis of their faith in Christ. Furthermore, it was made clear to them that if they were to continue in His fellowship by the Spirit after He was gone from them in the flesh, they would have to abide in His Word (Jn 15:7).

## Supremely Soul Winning

Through this manner of personal demonstration, every aspect of Jesus' personal discipline of life was bequeathed to His disciples, but what perhaps was most important in view of His ultimate purpose was that all the while He was teaching them how to win souls.

Practically everything that Jesus said and did had some relevance to their work of evangelism, either by explaining a spiritual truth or revealing to them how they should deal with men. He did not have to work up teaching situations, but merely took advantage of those about Him, and thus His teaching seemed perfectly realistic. In fact, for the most part, the disciples were absorbing it without even knowing that they were being trained to win people under like conditions for God.

## Teaching Naturally

This point, already alluded to several times, cannot be emphasized too much. Jesus was so much the Master in His teaching that He did not let His method obscure His lesson. He let His truth call attention to itself, and not the presentation. His method in this respect was to conceal the fact that He even had a method. He was His method.

This may be hard to imagine in this day of professional techniques and sure-fire gimmicks. In some quarters, it would almost appear we would be unable to proceed without a well-illustrated handbook or multi-colored chart showing us what to do. The least we might expect is a class in soul winning. Yet, strange as it may seem, the disciples never had any of these things now considered so essential for the work.

All the disciples had to teach them was a Teacher who practiced with them what He expected them to learn. Evangelism was lived before them in spirit and in technique. Watching Him they learned what it was all about. He led them to recognize the need inherent in all classes of people, and the best methods of approaching them.

They observed how He drew people to Himself; how He won their confidence and inspired their faith; how He opened to them the way of salvation and called them to a decision. In all types of situations and among all kinds of people, rich and poor, healthy and sick, friend and foe alike, the disciples watched the Master Soul-winner at work. It wasn't outlined on the blackboard of a stuffy classroom nor written up in a "Do It Yourself" manual. His method was so real and practical that it just came naturally.

## **Classes Always In Session**

This was as true in His approach to the masses as His way of dealing with individuals. The disciples were always there to observe His Word and deed. If the particular approach was not clear, all they had to do was to ask the Master to explain it to them. For example, after Jesus told the story of the sower to "a very great multitude" (Mk 4 cf., Mt 13:1-9; Lk 8:4-8), His disciples "asked Him what this parable might be" (Lk 8:9; cf., Mk 4:10; Mt 13:10). Whereupon Jesus proceeded to explain to them in detail the meaning of the analogies used in the illustration. In fact, judging from the printed Text, He spent three times the amount of time explaining this story to the disciples than He did in giving the initial lesson to the crowd (Mt 13:10-23; Mk 4:10-25; Lk 8:9-18).

When the disciples seemed reluctant to confess their bewilderment, then Jesus often would have to take the initiative in clearing up the problem. The story of the rich young ruler is a typical incident. After Jesus dealt with him rather sternly, and the young ruler went away sorrowful because He loved His riches more than the Kingdom of God, Jesus turned to His disciples and said: "It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19:23; cf., Mk 10:23; Lk 18:24). "The disciples were amazed at His Words" (Mk 10:24). This led to an extended conversation in which Jesus explained the reason for His approach to this good moral man, while also using the opportunity to apply the principle to their own profession of faith (Mk 10:24-31; Mt 19:24-20:16; Lk 18:25-30).

## **The Principle In Focus**

The method of Jesus here was more than a continuous sermon; it was an object lesson as well. This was the Secret of His influence in teaching. He did not ask anyone to do or be anything which first He had not demonstrated in His own life, thereby not only proving its workability, but also its relevance to His mission in life. And this He was able to do because He was constantly with His disciples. His training classes were never dismissed. Everything which He said and did was a personal lesson in reality, and since the disciples were there to notice it, they were learning practically every moment of their waking day.

How else will His Way ever be learned? It is well enough to tell people what we mean, but it is infinitely better to show them how to do it. People are looking for a demonstration, not an explanation.

## **The Principle Applied Today**

When it is all boiled down, those of us who are seeking to train men must be prepared to have them follow us, even as we follow Christ (1 Cor 11:1). We are the exhibit (Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 2:7, 8; 11, 2 Tim 1:13). They will do those things which they hear and see in us (Phil 4:9). Given time, it is possible through this kind of leadership to impart our way of living to those who are constantly with us.

We must take this truth to our lives. There can be no shirking or evading of our personal responsibility to show the way to those we are training, and this revelation must include the practical outworking in

life of the deeper realities of the Spirit. This is the Master's method, and nothing else will ever suffice to train others to do His work.

Yet, as we know, mere knowledge is not enough. There comes a time for action. To disregard this privilege can nullify all that has been acquired in the process of learning. Indeed, knowledge unapplied to living can become a stumbling-stone to further truth. No one better understood this than the Master. He was training men to do a job, and when they knew enough to get started, He saw to it that they did something about it. The application of this principle is so pronounced that it needs to be considered as another part of His strategy of conquest through trained and spiritually alert men.

(Coleman, Robert. Master Plan of Evangelism. Grand Rapids: Revell, 1963.)

## **HE CHOSE FROM THEM TWELVE**

**Luke 6:13**

### **Selection**

#### **Men Were His Method**

It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow Him. This revealed immediately the direction His evangelistic strategy would take. His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow. Remarkable as it may seem, Jesus started to gather these men before He ever organized an evangelistic campaign or even preached a sermon in public. Men were to be His method of winning the world to God.

The initial objective of Jesus' plan was to enlist men who could bear witness to His life and carry on His work after He returned to the Father. John and Andrew were the first to be invited as Jesus left the scene of the great revival of the Baptist at Bethany beyond the Jordan (Jn 1:35-40). Andrew in turn brought his brother Peter (Jn 1:41-42). The next day Jesus found Philip on His way to Galilee, and Philip found Nathaniel (Jn 1:43-45). There is no evidence of haste in the selection of these disciples; just determination. James, the brother of John, is not mentioned as one of the group until the four fishermen are recalled several months later by the Sea of Galilee (Mk 1:19; Mt 4:21). Shortly afterward Matthew is bidden to follow the Master as Jesus passed through Capernaum (Mk 2:13,14; Mt 9:9; Lk 5:27,28). The particulars surrounding the call of the other disciples are not recorded in the Gospels, but it is believed that they all occurred in the first year of the Lord's ministry.

As one might expect, these early efforts at soul winning had little or no immediate effect upon the religious life of His day, but that did not matter greatly. For as it turned out these few early converts of the Lord were destined to become the leaders of His church that was to go with the Gospel to the whole world, and from the standpoint of His ultimate purpose, the significance of their lives would be felt throughout eternity. That's the only thing that counts.

#### **Men Willing To Learn**

What is more revealing about these men is that at first they do not impress us as being key men. None of them occupied prominent places in the Synagogue, nor did any of them belong to the Levitical priesthood. For the most part they were common laboring men, probably having no professional training beyond the rudiments of knowledge necessary for their vocation. Perhaps a few of them came from families of some considerable means, such as the sons of Zebedee, but none of them could have been considered wealthy. They had no academic degrees in the arts and philosophies of their day. Like their Master, their formal education likely consisted only of the Synagogue schools. Most of them were raised in the poor section of the country around Galilee. Apparently the only one of the twelve who came from the more refined region of Judea was Judas Iscariot. By any standard of

sophisticated culture then and now they would surely be considered as a rather ragged aggregation of souls. One might wonder how Jesus could ever use them. They were impulsive, temperamental, easily offended, and had all the prejudices of their environment. In short, these men selected by the Lord to be His assistants represented an average cross section of the lot of society in their day. Not the kind of group one would expect to win the world for Christ.

Yet Jesus saw in these simple men the potential of leadership for the Kingdom. They were indeed "unlearned and ignorant" according to the world's standard (Acts 4:13), but they were teachable. Though often mistaken in their judgments and slow to comprehend spiritual things, they were honest men, willing to confess their need. Their mannerisms may have been awkward and their abilities limited, but with the exception of the traitor, their hearts were big. What is perhaps most significant about them was their sincere yearning for God and the realities of His life. The superficiality of the religious life about them had not obsessed their hope for the Messiah (Jn 1:41, 45, 49 and Lk 6:69). They were fed up with the hypocrisy of the ruling aristocracy. Some of them had already joined the revival movement of John the Baptist (Jn 1:35). These men were looking for someone to lead them in the way of salvation. Such men, pliable in the hands of the Master, could be molded into a new image. Jesus can use anyone who wants to be used.

## **Concentrated Upon A Few**

In noting this fact, however, one does not want to miss the practical truth of how Jesus did it. Here is the wisdom of His method, and in observing it, we return again to the fundamental principle of concentration upon those He intended to use. One cannot transform a world except as individuals in the world are transformed, and individuals cannot be changed except as they are molded in the hands of the Master. The necessity is apparent not only to select a few laymen, but to keep the group small enough to be able to work effectively with them.

Hence, as the company of followers around Jesus increased, it became necessary by the middle of His second year of ministry to narrow the select company to a more manageable number. Accordingly Jesus "called His disciples and He chose from them twelve, whom also He named apostles" (Lk 6:13-17; cf., Mk 3:13-19). Regardless of the symbolical meaning one prefers to put upon the number twelve, it is clear that Jesus intended these men to have unique privileges and responsibilities in the Kingdom work.

This does not mean that Jesus' decision to have twelve apostles excluded others from following Him, for as we know, many more were numbered among His associates, and some of these became very effective workers in the Church. The seventy (Lk 10:1); Mark and Luke, the Gospel revelators; James, His own brother (1 Cor 15:7; Gal 2:9, 12; cf., Jn 2:12 and Jn 7:2-10), are notable examples of this. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that there was a rapidly diminishing priority given to those outside the twelve.

The same rule could be applied in reverse, for within the select apostolic group Peter, James and John seemed to enjoy a more special relationship to the Master than did the other nine. Only these privileged few are invited into the sick room of Jarius' daughter (Mk 5:37; Lk 8:51); they alone go up with the Master and behold His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mk 9:2; Mt 17:1; Lk 9:28); and amid the olive trees of Gethsemane casting their ominous shadows in the light of the full Passover moon, these members of the inner circle waited nearest to their Lord while He prayed (Mk 14:33; Mt 26:37). So noticeable is the preference given to these three that had it not been for the incarnation of selflessness in the Person of Christ, it could well have precipitated feelings of resentment on the part of the other apostles. The fact that there is no record of the disciples complaining about the pre-eminence of the three, though they did murmur about other things, is proof that where preference is shown in the right spirit and for the right reason offence need not arise.

## **The Principle Observed**

All of this certainly impresses one with the deliberate way that Jesus proportioned His life to those He wanted to train. It also graphically illustrates a fundamental principle of teaching: that other things being equal, the more concentrated the size of the group being taught, the greater the opportunity for effective instruction.

Jesus devoted most of His remaining life on earth to these few disciples. He literally staked His whole ministry upon them. The world could be indifferent toward Him and still not defeat His strategy. It even caused Him no great concern when His followers on the fringes of things gave up their allegiance when confronted with the true meaning of the Kingdom (Jn 6:66). But He could not bear to have His close disciples miss His purpose. They had to understand the truth and be sanctified by it (Jn 17:17), else all would be lost. Thus He prayed "not for the world," but for the few God gave Him "out of the world" (Jn 17:6, 9).<sup>2</sup> Everything depended upon their faithfulness if the world would believe on Him "through their word" (Jn 17:20).

## **Not Neglecting The Masses**

It would be wrong, however, to assume on the basis of what has here been emphasized that Jesus neglected the masses. Such was not the case. Jesus did all that any man could be asked to do and more to reach the multitudes. The first thing He did when He started His ministry was to identify Himself boldly with the great mass revival movement of His day through baptism at the hands of John (Mk 1:9-11; Mt 3:13-17; Lk 3:21-22), and He later went out of His way to praise this work of the great prophet (Mt 11:7-15; Lk 7:24-28). He Himself continuously preached to the crowds that followed His miracle-working ministry. He taught them. He fed them when they were hungry. He healed their sick and cast out demons among them. He blessed their children. Sometimes the whole day would be spent ministering to their needs, even to the extent that He had "no leisure so much as to eat" (Mk 6:31). In every way possible Jesus manifested to the masses of humanity a genuine concern. These were the people that He came to save—He loved them, wept over them, and finally died to save them from their sin. No one could think that Jesus shirked mass evangelism.

## **Multitudes Aroused**

In fact, the ability of Jesus to impress the multitudes created a serious problem in His ministry. He was so successful in expressing to them His compassion and power that they once wanted "to take Him by force, to make Him King" (Jn 6:15). One report by the followers of John the Baptist said that "all men" were clamoring for His attention (Jn 3:26). Even the Pharisees admitted among themselves that the world had gone after Him (Jn 12:19), and bitter as the admission must have been, the chief priests concurred in this opinion (Jn 11:47-48). However one looks at it, the Gospel record certainly does not indicate that Jesus lacked any popular following among the masses, despite their hesitating loyalty, and this condition lasted right on down to the end. Indeed, it was the fear of this friendly mass feeling for Jesus that prompted His accusers to capture Him in the absence of the people (Mk 12:12; Mt 21:26; Lk 20:19).

Had Jesus given any encouragement to this popular sentiment among the masses, He easily could have had all the Kingdoms of men at His feet. All He had to do was to satisfy the temporal appetites and curiosities of the people by His supernatural power. Such was the temptation presented by Satan in the wilderness when Jesus was urged to turn stones into bread and to cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the temple that God might bear Him up (Mt 4:1-7; Lk 4:1-4 and Lk 9-13). These spectacular things would surely have excited the applause of the crowd. Satan was not offering Jesus anything when he promised Him all the Kingdoms of the world if the Master would only worship him (Mt 4:8-10). The arch deceiver of men knew full well that Jesus automatically would have this if He



just turned His concentration from the things that mattered in the eternal Kingdom.

But Jesus would not play to the galleries. Quite the contrary. Repeatedly He took special pains to allay the superficial popular support of the multitudes which had been occasioned by His extraordinary power (e.g., Jn 2:23; 3:3; 6:26-27). Frequently He would even ask those who were the recipients of His healing to say nothing about it in order to prevent mass demonstrations by the easily aroused multitudes. Likewise, with the disciples following His transfiguration on the Mount "He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen" until after His resurrection (Mk 9:9; Mt 17:9). On other occasions when applauded by the crowd, Jesus would slip away with His disciples and go elsewhere to continue His ministry.

His practice in this respect sometimes rather annoyed His followers who did not understand His strategy. Even his own brothers and sisters' who yet did not believe on Him, urged Him to abandon this policy and make an open show of Himself to the world, but He refused to take their advice (Jn 7:2-9).

## **Few Seemed To Understand**

In view of this policy, it is not surprising to note that few people were actually converted during the ministry of Christ' that is in any clear cut way. Of course, many of the multitudes believed in Christ in the sense that His divine ministry was acceptable, but comparatively few seemed to have grasped the meaning of the Gospel. Perhaps His total number of devoted followers at the end of His earthly ministry numbered little more than the 500 brethren to whom Jesus appeared after the resurrection (1 Cor 15:6), and only about 120 tarried in Jerusalem to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:15). Though this number is not small considering that His active ministry extended only over a period of three years, yet if at this point one were to measure the effectiveness of His evangelism by the number of His converts, Jesus doubtless would not be considered among the most productive mass evangelists of the church.

## **His Strategy**

Why? Why did Jesus deliberately concentrate His life upon comparatively so few people? Had he not come to save the world? With the glowing announcement of John the Baptist ringing in the ears of multitudes, the Master easily could have had an immediate following of thousands if He wanted them. Why did He not then capitalize upon His opportunities to enlist a mighty army of believers to take the world by storm? Surely the Son of God could have adopted a more enticing program of mass recruitment. Is it not rather disappointing that one with all the powers of the universe at His command would live and die to save the world, yet in the end have only a few ragged disciples to show for His labors?

The answer to this question focuses at once the real purpose of His plan for evangelism. Jesus was not trying to impress the crowd, but to usher in a Kingdom. This meant that He needed men who could lead the multitudes. What good would it have been for His ultimate objective to arouse the masses to follow Him if these people had no subsequent supervision nor instruction in the Way? It had been demonstrated on numerous occasions that the crowd was an easy prey to false gods when left without proper care. The masses were like helpless sheep wandering aimlessly without a shepherd (Mk 6:34; Mt 9:36 and Mt 14:14;). They were willing to follow almost anyone that came along with some promise for their welfare, be it friend or foe. That was the tragedy of the hour—the noble aspirations of the people were easily excited by Jesus, but just as quickly thwarted by the deceitful religious authorities who controlled them. The spiritually blind leaders of Israel (Jn 8:44; 9:39-41; 12:40; cf., Mt 23:1-39), though comparatively few in number, completely dominate the affairs of the people. For this reason, unless Jesus' converts were given competent men of God to lead them on and protect them in the truth they would soon fall into confusion and despair, and the last state would be worse than the

first. Thus, before the world could ever be permanently helped men would have to be raised up who could lead the multitudes in the things of God.

Jesus was a realist. He fully realized the fickleness of depraved human nature as well as the Satanic forces of this world amassed against humanity, and in this knowledge He based His evangelism on a plan that would meet the need. The multitudes of discordant and bewildered souls were potentially ready to follow Him, but Jesus individually could not possibly give them the personal care they needed. His only hope was to get men imbued with His life who would do it for Him. Hence, He concentrated Himself upon those who were to be the beginning of this leadership. Though He did what He could to help the multitudes, He had to devote Himself primarily to a few men, rather than the masses, in order that the masses could at last be saved. This was the genius of His strategy.

## **The Principle Applied Today**

Yet, strangely enough, it is scarcely comprehended in practice today. Most of the evangelistic efforts of the church begin with the multitudes under the assumption that the church is qualified to conserve what good is done. The result is our spectacular emphasis upon numbers of converts, candidates for baptism, and more members for the church, with little or no genuine concern manifested toward the establishment of these souls in the love and power of God, let alone the preservation and continuation of the work.

Surely if the pattern of Jesus at this point means anything at all it teaches that the first duty of a pastor as well as the first concern of an evangelist is to see to it that a foundation is laid in the beginning upon which can be built an effective and continuing evangelistic ministry to the multitudes. This will require more concentration of time and talents upon fewer men in the church while not neglecting the passion for the world. It will mean raising up trained leadership "for the work of ministering" with the pastor (Eph 4:12). A few people so dedicated in time will shake the world for God. Victory is never won by the multitudes.

Some might object to this principle when practiced by the Christian worker on the ground that favoritism is shown toward a select group in the church. But be that as it may, it is still the way that Jesus concentrated His life, and it is necessary if any permanent leadership is to be trained. Where it is practiced out of a genuine love for the whole church, and due concern is manifested toward the needs of the people, objections can at least be reconciled to the mission being accomplished. However, the ultimate goal must be clear to the worker, and there can be no hint of selfish partiality displayed in his relationships to all. Everything that is done with the few is for the salvation of the multitudes.

## **A Modern Demonstration**

This principle of selectivity and concentration is engraved in the universe, and will bring results no matter who practices it, whether the church believes it or not. It is surely not without significance that the Communists, always alert to what works, adopted in a large measure this method of the Lord as their own. Using it to their own devious end they have multiplied from a handful of zealots seventy-five years ago to a vast conspiracy of followers that enslave nearly half the peoples of the world. They have proved in our day what Jesus demonstrated so clearly in His day that the multitudes can be won easily if they are just given leaders to follow. Is not the spread of this vicious Communistic philosophy, in some measure, a judgment upon the church, not only upon our flabby commitment to evangelism, but also upon the superficial way that we have tried to go about it?

## **Time For Action**

It is time that the church realistically faces the situation. Our days of trifling are running out. The

evangelistic program of the Church has bogged down on nearly every front. What is worse, the great missionary thrust of the Gospel into new frontiers has largely lost its power. In most lands the enfeebled church is not even keeping up with the exploding population. All the while the Satanic forces of this world are becoming more relentless and brazen in their attack. It is ironic when one stops to think about it. In an age when facilities for rapid communication of the Gospel are available to the Church as never before, we are actually accomplishing less in winning the world for God than before the invention of the horseless carriage.

Yet in appraising the tragic condition of affairs today, we must not become frantic in trying to reverse the trend overnight. Perhaps that has been our problem. In our concern to stem the tide, we have launched one crash program after another to reach the multitudes with the saving Word of God. But what we have failed to comprehend in our frustration is that the real problem is not with the masses—what they believe, how they are governed, whether they are fed a wholesome diet or not. All these things considered so vital are ultimately manipulated by others, and for this reason, before we can resolve the exploitation of the people we must get to those whom the people follow.

This, of course, puts a priority on winning and training those already in responsible positions of leadership. But if we can't begin at the top, then let us begin where we are and train a few of the lowly to become the great. And let us remember, too, that one does not have to have the prestige of the world in order to be greatly used in the Kingdom of God. Anyone who is willing to follow Christ can become a mighty influence upon the world providing, of course, this person has the proper training himself.

Here is where we must begin just like Jesus. It will be slow, tedious, painful and probably unnoticed by men at first, but the end result will be glorious, even if we don't live to see it. Seen this way, though, it becomes a big decision in the ministry. One must decide where he wants his ministry to count—in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen men who will carry on his work after he has gone. Really it is a question of which generation we are living for.

But we must go on. It is necessary now to see how Jesus trained His men to carry on His work. The whole pattern is part of the same method, and we cannot separate one phase from the other without destroying its effectiveness.

(Coleman, Robert. Master Plan of Evangelism. Grand Rapids: Revell, 1963.)

## **Delegation**

### **Matthew 4:19**

#### **He Assigned Them Work**

Jesus was always building up in His ministry to the time when His disciples would have to take over His work, and go out into the world with the redeeming Gospel. This plan was progressively made clear as they followed Him.

The patience with which Jesus brought this out to His disciples reflects upon His consideration for their ability to learn. He was never premature in His insistence upon action. The first invitation to the disciples to follow Him said nothing about going out and evangelizing the world, although this was His plan from the beginning. His method was to get the disciples into a vital experience with God, and to show them how He worked, before telling them they had to do it.

On the other hand, Jesus did not discourage their spontaneous reactions to bear witness to their faith, and in fact, He seemed delighted that they wanted to bring others to know what they had found. Andrew got Peter, Philip found Nathaniel, Matthew invited his friends to a feast in His house and Jesus responded to these new introductions with gladness. It is well, also, to note that on several

occasions Jesus specifically asked those who were helped by His ministry to say something about it to others. However, in none of these early instances is the real purpose of their life of witnessing made a matter of explicit command.

He used His disciples in other ways to help along His work, such as caring for the manual burdens of getting food and arranging accommodations for the group as they followed Him. He also let them baptize some people who were aroused by His message (Jn 4:2). Outside of this, however, it is rather startling to observe in the Gospels that these early disciples really did not do much more than watch Jesus work for a year or more. He kept the vision before them by His activity, and in His call again to the four fishermen He reminded them that following Him they were to be fishers of men (Mk 1:17; Mt 4:19; Lk 5:10), but it does not seem that they did much about it. For that matter, even after they were formally ordained to the ministry a few months later (Mk 3:14-19; Lk 6:13-16), they still showed no evidence of doing any evangelistic work on their own. This observation perhaps should cause us to be more patient with new converts who follow us.

## **First Evangelistic Message Of The Twelve**

But as Jesus was beginning His third general tour of Galilee (Mk 6:6; Mt 9:35), He doubtless realized that the time had come when His disciples could join Him more directly in the work. They had seen enough at least to get started. They needed now to put into practice what they had seen their Master do. So "He called unto Him the twelve, and began to send them forth" (Mk 6:7; cf., Lk 9:1-2). Like a mother eagle teaching her young to fly by pushing them out of the nest, Jesus pushed His disciples out into the world to try their own wings.

## **Briefing Instructions**

Before letting them go, however, Jesus gave them some briefing instructions on their mission. What He said to them on this occasion is very important to this study because, in a sense, He outlined for them explicitly what He had been teaching implicitly all the time.

He first reaffirmed His purpose for their lives. They were to go and "preach the Kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (Lk 9:1-2; cf., Mt 10:1; Mk 6:7). Nothing was new in this commission, but it did serve to further clarify their task. However, their new instructions did emphasize more the immediacy of their task with the announcement that the "Kingdom was at hand" (Mt 10:7). It also spelled out more completely the scope of their authority by telling them not only to heal, but to "cleanse the lepers, cast out devils, and raise the dead" (Mt 10:8).

But Jesus did not leave it at this. He went on to tell them who to see first. "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 10:5-6). It was as though Jesus was telling His disciples to go where they would find the most susceptible audience to hear their message. This is the way that Jesus proceeded in His ministry, although as time went on He did not bind Himself by it. Since kinsmen were those most like them in cultural and religious background, it is only natural that they start with them. Interestingly enough, a few months later, when the seventy are sent out, this parting injunction was not repeated, perhaps indicating it was time then to go beyond these natural ties in pressing the claims of Christ.

As to their support, they were to trust God to supply their needs. They were told to render their services freely remembering how they had also freely received from their Lord (Mt 10:8). Consequently, Jesus instructed them not to burden themselves unnecessarily with a lot of excess baggage and provisions (Mt 10:9, 10; Mk 6:8-9; Lk 9:3). As they were faithful to God, He would see to it that they were supplied their needs. "The laborer is worthy of his food" (Mt 10:10).

## Follow His Method

The plan of Jesus is even more specific to His disciples in His instructions to find some friendly person in each town they visited, and there live as long as they continued their evangelistic work in the area. "Into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go forth" (Mt 10:11; cf., Mk 6:10; Lk 9:4). In effect, the disciples were told to concentrate their time upon the most promising individuals in each town who would thereby be able to follow up their work after they had gone. This was to receive priority over everything else. In fact, if they could not find someone who would take them in, they were specifically instructed to shake off the dust on their feet as a testimony against them. It would be "more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Mt 10:14-15; cf., Lk 9:5; Mk 6:11). This principle of establishing a beachhead in a new place of labor by getting with a potentially key follow-up leader is not to be minimized. Jesus had lived by it with His own disciples, and He expected them to do the same. His whole plan of evangelism depended upon it, and those places which refused the disciples opportunity to practice this principle actually brought the judgment of utter darkness upon themselves.

## Expect Hardship

The fact that some men would refuse the disciples' ministry only accentuated Jesus' warning of the treatment they could expect to receive. "Beware of men: for they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles" (Mt 10:17-18). This was only natural, since "a disciple is not above his Master, or a servant above his Lord" (Mt 10:24). The rulers had called Jesus Beelzebub, and those of His household could not expect any less abuse (Mt 10:25). This was to say again that His way was contrary to the accepted pattern of worldly wisdom. Therefore they would be hated of all men (Mt 10:22-23). Nevertheless, Jesus told them to "fear not." God would never desert them. And though their witness was wrought with grave danger to their lives, the Holy Spirit would enable them to meet emergencies (Mt 10:20-21). No matter what happened to them, Jesus assured them that everyone who confessed Him before men would be remembered before His Father in heaven (Mt 10:32).

One cannot help being impressed with the realistic way that Jesus never let His disciples underestimate the strength of the enemy, nor the natural resistance of men to His redeeming Gospel. They were not looking for trouble. Indeed, His admonition to them to be "as wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Mt 10:16) under-scored the need for propriety and tactfulness, but in spite of all their precautions, the fact remained that the world was not likely to receive the disciples with favor when they faithfully preached the Gospel. They were sent "as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Mt 10:16).

## A Dividing Gospel

It is significant, too, that Jesus reminded them of the decisive nature of the Gospel invitation. There could be no compromise with sin, and for this reason, anyone holding out on God was sure to be disturbed by their preaching. They were not hand-shaking emissaries maintaining the status quo of complacency. Rather Jesus said: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me" (Mt 10:34-38). If the disciples had any notions prior to this time about the easy nature of their work, it was certainly dispelled now. They were going forth with a revolutionary Gospel, and when it was obeyed, it effected a revolutionary change in people and their society.

## **One With Christ**

The point Jesus made in all these instructions was that the mission of His disciples was not different in principle or method from His own. He began by giving them His own authority and power to do His work (Mk 6:7; Mt 10:1; Lk 9:1), and He closed by assuring them that what they were doing was as though He was doing it Himself. "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me" (Mt 10:40; cf., Jn 13:20). Think of this identity! The disciples were to be the actual representatives of Christ as they went forth. So clear was this association that if someone even gave a child a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, that act of mercy would be rewarded (Mt 10:42).

## **Two By Two**

These were the instructions that Jesus gave to His disciples. But before they went out, He teamed them up in pairs of two (Mk 6:7). Doubtless this plan was intended to provide for His disciples needed companionship along the way. Together they could help one another, and when adverse circumstances greeted them as surely often would be the case, they could still find solace among themselves. It reflects again the characteristic concern of Jesus for togetherness.

"And they departed, and went throughout the villages, preaching the Gospel, and healing everywhere" (Lk 9:6; cf., Mk 6:12). The little group of disciples were finally started in the active ministry of Christ on their own.

Of course, this was no excuse for Jesus neglecting His own work. He never asked anyone to do something which He was unwilling to do. So as the disciples went out, the Master likewise "departed thence to teach and preach in their cities" (Mt 11:1).

## **The Mission Of The Seventy**

Not many months after this "seventy others" were sent out again two by two to witness for their Lord (Lk 10:1). It is not known for sure just who these other disciples were, but the indications are that they included the original twelve. The size of the group also indicates that this was due in measure to the increased activity of the twelve in witnessing for Christ.

Again the instructions given to this larger group were essentially the same as those delivered earlier to the twelve (Lk 10:2-16). One addition in this new commission was the reminder that they were going "into every city and place, whither He Himself was about to come" (Lk 10:1). That is, the disciples were forerunners for their Lord, setting things up for His ministry. This detail had been impressed upon them a few weeks before while they were on a trip to Samaria (Lk 9:52), so actually it was not something with which they had no previous knowledge. It merely indicated again that they all were to practice what they had learned to be their Master's strategy of evangelism.

## **Post Resurrection Commands**

The principle of giving evangelistic work assignments to His disciples was conclusively demonstrated just before He returned to Heaven after His crucifixion and resurrection. On at least four occasions as He met with His disciples He told them to go out and do His work. It was first mentioned to the disciples, with the exception of Thomas, on that first Easter evening as they were assembled in the Upper Room. After Jesus had showed the astonished disciples His nail-scarred hands and feet (Lk 24:38-40), and had partaken of the meal with them (Lk 24:41-43), He then said: "Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (Jn 20:21). Whereupon Jesus assured them again of

the promise and authority of the Holy Spirit to do the work.

A little later as Jesus had breakfast with His disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, He told Peter three times to feed His sheep (Jn 21:15-17). This admonition was interpreted to the big fisherman as the proof of his love to the Master.

On a mountain in Galilee He gave His great commission to, not only the eleven disciples (Mt 28:16), but also to the whole church numbering then about five hundred brethren (1 Cor 15:6). It was a clear proclamation of His strategy of world conquest. "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt 28:18-20; cf., Mk 16:15-18).

Finally, before He ascended back to the Father, Jesus went over the whole thing again with His disciples for the last time, showing them how things had to be fulfilled while He was with them (Lk 24:44-45). His suffering and death, as well as His resurrection from the dead the third day, was all according to schedule (Lk 24:46). Jesus went on to show His disciples "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name unto all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Lk 24:47). And for the fulfillment of this divine purpose, the disciples were no less a part than their Master. They were to be the human instruments announcing the good tidings, and the Holy Spirit was to be God's personal empowerment for their mission. "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witness both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8 cf., Lk 24:48-49).

## **The Principle Is Clear**

Clearly Jesus did not leave the work of evangelism subject to human impression or convenience. To His disciples it was a definite command, perceived by impulse at the beginning of their discipleship, but progressively clarified in their thinking as they followed Him, and finally spelled out in no uncertain terms. No one who followed Jesus very far could escape this conclusion. It was so then; it is so today.

Christian disciples are sent men-sent out in the same work of world evangelism to which the Lord was sent, and for which He gave His life. Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life. It is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do. It is the commission of the church which gives meaning to all else that is undertaken in the Name of Christ. With this purpose clearly in focus, everything which is done and said has glorious fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose-educational institutions, social programs, hospitals, church meetings of any kind-everything done in the Name of Christ has its justification in fulfilling this mission.

## **The Principle Applied Today**

But it is not enough to make this an ideal. It must be given tangible expression by those who are following the Savior. The best way to be sure that this is done is to give practical work assignments and expect them to be carried out. This gets men started, and where they already have seen their work demonstrated in the life of their teacher, there is no reason why the assignment cannot be completed. When the church takes this lesson to heart, and gets down to business with evangelism, then those in the pews will soon start moving out for God.

However, the fact that one starts the work is no assurance that he will keep it up. Once inertia is overcome, it is still necessary to keep one moving, and going in the right direction. Certainly the assignments that Jesus gave His disciples, at least at first were no discharge from His school of

training. They had much more to learn before they could be considered ready for graduation, and until that time came, He had no intention of turning them loose from His personal direction. His concern at this point was so explicit and His method of dealing with it so pronounced that it needs to be considered as another step in His strategy of ultimate victory.

From Coleman, Robert. *Master Plan of Evangelism*.

## **Supervision He Kept Check On Them**

Jesus made it a point to get with His disciples following their tours of service to hear their reports and to share with them the blessedness of His ministry in doing the same thing. In this sense, one might say that *His teaching rotated between instruction and assignment*.

When He was with them, He was helping them to understand the reason for some previous action or getting them ready for some new experience. His questions, illustrations, warnings, and admonitions were calculated to bring out those things that they needed to know in order to fulfill His work, which was the evangelization of the world.

Accordingly, not long after the twelve were sent Out, they gathered themselves "together with Jesus" to tell "what things they had done" (Mk 6:30; Lk 9:10). It would appear from the Bible that this reunion was prearranged, and hence, the initial solo excursion of the disciples was merely a field assignment as they continued their training with the Master.

The regrouping of the disciples following their evangelistic tour, of course, provided them some needed rest in body and soul. As to how long the disciples had been out, the Scripture does not say. Perhaps a few days, even a week. The time element here is not the important thing. What does matter though, as the record shows, is that after the disciples were sent out to work, they were expected to share their experiences, later, with the group.

Similarly, after the seventy went out, Jesus called them back to report on their work during the visitation. "And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in Thy Name" (Lk 10:17). On the previous mission of the twelve, no mention is made of any spectacular success in their work, but on this occasion they had a rousing report of triumph. Perhaps the difference was the additional experience which the disciples had gained.

Nothing could have given Jesus more joy than this. Visualizing the victory ultimately assured by their work, Jesus said: "I beheld Satan falling as lightning from heaven" (Lk 10:18). "In that same hour He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit" and then lifted up His voice in praise to God for what had been done (Lk 10:21-22). This was what Jesus had been working for all these long months, and now He was beginning to see His labors show fruit. Yet, to show how Jesus was alert to make experiences teach truth, even this occasion was used to caution the disciples against pride in their accomplishments. As he put it, "Howbeit in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Lk 10:20).

### **Continuous Review And Application**

What is seen here so vividly in these checkup sessions following the disciples' visitation merely brings into bold relief a strategy of Jesus throughout His ministry. As He reviewed some experience which the disciples had He would bring out some practical application of it to their lives.

Take, as an illustration, the way He responded to the futile efforts of some of His disciples to heal an afflicted boy. This incident was precipitated while Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, with Peter, James, and John. In His absence, the other disciples had tried to heal a demon-possessed boy brought to them by the father. The case was too much for their faith, and when Jesus returned to see how things were getting along, He found the distraught father with the sick child having a fit before



the helpless disciples. Jesus, of course, took care of the boy, but He did not let the occasion pass without giving the frustrated disciples a much needed lesson on how they, through more prayer and fasting, should have laid hold upon God's faithfulness (Mk 9:17-29; Mt 7:14-20; Lk 9:37-43).

Or, again, think of the way He recalled their part in feeding the multitude to impress upon them His power to do all things while also teaching them a vital lesson concerning spiritual discernment (Mk 6:30-44; 7:31-8:9; 13-21; Mt 14:13-21; 15:29-38; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-13). It came about as they were going across the Sea of Galilee in a boat immediately following the Master's severe denunciation of the chronic sign-seeking attitude of the religious sects of His day (Mk 8:10-12; Mt 15:39-16:4).

Jesus, doubtless feeling a great heaviness because of the incident on the other side of the lake, turned to His disciples and said: "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." But the spiritually dull disciples, growing hungry for food, and having only one loaf of bread with them, thought that they should not buy bread from these unbelieving people, and therefore wondered where their next meal was coming from. Realizing that they had missed completely the spiritual lesson of His remarks intended to warn them against unbelief, Jesus said: "O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves because ye have no bread? Do ye not yet perceive, neither understand? Have ye your heart hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? And do ye not remember? When I broke the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces took ye up?" The disciples answered, "Twelve" (Mk 8:19). Doubtless this brought clearly to mind that day when the disciples seated the multitudes for dinner, and then saw Jesus perform the miracle of the loaves. They remembered, too, how He employed them to distribute the provisions so that everybody had enough, and then to gather up what was left. Indeed, it was a vivid recollection, for each one of the twelve had a basket full of food when it was all over. Similarly, they remembered how that they had seven baskets left over from feeding the four thousand. With this evidence of Jesus' miraculous power there could be no doubt about His ability to feed them with their loaf of bread if it was necessary. "Then they understood how that He bade them, not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Mt 16:12).

## **Lessons On Patience**

One of the most penetrating of the Lord's correctional lectures following the disciples' activity was in connection with their attitude toward others in the work who were not members of the apostolic company. It seems that in the course of their travels they had run across some people casting out demons in Jesus' Name, but since these persons were not of their denomination, the disciples had severely rebuked them for it (Mk 9:38; Lk 9:49). Doubtless Jesus' disciples felt they were doing the right thing, but when it was reported to the Master, He felt constrained to give them an extended discourse on the dangers of discouraging any sincere work on His behalf (Mk 9:39-50; Mt 18:6-14). "Forbid them not," Jesus said, "for He that is not against you is with you" (Lk 9:50). Then making His point apply more generally to all innocent people, especially children, He went on to say, "Whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea" (Mk 9:42). "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (Mt 18:14).

On another excursion, the disciples encountered some resistance to their work while on an assignment for their Lord in Samaria. Reacting impulsively to destroy the people, they wanted to call down fire from heaven (Lk 51-54). But Jesus, who was standing nearby, "turned and rebuked them," adding, "Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Lk 9:55-56). And then showing His disciples how they might solve this kind of problem, "they went to another village" (Lk 9:56).

## **The Principle Observed**

Many other illustrations could be cited to show how Jesus checked up on the actions and reactions of His disciples as they faced various difficult situations. He kept after them constantly, giving them increasingly more attention as His ministry on earth came to a close. He would not let them rest in success or in failure. No matter what they did, there was always more to do and to learn. He rejoiced

in their success, but nothing less than world conquest was His goal, and to that end He always superintended their efforts.

Here was on-the-job training at its best. Jesus would let His followers have some experience or make some observation of their own, and then He would use this as a starting point to teach a lesson of discipleship. The fact that they tried to do His work, even though they may have failed at it, gave them greater awareness of their deficiencies and hence they were more disposed to the Master's correction. Moreover, their encounter with life situations enabled Jesus to pinpoint His teaching upon specific needs and to spell it out in the concrete terms of practical experience. One always appreciates an education more after he has had the opportunity to apply what he knows.

The important thing about all this supervisory work of Jesus was that He kept the disciples going on toward the goal He had set for them. He did not expect more from His disciples than they could do, but He did expect their best, and this He expected always to be improved as they grew in knowledge and grace. His plan of teaching, by example, assignment, and constant check-up, was calculated to bring out the best that was in them

### **The Principle Applied Today**

No less patient yet determined supervision is needed today among those who are seeking to train others for evangelism. One dare not assume that the work will be done merely because he has shown a willing worker how to do it, and then sent him out with a glowing expectation of results. Innumerable things could happen to frustrate and sidetrack the work, and unless these matters are dealt with realistically by competent and understanding people, the worker may easily become discouraged and defeated. Likewise, many experiences of grace which bring delight to the soul need to be clarified and deepened as their meaning is interpreted in the light of the total world mission of Christ. It is thus crucial that those engaging in the work of evangelism have personal supervision and guidance until such time as they are matured enough to carry on alone.

### **Keep The Vision Clear**

We must always remember, too, that the goal is world conquest. We dare not let a lesser concern capture our strategy of the moment. All too many times one has been brought to the place of service only to be discharged with no further training or inspiration. The result is that his activity becomes localized in a feverish round of excitement. There is no growth. The potential ability resident in the worker is not developed, and before long a promising leader is spoiled for want of supervision. Success is lost on the eve of victory. What once looked so good eventually becomes a stumbling stone to the best.

Undoubtedly much of our effort for the Kingdom is dissipated for this reason. We fail, not because we do not try to do something, but because we let our little efforts become an excuse for not doing more. The result is that we lose by default the advantage of years of hard work and sacrifice.

When will we learn the lesson of Christ not to be satisfied merely with the first fruits of those who are sent out to witness? Disciples must be brought to maturity. There can be no substitute for total victory, and our field is the world. We have not been called to hold the fort, but to storm the heights. It is in this light that the final step in Jesus' strategy of evangelism can be understood.

From Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*

## **Consecration He Required Obedience**

Jesus expected the men He was with to obey Him. They were not required to be smart, but they had to be loyal. This became the distinguishing mark by which they were known. They were called His "disciples" meaning that they were "learners" or "pupils" of the Master. It was not until much later that they started to be called "Christian" (Acts 11:26), although it was inevitable, for in time obedient

followers invariably take on the character of their leader.

The simplicity of this approach is marvelous if not astounding. None of the disciples were asked at first to make a statement of faith or accept a well-defined creed, although they doubtless recognized Jesus to be the Messiah (Jn 1:41, 45, 49; Lk 5:8). For the moment all they were asked to do was to follow Jesus. Of course, clearly implied in their initial invitation was a call to faith in the Person of Christ and obedience to His Word. If this was not comprehended in the beginning, it would be perceived as they continued in the way with the Master. No one will follow a person in whom he has no trust, nor will he sincerely take the step of faith unless he is willing to obey what his leader says.

## **The Way of The Cross**

Following Jesus seemed easy enough at first, but that was because they had not followed Him very far. It soon became apparent that being a disciple of Christ involved far more than a joyful acceptance of the Messianic promise: it meant the surrender of one's whole life to the Master in absolute submission to His sovereignty. There could be no compromise. "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Lk 16:13). There had to be a complete forsaking of sin. The old thought patterns, habits and pleasures of the world had to be conformed to the new disciplines of the Kingdom of God (Mt 5:1-7:29; Lk 6:20-49). Perfection of love was now the only standard of conduct (Mt 5:48), and this love was to manifest itself in obedience to Christ (Jn 14:21, 23) expressed in devotion to those whom He died to save (Mt 25:31-36). There was a cross in it—the willing denial of self for others (Mk 8:34-38; 10:32-45; Mt 16:24-26; 20:17-28; Lk 9:23-25; Jn 12:25-26; 13:1-20).

This was strong teaching. Not many of them could take it. They liked to be numbered among His followers when He filled their stomachs with bread and fish, but when Jesus started talking about the true spiritual quality of the Kingdom and the sacrifice necessary in achieving it (Jn 6:25-59), many of His disciples "went back, and walked no more with Him" (Jn 6:66). As they put it, "This is a hard saying: who can hear it?" (Jn 6:60). The surprising thing is that Jesus did not go running after them to try to get them to stay on His membership roll.

He was training leaders for the Kingdom, and if they were going to be fit vessels of service, they were going to have to pay the price.

## **Must Count the Cost**

Those who would not go all the way thus in time fell by the wayside. They separated themselves from the chosen company by reason of their own selfishness. Judas, exposed as a devil (Jn 6:70), held on until the end, but at last his greed caught up with him (Mk 14:10-11, 43-44; Mt 26:14-16, 47-50; Lk 22:3-6, 47-49; Jn 18:2-9).

One simply could not follow Jesus through the course of His life without turning loose of the world, and those who made a pretense of it brought only anguish and tragedy to their souls (Mt 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-19).

Perhaps this is why Jesus spoke so severely to the scribe who came and said, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Jesus frankly told this apparent volunteer for service that it would not be easy. "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Mt 8:19-20; Lk 9:57-58). Another disciple wanted to be excused from His immediate obligation of obedience in order that he might go and care for his aged father, but Jesus would allow no delay. "Follow Me," He said, "and leave the dead to bury the dead. Go thou and publish abroad the Kingdom of God" (Mt 8:21-22; Lk 9:59-60). Another man indicated that He would follow Jesus, but on his own terms. He wanted to first bid farewell to his family, perhaps anticipating a merry good time doing it. But Jesus put it to him straight. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Lk 9:62). Jesus did not have the time nor the desire to scatter Himself upon those who wanted to make their own terms of discipleship.

Hence it was that a would-be disciple was made to count the cost. "For which of you, desiring to build

a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it?" (Lk 14:28). Not to do so was tantamount to inviting ridicule later from the world. The same would be true of a king in war who did not consider the cost of victory before hostilities began. To sum it up bluntly, Jesus said: "Therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:33; cf., Mk 10:21; Mt 19:21; Lk 18:22).

### **Few Would Pay The Price**

Actually when the opportunists left Him at Capernaum because He would not satisfy their popular expectations, Jesus had only a handful of followers left. Turning to the twelve he said, "Would ye also go away?" (Jn 6:67). This was a crucial question. If these few men quit following Him, what would remain of His ministry? But Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God" (Jn 6:68-69). Indeed these words of the apostle must have been reassuring to the Master, for thereafter Jesus began to talk with His disciples more about His suffering and death, and with greater frankness.

### **To Obey Is To Learn**

This does not mean, however, that the disciples quickly understood everything the Lord said. Far from it. Their ability to grasp the deeper truths of the Lord's vicarious ministry was encumbered with all the limitations of human frailty. When Jesus told the disciples after the great affirmation at Caesarea Philippi that He would be put to death by the religious leaders in Jerusalem, Peter actually rebuked Him, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: This shall never be unto Thee" (Mt 16:22; cf., Mk 8:32). Whereupon Jesus had to tell the big fisherman that Satan deceived him at this point, "For thou mindest not the things of God, but of men" (Mt. 16:23; Mk 8:33). Nor did this end it. Again and again Jesus felt constrained to speak about His death, and its meaning to them, but it was not really comprehended until the day He was betrayed into the hands of His enemies.

Not comprehending clearly the message of the Cross, of course, they faltered at first in understanding their own place in the Kingdom. It was hard for them to accept the teaching of lowly servitude for the sake of others (Lk 22:24-30; Jn 13:1-20). They bickered among them-selves who would be greatest in the Kingdom (Mk 9:33-37; Mt 18:1-5; Lk 9:46-48). James and John wanted to have the prominent places (Mk 10:35-37; Mt 20:20), and the other ten, displaying an envious spirit, were indignant about it (Mk 10:41; Mt 20:24). They were unnecessarily harsh in their judgment upon others who did not agree with them (Lk 9:51-54). They were moved "with indignation" at parents who wanted Jesus to bless their children (Mk 10:13). Obviously, the practical outworking of what it meant to follow Christ was not fully experienced.

Yet Jesus patiently endured these human failings of His chosen disciples because in spite of all their shortcomings they were willing to follow Him. There was a brief interval of time after their initial call when they went back to their old fishing business (Mk 1:16; Mt 4:18; Lk 5:2-5; cf., Jn 1:35-42), but their return does not seem to have been precipitated by any act of disobedience on their part. They just had not come to realize His purpose for their lives in leadership, or perhaps it had not yet been told them. Nonetheless, from the time that He appeared at their business and asked them to follow Him to become fishers of men, "they left all, and followed Him" (Lk 5:11; cf., Mt 4:22; Mk 1:20). Later on, though they had much to learn, they could say that their dedication to Christ was still holding true (Mk 10:28; Mt 19:27; Lk 18:28). With such men Jesus was willing to put up with a lot of those things which issued from their spiritual immaturity. He knew that they could master these defects as they grew in grace and knowledge. Their capacity to receive Revelation would grow provided they continued to practice what truth they did understand.

Obedience to Christ thus was the very means by which those in His company learned more truth. He did not ask the disciples to follow what they did not know to be true, but no one could follow Him without learning what was true (Jn 7:17). Hence, Jesus did not urge His disciples to commit their lives to a doctrine, but to a Person Who was the doctrine, and only as they continued in His Word could they know the truth (Jn 8:31,32).

## **The Proof Of Love**

Supreme obedience was interpreted to be the expression of love. This lesson was underscored most emphatically on the eve of His death. As the disciples gathered around Him in the Upper Room following the Paschal meal, Jesus said: "If ye love Me, ye will keep my commandments . . . He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him . . . If a man love Me, he will keep my word; and my father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent Me. . . . If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I have told you" (Jn 14:15, 21, 23, 24; 15:10, 12).

## **Demonstrated By Jesus**

Absolute obedience to the will of God, of course, was the controlling principle of the Master's own life. In His human nature He continually gave consent to the will of His Father which made it possible for God to use His life fully according to its intended purpose. Repeatedly He sounded it out: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work (Jn 4:34); "I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (Jn 5:30; cf., Jn 6:38); "I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love" (Jn 15:10; cf., Jn 17:4). It could be summed up in His cry of Gethsemane, "Not My will, but Thine be done" (Lk 22:42; cf., Mk 14:36; Mt 26:39, 42, 44).

The cross was but the crowning climax of Jesus' commitment to do the will of God. It forever showed that obedience could not be compromised-it was always a commitment unto death.

The worldly-minded religious leaders stated the truth when they said in derision: "He saved others; Himself He cannot save" (Mk 15:31; Mk 27:42; Lk 23:35). Of course, He could not save Himself. He had not come to save Himself. He came to save the world. He came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45; Mt 20:28). He came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk 19:10). He came to offer Himself a sacrifice unto God for the sins of all men. He came to die. There was no other way that the inviolable law of God could be satisfied.

This cross, having already been accepted in advance (Rev 13:8; cf., Acts 2:32), made each step that Christ took on the earth a conscious acceptance of God's eternal purpose for His life. When Jesus therefore spoke about obedience, it was something which the disciples could see incarnated in human form. As Jesus put it, "Ye should do as I have done unto you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, a servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than He that sent him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them" (Jn 13:15-16). No one could miss this lesson. Just as Jesus found His blessedness in doing His Father's will, even so His followers would find theirs. This is the sole duty of a servant. It was true of Christ, and nothing less can ever be accepted as worthy of His disciple (Lk 17:6-10; cf., Lk 8:21; Mk 3:35; Mt 12:50).

## **The Principle In Focus**

From the standpoint of strategy, however, it was the only way that Jesus could mold their lives by His word. There could be no development of character or purpose in the disciples without it. A father must teach his children to obey him if he expects his children to be like him.

It must be remembered, too, that Jesus was making men to lead His church to conquest, and no one can ever be a leader until first he has learned to follow a leader. So He brought up His future commanders from the ranks, drilling in them along the way the necessity for discipline and respect for authority. There could be no insubordination in His command. No one knew better than Jesus that the Satanic forces of darkness against them were well organized and equipped to make ineffectual any half-hearted effort of evangelism. They could not possibly outwit the devilish powers of this world unless they gave strict adherence to Him who alone knew the strategy of victory. This required absolute obedience to the Master's will even as it meant complete abandonment of their own.

## The Principle Applied Today

We must learn this lesson again today. There can be no dilly-dallying around with the commands of Christ. We are engaged in warfare, the issues of which are life and death, and every day that we are indifferent to our responsibilities is a day lost to the cause of Christ. If we have learned even the most elemental truth of discipleship, we must know that we are called to be servants of our Lord and to obey His Word. It is not our duty to reason why He speaks as He does, but only to carry out His orders. Unless there is this dedication to all that we know He wants us to do now, however immature our understanding may be, it is doubtful if we will ever progress further in His life and mission. There is no place in the Kingdom for a slacker, for such an attitude not only precludes any growth in grace and knowledge, but also destroys any usefulness on the world battlefield of evangelism.

One must ask, why are so many professed Christians today stunted in their growth and ineffectual in their witness? Or to put the question in its larger context, why is the contemporary church so frustrated in its witness to the world? Is it not because among the clergy and laity alike there is a general indifference to the commands of God, or at least, a kind of contented complacency with mediocrity? Where is the obedience of the cross? Indeed, it would appear that the teachings of Christ upon self-denial and dedication have been replaced by a sort of respectable "do-as-you-please" philosophy of expediency.

The great tragedy is that little is being done to correct the situation, even by those who realize what is happening. Certainly the need of the hour is not for despair, but for action. It is high time that the requirements for membership in the church be interpreted and enforced in terms of true Christian discipleship. But this action alone will not be enough. Followers must have leaders, and this means that before much can be done with the church membership something will have to be done with the church officials. If this task seems to be too great, then we will have to start like Jesus did by getting with a few chosen ones and instilling into them the meaning of obedience.

It is when this principle is accepted in practice that we can develop fully according to the next step in the Master's strategy of conquest.

From: Robert Coleman. *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Fleming H. Revell, 1971.

### QUESTION 25

In our study of the life of Christ, we have emphasized His methods of training His followers. What are the key principles He followed? Match the principle with its description.

<i>Principle</i>	<i>Description</i>
Demonstration	He sent them out into the ministry to give them practical experience.
Selection	After a night of prayer, He carefully chose those with whom He would invest His life.
Delegation	He modeled how to live, pray, teach, and disciple others.
Supervision	He held them accountable and had times of review and application.
Consecration	He held them to a high standard in their ministry and in their personal lives

## Lesson 3 Self Check

### QUESTION 1

Christ instructed the disciples about several elements involved in following Him. Which of the following is *not* one of these elements?

- A. Do not entice others to sin.
- B. Confront the sinner and forgive the penitent.
- C. Attribute great works of faith to personal achievement.
- D. Exercise even a little genuine faith.
- E. Be a dutiful servant.

### QUESTION 2

The emotional suffering of leprosy was even more intense than the physical suffering. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 3

Why did the Pharisees ask if Christ was the Messiah?

- A. They had a disposition of faith.
- B. They wanted to know when the kingdom was coming.
- C. They were afraid.
- D. They were curious to see what this imposter would say.

### QUESTION 4

When Jesus spoke about the kingdom of God, which of the following is true regarding His disciples?

- A. Believed He was speaking of the restoration of the Davidic throne.
- B. Understood He meant a spiritual reign.
- C. Understood He meant a kingdom separate from the Davidic throne.
- D. Didn't know what He was talking about.

### QUESTION 5

When judgment comes, it will be difficult to discern. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 6

The Shammai rabbinic school allowed divorce for a number of reasons, including something as trivial as meal preparation. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 7

Jesus says the person who marries a divorced person does not commit adultery because this third person was not divorced. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 8

What does "to enter the kingdom of God" *not* mean?

- A. Go to heaven when I die
- B. Enter solely in a geographical sense
- C. Experience a rich life with God
- D. Progressively and continually experiencing the powers of the kingdom

**QUESTION 9**

What does it mean to enter into the “joy of your master” (Mt 25:21)?

- A. Freedom from persecution
- B. The joy of kingdom life
- C. Being served by the Master
- D. Power over your enemies

**QUESTION 10**

Entry into the kingdom does *not* come through which of the following?

- A. Poverty of spirit
- B. Seeking
- C. Keeping the commandments
- D. Self-righteousness



## Unit 1 Exam: Life of Christ, Volume 2

### QUESTION 1

What is the real lesson of the parable of the Good Samaritan?

- A. Our enemies are not our neighbors.
- B. The identity of our neighbors determines how we feel about them.
- C. Our neighbors are those who pay our doctor's bills.
- D. The identity of our neighbors is not as important as acting like a good neighbor.

### QUESTION 2

When Jesus told the lawyer to "do this and you will live," He meant that if the lawyer kept the Ten Commandments, he would live eternally. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 3

Which of the following is untrue regarding the Lord's Prayer?

- A. It is given as a prayer for believers as children of their Father.
- B. It suggests a guarantee that this prayer will be answered.
- C. It reminds us that the priority in prayer is giving honor to God
- D. Its danger is that it can become a mere mechanical exercise to ease the conscience.

### QUESTION 4

When Jesus warned the disciples about the "yeast of the Pharisees," what did He mean?

- A. The disciples should never eat leavened bread.
- B. The Pharisees might try to trick the disciples into eating unclean foods, so the disciples should be aware and avoid eating with these religious leaders.
- C. The Pharisees' "yeast" represents their hypocritical acts, which could spread throughout believers and become more prevalent.
- D. The Pharisees' "yeast" represents their holiness. As yeast causes bread to rise and grow, so holiness will cause puffed up pride for anyone who seeks after it.

### QUESTION 5

What would have been Jesus' and His disciples' probable understanding of the meaning of *gehenna*?

- A. Some kind of eventual judgment
- B. A judgment after death
- C. A place for children who had been sacrificed to Molech
- D. A place where departed saints go after death

### QUESTION 6

In Luke 12:16-21, the landowner refers to himself and his belongings only one or two times. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 7

Which of the following is not a way Jesus said we should prepare for His return in Luke 12:22, 32-40 and Matthew 24:43-44?

- A. Give to the poor
- B. Keep the lamps burning
- C. Watch expectantly
- D. Prepare food for the wedding feast

### QUESTION 8

When Peter wanted to know what kind of reward he and the other disciples would receive because they had left everything to follow Christ, Jesus gently rebuked him. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 9

What is the most likely meaning of “weeping and gnashing of teeth”?

- A. An eternity of wailing and crying
- B. Negative consequences; strong regret at an unfaithfully lived life
- C. Eternal damnation
- D. Weeping in pain at being bitten and torn by demons in the darkness outside the kingdom

### QUESTION 10

On Christ’s return, unfaithful believers will be literally whipped. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 11

Which of the following is not a key lesson taught by Jesus’ example of honor given at a wedding feast? *True or False?*

Everyone who attends a wedding feast is naturally grateful for the honor given them by the invitation.

The reason some like to attend wedding feasts is that it gives them an opportunity to advertise their own imagined merit and distinction.

It is better for the host to give you an unexpected distinction or honor than to assume it for yourself.

Those who elevate themselves will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be elevated.

### QUESTION 12

In Jesus’ parable of the host of the feast’s rejected invitations, “those in the roads and country lanes” represent Gentiles who are outside the city. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 13

In the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, the “lost” items appear to refer to which of the following?

- A. The unsaved
- B. Both the unsaved and the saved
- C. Non-Pharisees
- D. The saved

#### **QUESTION 14**

In the parable of the prodigal son, the father acts exactly as one would expect a patriarch in the Ancient Near East to act. *True or False?*

#### **QUESTION 15**

Why did Jesus speak about divorce so pointedly?

- A. Because Jesus opposed the Pharisees' teaching on divorce.
- B. Because Jesus wanted to prevent adultery.
- C. Because many were remarrying after divorce, and Jesus wanted to prevent it.
- D. Because Jesus wanted to establish that moral authority resides in Jesus' teaching, and not in that of the Pharisees.

#### **QUESTION 16**

Based on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which of the following statements is true?

- A. The rich man missed salvation because he did not believe in Christ.
- B. The rich man missed salvation because he was not generous enough with his money.
- C. The rich man revealed that he was unsaved by the fact that he did not give money.
- D. There is always a remote possibility that one may have a second chance in the afterlife.

#### **QUESTION 17**

Jesus' mention of being shut out of "the kingdom" does not refer to eternal damnation but to exclusion from the joy of the messianic banquet. *True or False?*

#### **QUESTION 18**

When the Pharisees referred to those Jesus ate with as sinners, it was a reference to their state of eternal salvation. *True or False?*

#### **QUESTION 19**

The parable of the lost coin illustrates the loving concern of the Father to always seek non-believers and bring them to saving faith in Christ. *True or False?*

#### **QUESTION 20**

Christ instructed the disciples about several elements involved in following Him. Which of the following is *not* one of these elements?

- A. Do not entice others to sin.
- B. Confront the sinner and forgive the penitent.
- C. Attribute great works of faith to personal achievement.
- D. Exercise even a little genuine faith.

#### **QUESTION 21**

One reason that the future generation to which Christ returns will totally miss the signs of His arrival will be that they will be blinded by their involvement in shocking sin. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 22**

What does it mean to enter the kingdom as a little child?

- A. To invite Christ into one's heart
- B. To adopt a humble attitude
- C. To be submissive to the lordship of Christ
- D. To trust Him based on needs with no claims on Him

**QUESTION 23**

Jesus delayed for two days, allowing Lazarus to die, in order that God might be glorified and that the faith of the disciples might increase. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 24**

Why were the hearts of the Jews hardened after seeing Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead?

- A. They wanted such miracles to be done in Jerusalem, not an obscure village.
- B. They felt threatened politically; He challenged their biased opinions.
- C. They were simply good people who were confused.
- D. The community harbored animosity toward Lazarus and his sisters.

**QUESTION 25**

Why did the Pharisees ask if Christ was the Messiah?

- A. They were afraid.
- B. They wanted to know when the kingdom was coming.
- C. They were curious to see what this imposter would say.
- D. Their faith was building.

## Lesson 3 Answers to Questions

### QUESTION 1

C. Only a little faith is necessary, and humility is important overall.

### QUESTION 2

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Lesson or Principle</i>
Luke 17:10	God, in His grace, notices and commends our work.
Luke 17:7-8	The master's wishes always come first.
Luke 17:6	The way to increase faith is to exercise the faith we have and see the results.
Luke 17:3	When someone sins against us, we should personally talk to our offender
Luke 17:1-2	Christians will face a severe rebuke by God if they cause others to stumble.
Luke 17:4	The disciple is always to forgive a repentant brother.

### QUESTION 3: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

The disciples are warned not to tempt new believers or allow others to do so. The eternal consequences for causing or allowing this temptation are worse than physical death by drowning in the sea. To avoid this, believers must hold each other accountable, and when someone personally sins against them, they must confront and forgive that person. Practicing this continual process of forgiveness requires great faith, which is what leads the disciples to ask how their faith can be increased. Jesus tells them that even a little faith can achieve great things, but we must take care that we do not begin attributing God's great works through us to our own personal achievement. In fact, a disciple could mistakenly be led to believe that God owes him honor. Jesus corrects this misconception by saying that after a servant has done all that he should do, he has only done his duty and he deserves nothing. If he receives honor or thanks, it is due to grace and is not earned or deserved.

### QUESTION 4: *Your answer*

### QUESTION 5

B. The kingdom has begun in the present with the ministry of Jesus, but will be consummated in its predicted Old Testament form at the second coming of Christ.

### QUESTION 6

- A. It never answers the question of when the kingdom will come.
- B. It suggests that the human power to repent can hasten the kingdom's arrival.
- C. It contradicts Luke 5:31-32 and Luke 11:29-32.
- D. This is not a very clear way to say that the kingdom will come if you repent.

### QUESTION 7: False

### QUESTION 8: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

The key point of this verse is that when the second coming occurs, there will be no doubt. No one would need to tell anybody; it will be obvious to all.

### QUESTION 9

D. Their generation will be utterly indifferent to eternal truths.

### QUESTION 10

A. Before the judgment [The pattern seems to be that first the righteous are removed—Noah into the boat and Lot out of Sodom—and then the judgment falls. This may suggest that the rapture of the church occurs before the coming judgment of the tribulation.]

### QUESTION 11: *Your answer*

### QUESTION 12

A. When judgment comes, it will be visible, universal and permanent. Vultures gather to feed off dead bodies. [All of these views are possible and are held by various scholars. The point of this question is to introduce you to the various options and to suggest that the first option seems probable. In effect, Jesus is saying that they are not to worry about where the judgment will occur. Once it comes, it will be visible to all.]

### QUESTION 13

A. When we pray and God seems to be silent, we conclude that it is useless to appeal to Him.

- C. To give up on prayer is to assume that God is indifferent to justice.
- D. Continuing to believe God in face of circumstances that seem to show otherwise is a crucial ingredient in our final accountability.
- E. If an unjust judge will respond to vindicate an ill-treated widow, how much more will the just judge vindicate His people?

**QUESTION 14:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

(1) The tax collector stood at a distance, realizing the gulf that separated him from God; (2) The tax collector acknowledged his unworthiness and the justice of his condemnation before God; (3) The Pharisee thought himself better than others, whereas the tax collector thought of himself as less; (4) the Pharisee boasted in his religious activities to make him right with God, while the tax collector appealed only to God’s mercy.

**QUESTION 15:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 16**

- D. To trust Him based on need with no claims on Him

**QUESTION 17:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

A day has twelve hours of light, which is a limited period of time. One can walk during those hours without stumbling because the light of this world (the sun) is illuminating one’s path. Jesus knew that He must “walk” in the limited time appointed for Him. While He does, He knows that He will not stumble, for He is under the protection of God. He makes the general point that whoever walks in the dark will stumble over unseen obstacles, for he is without the Light of the World (Jesus) shining within him. Therefore, Jesus’ disciples, including believers today; must always keep close to Him even though He seems to be advancing toward danger and death.

**QUESTION 18**

- A. So that God might be glorified
- B. So that the disciples’ faith could increase
- C. So that the disciples might learn that being with Jesus was the best protection against danger

**QUESTION 19**

<i>Verse</i>	<i>Metaphor</i>
John 6:35	Bread
John 8:12	Light
John 10:7	Door
John 10:14	Shepherd
John 11:25	Life
John 14:6	Way
John 15:1	Vine

**QUESTION 20:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

First, this would serve as a sign to the hostile Jews. If the Jews were the ones who removed the stone, they could not claim that what happened was a hoax. This also illustrates an important principle in the Christian life: God’s part is to do what He has not enabled us to do.

**QUESTION 21**

- B. They felt threatened politically.
- C. Their rejection was based on their biased opinions, not logic.

**QUESTION 22:** False

**QUESTION 23:** *See Matching Events chart*

**QUESTION 24:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 25**

<i>Principle</i>	<i>Description</i>
Demonstration	He modeled how to live, pray, teach, and disciple others.
Selection	After a night of prayer, He carefully chose those with whom He would invest His life.
Delegation	He sent them out into the ministry to give them practical experience.
Supervision	He held them accountable and had times of review and application.
Consecration	He held them to a high standard in their ministry and in their personal lives

## Lesson 3 Self Check Answers

### QUESTION 1

C. Attribute great works of faith to personal achievement.

**QUESTION 2:** True

### QUESTION 3

D. They were curious to see what this imposter would say.

### QUESTION 4

A. Believed He was speaking of the restoration of the Davidic throne.

**QUESTION 5:** False

**QUESTION 6:** False

**QUESTION 7:** False

### QUESTION 8

B. Enter solely in a geographical sense

### QUESTION 9

B. The joy of kingdom life

### QUESTION 10

D. Self-righteousness



## Unit 1 Exam Answers

### QUESTION 1

D. The identity of our neighbors is not as important as acting like a good neighbor.

**QUESTION 2:** False

### QUESTION 3

B. It suggests a guarantee that this prayer will be answered.

### QUESTION 4

C. The Pharisees' "yeast" represents their hypocritical acts, which could spread throughout believers and become more prevalent.

### QUESTION 5

A. Some kind of eventual judgment

**QUESTION 6:** False

### QUESTION 7

D. Prepare food for the wedding feast

**QUESTION 8:** False

### QUESTION 9

B. Negative consequences; strong regret at an unfaithfully lived life

**QUESTION 10:** False

**QUESTION 11:** False

**QUESTION 12:** True

### QUESTION 13

D. The saved

**QUESTION 14:** False

### QUESTION 15

D. Because Jesus wanted to establish that moral authority resides in Jesus' teaching, and not in that of the Pharisees.

### QUESTION 16

A. The rich man missed salvation because he did not believe in Christ.

**QUESTION 17:** True

**QUESTION 18:** False

**QUESTION 19:** True

### QUESTION 20

C. Attribute great works of faith to personal achievement.

**QUESTION 21:** True

### QUESTION 22

C. To be submissive to the lordship of Christ

**QUESTION 23:** True

### QUESTION 24

B. They felt threatened politically; He challenged their biased opinions.

### QUESTION 25

C. They were curious to see what this imposter would say.

## Unit 2: His Ministry Concludes

---

In the last year of His life, Jesus started an extensive journey to Jerusalem. During this journey He revisited all the places where He had previously ministered. Some of His most important parables lessons on discipleship were given during this period of His life.

Eleven months after His journey began in April, AD 32 (Lk 9:51), Jesus approached the gates of Jerusalem, the gates that would lead to His final destination: His ascension into heaven. Jerusalem will be the capital city of the kingdom God promised Christ as David's "greater son" (Lk 1:32), so Jesus' claim to rightful kingship of Israel had to be made within its walls.

On His way, we will see Him stop about three kilometers away at Bethany, where He will be symbolically anointed for His coming burial. He will enter Jerusalem, fulfilling prophecies and heralded by the multitudes as the coming king. The Gospels relate Christ's final week in Jerusalem more completely than they do any other period of His life. We will see Him weep over Jerusalem (Lk 19:29-44) and predict its ultimate destruction by the Romans in AD 70.

In this unit, Lesson 4 will center on the conclusion of His ministry; Lesson 5 will focus mainly on His triumphal entry into Jerusalem; and in Lesson 6 we will consider His startling predictions of the future of the city and His future return. In other words, we will examine both the first and second comings of the King.

# Lesson 4: His Ministry Concludes

---

Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem continues for more than a year. Instead of being a straight-line affair, this journey has led Him to travel all over Palestine, circuit Galilee in the north, and take several trips south to Judea. This is His last teaching tour, a finale involving all the places He has visited, taught, and performed miracles. As the teacher King offers His words of wisdom, the countdown begins: every step brings Him closer to Jerusalem, where He will meet His destiny.

In Topic 1 of this lesson, we will consider the familiar story of the rich young ruler. Jesus continues to exhort His listeners regarding the question of the method of reward in the coming kingdom.

In Topic 2, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard stresses clearly that any reward we receive is a result of overgenerous wages since God owes us nothing. The parable teaches us that we should not waste time comparing ourselves with other workers.

In Topic 3, Jesus once again predicts His death in Jerusalem, explaining that it must happen to fulfill all the Old Testament prophecies concerning Him. In this topic, we will consider some of those predictions.

In Topic 4, we see Jesus' disciples becoming more concerned about their own destinies as the time of prophetic fulfillment approaches. Jesus instructs them on the meaning of true greatness.

In Topic 5, incidents with two individuals—a blind beggar and a rich tax collector—present examples of two key aspects of salvation: a humble cry for mercy and an act of service for the King.

In Topic 6, Jesus teaches the parable of the talents to explain how faithfulness in this life will one day be rewarded in the kingdom. Three servants are given different amounts of money to invest while their master goes on a journey—and differing rewards on his return.

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: What Must One Do to Inherit the Kingdom?

Topic 2: The Promise of Reward

Topic 3: The Passion Predicted

Topic 4: True Greatness

Topic 5: Sight to the Blind and Salvation to the Tax Collector

A Beggar Receives Sight

Jesus' Visit with Zacchaeus

Topic 6: The Parable of the Rejected King

The Parable of the Minas

The Fate of the Third Servant

Summary

Topic 7: Knowing, Being, Doing

## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Show that inheriting eternal life and entering the kingdom sometimes refer to an enhanced experience of the kingdom, not to initial entrance
- Explain how all rewards are the result of grace, not merit, and that greatness in the kingdom is still available to those who come to Christ late in life
- Implement the great principle of Christ's ministry: To be great in His kingdom, we must learn to serve
- View how the Son of God always responds when we cry out for mercy
- Take hold of opportunities for great honor and responsibility in the future kingdom and take heed of the warnings given us against the dangers of negligence

## Topic 1: What Must One Do to Inherit Eternal Life?

### February, AD 33

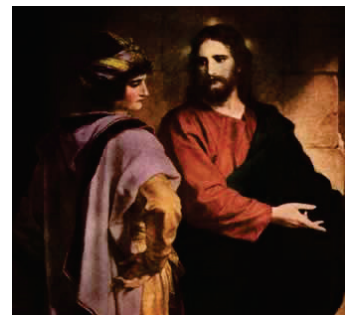
Previously we saw Jesus tell His disciples that to enter the kingdom of God, one must have the dependent, needy faith of a little child. Now, Jesus teaches about how to gain rewards in that kingdom.

The story of the rich young ruler is often used to illustrate that a person cannot be saved on the basis of works or riches. Interpreted this way, Jesus' intent is apparently to convince the rich young ruler to put his trust in Himself, the good teacher, instead of in works and wealth. In this topic, we will suggest an alternative interpretation. Because entering the kingdom can refer either to initial salvation or entering into a richer experience of the rule of God in one's life, we can see good reasons to believe that Christ's focus was on the latter during His encounter with this young man whom He loved.

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 19:15-26; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 10:25-28; and Luke 18:18-27.

A similar incident in the Lord's ministry was discussed in Lesson 2 and will not be expounded on here. However, please read "Entering the Kingdom" and "Inheriting Eternal Life" then answer the matching question.



## Entering the Kingdom

What does it mean “to enter the kingdom of God”? It doesn’t necessarily always mean “to go to heaven when I die.” It often means “to experience a rich life with God.” Michael Eaton suggests that in Matthew 5:20, entering the kingdom of God refers to “one’s ongoing experience of the powers of the Kingdom of God . . . it refers to something continuing and progressive” (Eaton, Michael. *No Condemnation: A New Theology of Assurance*. Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995, p. 133). Another possibility is that it refers to entering into a kingdom way of living, not personal salvation. That way of living is the subject of the Sermon on the Mount.

This view should not surprise us. Jesus described the kingdom of heaven to one of His faithful servants as “the joy of your master” (Mt 25:21-23). Paul tells us that the kingdom of God is more than a geographical sphere, it is “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17), and that it consists not just in words but power (1 Cor 4:17). While it is debatable whether or not these Pauline references refer to the present experience of the kingdom or of the kingdom we will one day enter, the point is clear: The kingdom is more than geography; it is a rich experience of God; a way of life.

It has often been noted that equivalent expressions to “enter the kingdom” are “enter into life” and “enter into joy” (Mt 18:8; Mk 9:43). Yet “life” in both the Old and New Testaments is not a static experience, it is “to know Him” (Jn 17:3), a relationship which not only has an entry point, but an ongoing development. It is called “eternal life” (Mt 19:29; 25:46) or “life” (Mt 18:8, 9; 19:17; Mk 9:43, 45, 46).

Furthermore, while *eiserchomai* is the common Greek word for “to enter,” it also is used in the sense of “to experience.” To enter into the joy of your master is to experience the joy of kingdom life (Mt 25:21). To enter into temptation is to experience temptation (Lk 22:46); to enter into their labor is to experience their labor (Jn 4:38), etc. To “enter into” often means “to enter into an event or state,” or “to begin to experience an event or state.” The standard Greek lexicon ascribes this meaning in Matthew 5:20. We conclude that “to enter the kingdom” usually means “to enter into the kingdom way of living,” which leads to an abundant life and greatness in the kingdom (Mt 5:19).

Once this is accepted, a number of perplexing passages are clarified. Throughout the Gospels, the conditions for entering the kingdom seem to be contradictory. On the one hand, the only condition for entry is to be born again (Jn 3:3) but numerous other passages assert conditions involving various kinds of works in direct contradiction to the faith-alone gospel Jesus preached in John. For example, entry into the kingdom comes about through poverty of spirit (Mt 5:3); by enduring persecutions (Mt 5:10), living in a way that surpasses the works of the Pharisees (Mt 5:20); seeking (Mt 6:33); keeping the commandments (Mt 19:17); doing the will of God (Mt 7:13); vigilance, and preparedness (Mt 25:10); fidelity (Mt 25:21). Entrance can be hindered by wealth (Mk 10:23) or by the self-righteous (Lk 11:52); it can be entered only by going through tribulations (Acts 14:22); and through striving (Lk 13:24).

Entering the kingdom as an initial event is dependent on faith alone. Let us, then, make this proposal: Whenever entrance into the kingdom seems to be based upon works, it probably means entering into the kingdom way of living. When it is based on faith, it is the entry point, salvation from hell, in view.

## Inheriting Eternal Life

The phrase “eternal life” (*zoen aionion*) occurs forty-two times in the New Testament. [1] Its common meaning of the free gift of regeneration (entrance into heaven on the basis of faith alone) is well documented. However, many are not aware that in eleven of those forty-two usages (26

percent), “eternal life” is presented to the believer as something to be earned or worked for! [2]  
For example:

To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life [*zoen aionion*]. (Rom 2:7, NIV)

The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life [*zoen aionion*]. (Gal 6:8, NIV)

The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life [*zoen aionion*]. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. (Jn 12:25-26, NIV)

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life [*zoen aionion*]. (Mt 19:29, NIV)

Just as there are two kinds of inheritance, two dimensions to salvation, there seem to be two sides to eternal life. We must remember that eternal life in the Bible is not a static entity, a mere gift of regeneration that does not continue to grow and blossom. No, it is a dynamic relationship with Christ Himself. Jesus taught us that when He said:

Now this is eternal life [*zoen aionion*]: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (Jn 17:3)

He explained elsewhere that this life was intended to grow and become more abundant: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10). But growth is not automatic; it is conditioned upon our responses. Only by the exercise of spiritual disciplines such as prayer, obedience, faith, study of the Scriptures, and proper responses to trials, does our intimacy with Christ increase. Only by continuing in doing good does that spiritual life imparted at regeneration grow to maturity and earn a reward.

This is what the apostle Paul referred to when he challenged Timothy to "take hold of eternal life":

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Tim 6:12, NIV)

Possessing eternal life is one thing, but "taking hold" of it is another. The former is static; the latter is dynamic. The former depends upon God; the latter depends upon us. The former comes through faith alone; "taking hold" requires faith plus obedience (1 Tim 6:14). Those who are rich in this world and who give generously "will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life" (1 Tim 6:19). Eternal life is not only the gift of regeneration but "true life," which is cultivated by faith and acts of obedience.

This should not surprise us. On page after page of the Bible, the richness of our spiritual life is conditioned upon our spiritual obedience. Israel was instructed in this manner:

Hear now, O Israel, the decrees and the laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that **you may live** and may go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your father, is giving you. (Deut 4:1, NIV 1984, emphasis added)

To "live" and to take possession of the land, while not the same, are at least related concepts. Recall the numerous references above to obtaining the inheritance by taking possession of the land. Life, too, is a result of our obedience. However, regeneration, the beginning of that life, cannot be meant, so the fruition or growth of it must be in view.

Keep the decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you for all time (Deut 4:40, NIV).

A long and prosperous life on earth is the reward for keeping the decrees. Surely the consequences of such a life have eternal results as well. Moses implies that it will:

Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children **forever!** (Deut 5:29, emphasis added)

Again he says:

Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land you will possess. (Deut 5:33, NIV 1984)

But is this life only material prosperity in the land of Canaan? Surely such a view of life would trivialize the commandments into a mere social contract whereby the Israelite could secure property in return for obedience. Spiritual obedience and the spirituality of the Old Testament religion lifts life far beyond mere material prosperity in Canaan. It is a rich fellowship with God. The writer to the Hebrews confirms this when he says:

Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and **live!** They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may **share in his holiness.** No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a **harvest of righteousness and peace** for those who have been trained by it. (Heb 12:9-11, NIV, emphasis added)

He explains that the life which comes from responding to divine discipline is nothing less than "a harvest of righteousness and peace" and sharing "in His holiness." Yet this passage is a divine commentary on Deuteronomy 8:5 and Proverbs 3:11-12:

Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you. (Deut 8:5, NIV)

In Deuteronomy 30:15-20 life and prosperity are associated and contrasted with "destruction." If they love the Lord their God and walk in His ways and keep His commands, they will "live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess." If they follow other gods, they will not live long but will be destroyed in the land they are entering. God sets before them "life and death, blessings and cursing" and says, "Now choose life so that you and your children will live. The Lord is your life" (Deut 30:20, NLT). Moses is equating life with far more than material prosperity. It is ultimately fellowship with God and the rewards which come from that fellowship.

A similar thought is expressed in Leviticus 18:5 where they are told:

Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord. (NIV)

As Lindsay has observed, "life" here refers to "a happy and meaningful life." [3]

Similarly, Habakkuk 2:4 refers to the life of faith of the justified believer:

But the righteous will live by his faith.

The Hebrew word for faith, *emunah*, means "firmness, faithfulness, fidelity." [4] Its basic sense is "to be steady" or "have firm hands, be dependable, stable, etc." This meaning fits the context of Habakkuk as well. Faced with the inexplicable tardiness of God in dealing with the corrupt nation and the surprising revelation that He will bring an even more corrupt nation to judge them, the prophet is instructed to be faithful, steady, and to endure. Thus, Blue comments: [5]

A righteous Israelite who remained loyal to God's moral precepts and was humble before the Lord enjoyed God's abundant life. To "live" meant to experience God's blessing by enjoying a life of security, protection, and fullness.

This meaning is uniquely appropriate to the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews who were similarly in need of patient endurance in the face of many trials. For this reason the author quotes it in application to their situation in Hebrews 10:38, "But My righteous one will live by faith." The justified man must live by faith from beginning to end; he should endure. [6] But if he shrinks back and denounces his profession of faith, God's judgment will be upon him. The judgment here is *apoleia* and can refer to either a temporal judgment, as the context requires, [7] or eternal condemnation.

There is no reason that the reference in Romans 1:17 should be taken any differently. He has just explained that the gospel is based upon faith "from first to last" (Rom 1:16, NIV). It is therefore appropriate to quote a passage which refers to the continued endurance in faith of the sanctified man to demonstrate that "last" part of the life of the justified man.

It might seem that Paul uses the quotation slightly differently in Galatians 3:11:

Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." (NIV 1984)

Can a verse intended by the original author to apply to faithful endurance in the life of the justified be used to refute the notion that justification itself could be obtained by law? The question answers itself. Of course it could. Surely if a Christian man is to live his Christian life by faith, how could the initiatory event by which he entered that life be based on works!?! [8]

The Old Testament doctrine of the afterlife and rewards is very vague. That the rich life promised on the basis of obedience could result in rewards in heaven is only faintly intimated (Deut 5:29). But the idea that obedience could be related to the acquisition and growth of a rich spiritual (as well as material) life is clear. We should not therefore be surprised to find such an equation in the New Testament.

And we do find that equation in the references to eternal life being conditioned upon obedience. As long as we remember that eternal life is fundamentally a quality of life in relationship to God, this should not cause us any difficulty with the numerous passages which stress justification by faith alone. It is extremely important to note that in every place where eternal life is presented as something which can be obtained by works, it is contextually **always** described as a future acquisition. Conversely, whenever eternal life is described as something in the present, it is obtained by faith alone.

In Galatians 6:8, for example, eternal life is something earned by the sower. If this passage is



speaking of final salvation from hell, then salvation is based on works. A man reaps what he sows. If we sow to please the Spirit, we will reap (future tense) eternal life. Paul calls it a harvest "if we do not give up." Eternal life is earned by sowing to the Spirit and persevering to the end. It is what we get if we do good works. There is nothing here about the inevitability of this reaping. It depends upon us. Paul says we will reap, "if we do not give up." Eternal life is no static entity but a relationship with God. It is dynamic and growing and has degrees. Some Christians have a more intimate relationship with their Lord than others. They have a richer experience of eternal life. Jesus Himself said He came to give life more abundantly (Jn 10:10).

In this sense it is parallel to physical life. Physical life is received as a gift, but then it must be developed. Children often develop to their full physical and mental ability under the auspices of their parents. In order for eternal life to flourish, we must also be obedient to our parents. Whenever eternal life is viewed as a reward in the New Testament, it is presented as something to be acquired in the future. But when it is presented as a gift, it is something acquired in the present. No one can receive it as a reward, that is, experience it to a more abundant degree, until he has received eternal life freely as a gift to begin with. [9]

1. *A Concordance to the Greek Testament* ed. W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, 4th ed., rev. H. K. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), pp. 30-31.
2. Matthew 19:16; 19:29; Mark 10:17, 30; Luke 10:25; 18:18, 30; John 12:25-26; Romans 2:7; 6:22, Galatians 6:8.
3. F. Duane Lindsay, "Leviticus," in *BKC*, 1:200.
4. Jack B. Scott, "**emuna**," in *TWOT*, 1:52.
5. J. Ronald Blue, "Habakkuk," in *BKC*, 1:1513.
6. This view of the passage is taken by B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Macmillan, 2d. ed., 1892; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 337: "The just—the true believer—requires faith, trust in the unseen, for life. Such faith is the support of endurance." See also Arthur W. Pink, *Exposition of Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1954), pp. 641-42.
7. Compare Hebrews 10:30 where the judgments mentioned are from Deuteronomy 32:36 and Psalm 135:14 and refer to God's judgments on His people in time and not in eternity.
8. Eadie takes the same view: "The statement, he is justified by faith is the inference, inasmuch as he lives by faith - life being the result of justification, or rather coincident with it" (John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1884; reprint ed., Minneapolis: James and Klock, 1977], p. 246).
9. Matthew 19:29 is to be explained in the same manner. The eschatological harvest is in view, at which obedient men will reap.

## QUESTION 1

Match the phrase with the meaning that best fits the description in the articles.

<i>Phrase</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Saved	Reward in heaven
Entering the kingdom	A deeper experience of the kingdom
Inheriting eternal life	Finding true life now
Treasure in heaven	To possess or rule in the kingdom
Inherit the kingdom	An enhanced experience of Christ

## Topic 2: The Promise of Reward

### February, AD 33

The rich young ruler feels that because of his wealth and devotion to God's commandments, he should receive a high position in the kingdom, a greater reward than others. Jesus confronts him, however, revealing that the young man has not really kept the commandments. Instead, he has a problem with covetousness. Furthermore, the young man is trusting that his wealth will procure higher favor in the life to come.

When Jesus tells him that selling everything he owns will bring a rich treasure in heaven, the rich young ruler concludes that he would rather have wealth in this life than a richer experience of the kingdom of heaven now and in eternity.

Jesus comments that the rich often have difficulty entering into the experience of kingdom riches because they trust in their wealth rather than in Him. In shock, the disciples—who thought that wealth was a sure sign of divine favor—want to know who can actually find true life, reward in heaven, or be saved. Jesus responds that true life comes by the power of God working in their lives. He assures them that because they have left everything to follow Him, they will have great reward. Putting God in first place is what brings divine blessing.

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 19:27-20:16; Mark 10:28-31; and Luke 18:28-30.

### QUESTION 2

Peter seems to have a very mercenary approach to rewards in Luke 18:28-30, but Jesus agrees with him. *True or False?*

Jesus continues His discussion of rewards with the parable of the vineyard workers.

It seems that a landowner offered to hire some workers for a denarius per day. However, at the end of the day, workers who were hired later were paid the same amount, even though they worked fewer hours. How can this be fair?

#### Denarius

A *denarius* was the chief silver coin of the Romans at this time. We must remember to reckon according to the rate of wages in that day. A denarius was regarded as good pay for a day's work. It was the pay of a Roman soldier in Christ's time. In almost every case where the word occurs in the New Testament, it is connected with the idea of a liberal or large amount. Compare Matthew 18:28; Mark 6:37; Luke 7:41; John 12:5. (Vincent, M. R. *Word Studies in the New Testament* Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc. 2002. V.1, p. 111.)

### QUESTION 3

What does the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1-16) teach about such things as ability, opportunity, and length of service? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. It shows that we should not devalue menial service or overestimate prominent work in this life.
- B. It indicates that though the Lord will generously reward those whose devoted labor for Him produces great results, He will be equally generous to others whose faithful service in more difficult and out-of-the-way places brings forth more meager results.
- C. It teaches that all will be rewarded equally.
- D. It demonstrates God's disregard for inequities between the more- and less-gifted in this life.

The parable of the vineyard workers shows us God dispenses rewards on the basis of grace. No amount of work places God in our debt. The fact that He chooses to reward us at all in proportion to our labor is because of His grace, not our merit—a fact that should fill us with gratitude. Of our own accord, we deserve nothing.

### QUESTION 4

Go back to the beginning of this topic and re-read Peter's question (Mt 19:27-30). What two main points did Jesus make in answering him?

## Topic 3: The Passion Predicted

### February, AD 33

For the sixth time, Jesus announces His coming death (Lk 9:22, 44-45; 12:49-50; 13:32-33; 17:25). The connection with the preceding topic is clear: Jesus has just asked His disciples to give their all to follow Him, and He now says that He will give His all for them.

The passage we will consider in this topic (Lk 18:31-34) falls neatly into three divisions:

1. He will go to Jerusalem to fulfill Scripture (Lk 18:31).
2. He then predicts His death and resurrection (Lk 18:32-33).
3. The disciples continue to be perplexed (Lk 18:34).

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; and Luke 18:31-34.

As the journey toward Jerusalem progresses, the Lord announces that everything predicted about Him must be fulfilled. The disciples remain uncomprehending.

## QUESTION 5

Jesus says He must go up to Jerusalem so that everything written about Him in the Prophets will come true. Match each of the prophets' predictions on the left with its fulfillment on the right.

<i>Prediction</i>	<i>Fulfillment</i>
Psalm 22:16	Luke 23:24
Psalm 22:18	Luke 23:33
Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 26:14
Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 21:1-5
Zechariah 9:9	Luke 23:50-53

## Topic 4: True Greatness

### February, AD 33

The disciples are becoming more concerned about their own destinies as the time of prophetic fulfillment approaches. Confused and seemingly unmoved by Jesus' statements regarding His torture and death, they still believe that He plans to establish His kingdom on earth upon His arrival in Jerusalem.

This brings to their mind the question of their own position in the kingdom. But lacking courage to ask Jesus directly, James and John, the sons of Zebedee and Salome, send their mother to inquire on their behalf: "Permit these two sons of mine to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." Christ had just promised that the Twelve would sit on thrones and rule over Israel in the kingdom (Mt 19:28), but these two now covet even higher positions of honor—to be at His right hand!

### Assignment

- Read Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45; and Philippians 2:1-11.

In this topic, we will study one of the key emphases of Christ's entire ministry: the principle of servanthood. Greatness in His kingdom comes from learning now to be a servant of all.

On the way to Jerusalem, Salome, the mother of James and John and likely also the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, approaches Jesus on behalf of her sons, wanting to secure a high place of honor for them in the future kingdom.

To understand the importance of Christ's teaching here, we must go back to the time before the beginning. In eternity past, Satan, because of a spirit of pride, independence, and unbelief, declared himself independent of God. He decided to live in rebellion and encouraged all his followers to follow the same path. The earth upon which he lived (Ezek 28:12-19) was judged and fell into a chaos (without form and void, Gen 1:2). As a result, this world became Satan's domain. Jesus called him "the ruler of this world" (Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and Paul said he is "the god of this age" (2 Cor 4:4) and the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2). He has authority to deliver the kingdoms of this world to Jesus if Jesus will fall down and worship him (Lk 4:5-8).

God's answer to this monstrous declaration was to place the first Adam in Satan's world and tell him to rule and have dominion over it (Gen 1:27-30). The lesser creature, man, living in dependence and service, would achieve the superior rule that the superior creature, Satan, had stolen through independence and unbelief. From the lesser, God would bring the greater.

Yet the first Adam fell into the same sin, and warfare between the seed of woman and the followers of Satan ensued (Gen 3:15).

A major purpose of the incarnation was that Jesus, placing Himself last and living as a human dependent upon God, would contrast Satan's pompous claims and fulfill man's lost destiny: to rule and have dominion.

### **QUESTION 6**

Read about the fall of Satan in Ezekiel 28:11-19 and Isaiah 14:12-15 and then compare it with Philippians 2:1-11. In your Life Notebook, record your reflections on the differences between Satan and Christ. What differences would it make in your ministry, your job, and your marriage if you truly made your purpose to become a servant? Be specific.

## **Topic 5: Sight to the Blind and Salvation to the Tax Collector**

### **February, AD 33**

As Jesus nears Jericho, two men—a blind beggar and a rich tax collector named Zacchaeus—approach Jesus.

Luke seems to place these events strategically within his narrative. Together, they present examples of key aspects of salvation: a humble cry for mercy, followed by an act of service for the King.

Furthermore, both of these men stand in contrast with the honor-seeking disciples. The disciples are blind to Christ's purposes, just as the beggar is physically blind. Also, the blind beggar stands in stark contrast to the rich young ruler. The ruler has everything but is blind to the value of spiritual treasure; the beggar, who has nothing, comes to sight when he comes to faith.

### **Blind Bartimaeus**

#### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; and Luke 18:35-43.

The road to Jericho, apparently a tax collection center at this time, is also a major highway to Jerusalem. As Jesus traveled this road, about ten kilometers from the Jordan River, He heard a voice crying out over the conversation of His traveling companions.

“Son of David, have mercy on me!”

A blind beggar was at the side of the road, pleading for Jesus' help.

Matthew tells us that there were actually two blind men (Mt 20:30). Apparently the conversation with Jesus was with only the more prominent of the two. Mark tells us that one of them was named Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46).

However, there is a chronological problem here: According to Luke, the healing occurred as Jesus *entered* Jericho (Lk 18:35), while according to Mark it occurred as He *left* Jericho (Mk 10:29). Some scholars suggest that two different healings are related here, and that is certainly possible. However, the similarities of the language, the cry, and Jesus' response seem to point to its being the same event. Long ago, Calvin (the leader of the Protestant Reformation in Switzerland), suggested that a two-part event was condensed into one account: Bartimaeus cried out as Jesus entered the city and was with a second blind man on Jesus' departure from the city. Read about the two blind men.

### **Two Blind Men**

Luke 18:35-43 describes the healing of one blind man as they entered Jericho; Mark 10:46-52 gives the healing of Bartimaeus as they departed; and Matthew 20:29-34 summarizes the two healings as taking place as they left Jericho. The first man came when he heard the crowd as Jesus entered Jericho and was healed with Bartimaeus as they left.

## **QUESTION 7**

The story of the blind beggar directly follows Jesus' conversation with the rich young ruler about "inheriting eternal life." As explained above, "entering the kingdom" and "experiencing a rich life" are related terms. If Luke is presenting the stories of Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus as illustrations of how one enters or experiences the richness of kingdom life, how might Luke 18:42 apply?

- A. It teaches that healing is by faith.
- B. It proves that Jesus is in fact the foretold Son of David.
- C. It shows that Bartimaeus came to salvation from hell.
- D. It shows that Bartimaeus "entered the kingdom" in the sense that he entered into an experience of the power of the kingdom.

## **QUESTION 8**

According to Isaiah 35:4-5 and 2 Samuel 7:12-16, what is the probable significance of Jesus being addressed as the Son of David (Lk 18:39)?

## **Jesus' Visit with Zacchaeus**

### **Assignment**

- Read Mark 10:46 and Luke 19:1-10.

Immediately after relating the healing of the two blind men, Luke gives a second illustration of what it means to "enter into an experience of the kingdom" and to "inherit eternal life."

Zacchaeus was a hated tax collector in the city of Jericho, known for dishonest business deals that always came out to his own advantage. As short of stature as he was of character, he had to climb a tree in order to catch a glimpse of Jesus over the heads of his countrymen as the King of the Jews entered his city.

But when Jesus paused beneath the sycamore tree, looked up at Zacchaeus, and asked to come into his house, years of crushing rejection were shattered. God loved him after all!

We are told that when he came down from the tree, Zacchaeus “received Him joyfully” (Lk 19:6). To receive Christ with joy is to believe on Him. Much more than merely welcoming Him into his home for a meal is implied. This suggests that Zacchaeus embraced and believed everything Jesus taught around the dinner table that evening. It was at this point he became a saved man, born again.

Yet before the evening was over, he was saved in a different sense as well. Zacchaeus’ response to Jesus’ words in his home was to give away half of everything he owned and repay those he had cheated four times the amount he had stolen. This salvation of a man who was already saved came to him because he gave his wealth away. Clearly a different kind of salvation is in view.

### **QUESTION 9**

Please read the following paraphrases of the experience of Zacchaeus (Lk 9:24; 19:9). Open your Life Notebook and comment on the pros and cons of each view.

Because Zacchaeus attempted to save himself from damnation by giving everything to the poor, he had found the way to heaven.

Zacchaeus had lost his salvation by trying to work for it, but he had now demonstrated that he was saved by repaying those from whom he extorted money. By this act of self-denial, he had found the very salvation he had tried to find through wealth.

Zacchaeus found the true meaning of life (salvation) by giving much of that wealth away.

### **QUESTION 10**

What significant contrast exists between Jesus’ teaching in Luke 18:24 and Luke 9:9?

- A. Although it is often impossible for rich men to experience the fullness of kingdom life, Zacchaeus, who was saved when he received Christ into his home with joy (Lk 19:6), did enter into salvation in a fuller sense by making decisions for discipleship.
- B. Although it is often impossible for rich men to find entrance into heaven, Zacchaeus did find eternal salvation when he chose to give away half of his wealth to the poor.
- C. Although it is often impossible for rich men to find entrance into heaven, Zacchaeus did find eternal salvation by faith alone and gave evidence of it by giving away half his wealth to the poor.
- D. Although it is often impossible for rich men to enter into a rich experience of kingdom life, Zacchaeus did enter into that experience by faith alone and gave evidence of it by giving away half his wealth to the poor.

## **Topic 6: The Parable of the Rejected King**

### **February, AD 33**

The story of the rich young ruler (Lk 18:18-34) introduced the subject of inheriting eternal life and rewards in heaven. The incidents that followed—Bartimaeus receiving sight and Zacchaeus receiving salvation—illustrated that both the poor and the rich can enter into a rich and meaningful life. In the concluding parable of this lesson, Jesus addresses the subject of rewards, explaining the eternal consequences of investing our lives in discipleship or neglecting to do so.

This parable describes the interim between Jesus' resurrection and His return, during which time all followers of Christ are responsible to faithfully serve the King. When the King arrives, their use of the gifts and responsibilities bestowed on them will be evaluated.

## The Parable of the Minas

### Assignment

- Read Luke 19:11-37.

This parable of the minas (a Greek currency equal to about three months' wages) is likely based upon actual events that were well known to Jesus' listeners. After the death of Herod the Great, his son Archelaus went to see the Roman general Mark Antony in Rome, expecting to be crowned his father's successor. So despised was Archelaus that a fifty-member Jewish delegation went to Rome to protest. As a result, Archelaus was not made king. He remained in authority over Judea for only a brief period.

### QUESTION 11

Based on your reading of this parable, match the character with his identity.

<i>Character</i>	<i>i-Bold{Identity}i</i>
King	Jesus
First servant	An unfaithful believer
Second servant	A very faithful believer
Third servant	Unbelieving Jewish leaders
The citizens	A faithful believer

The parable seems to divide the people into two broad categories: the non-believing Jewish leaders who do not want Jesus to rule over them, and three believing servants who demonstrate differing degrees of faithfulness.

### QUESTION 12

The fact that the king went to a far country to receive a kingdom but did not exercise authority until he returned may suggest what?

- The kingdom has been established through God's rule from heaven over the church.
- There is an interval between the king's reception of the kingdom and his exercising ruling authority on earth.
- The kingdom is only a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men.
- The real kingdom is a future event.

Perplexingly, Jesus sometimes describes the kingdom of heaven as a present reality, while at other times it is a future event. This tension seems to be concisely expressed in this parable.

Each of the ten slaves is given a mina, a Greek unit of money worth about three months' wages. They are told to do business, literally "to make a profit," until the nobleman returns. When the master comes back, his question is simple: "What profit has been made in my absence?"

The fact that Jesus makes a distinction between the citizens who did not want Him to rule over them and the slaves who had submitted to His rule suggests that the slaves represent believers. Even the third, unfaithful one is a slave, a servant of his master.



### QUESTION 13

Briefly state the commendation, reason, and promotion given to the first servant.

### The Fate of the Third Servant

This parable teaches us that there are degrees of reward in heaven and a hierarchy of responsibilities: ten cities, five cities, and zero cities, etc. While the first servant obtained a one-thousand percent return on the master's investment and the second a five-hundred percent return, the third did not invest the gift or demonstrate any responsibility.

It is, of course, possible that the third servant is really an unbeliever. However, he is called a servant like the other two and distinguished from the unbelieving citizens in the parable.

### QUESTION 14

We can see in the passage that although Jesus does not agree with the third servant, He sympathetically recognizes that his emotional fears have some basis. *True or False?*

If the servant's view of the master was correct—that he was a severe man, etc.—then he should have done something to gain his master's approval. Yet the servant's assessment was wrong, and he insulted his master and failed to obey him. Thus, the servant is either a liar or a poor judge. Jesus says that the words of his mouth are the basis of his judgment. He seems to say that the man is a liar and simply trying to justify his lack of responsibility.

### QUESTION 15

Negative consequences at the judgment seat of Christ are not often discussed, yet this passage and others seem to say that unfaithful believers may experience rebuke or possibly disinheritance (notably *not* loss of salvation). Match the Scripture with the corresponding consequence.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Consequence</i>
1 Corinthians 6:9-11	Disinheritance
2 Corinthians 5:10	Shame at His arrival
1 John 2:28	Rewards for the bad
1 Corinthians 3:14-15	Total loss of reward and all that he has invested his life in at the judgment seat of Christ

### QUESTION 16

One standard by which we will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ is this: "The one who has receives more, and the one who had will lose what he appeared to have." *True or False?*

## **Summary**

This parable tells us that during the long period of time before Jesus returns, we should find significance for our life in committed discipleship. One day, we will be evaluated on the basis of our faithfulness to Him. We have all been given various gifts at birth and various responsibilities in God's sovereign arrangement of the affairs of our lives. Our utilization of God's gifts to us and our faithful completion of our life work are of utmost importance.

Although it seems harsh, believers who refuse utilize the gifts God has given them and faithfully complete their life work, will experience terrible rebuke and loss at the judgment seat of Christ. Those who have more will be given more. But those who have not invested their lives for Christ will lose what they were originally given. They will be saved, but as through fire.

Jesus is away now, but He has already received His kingdom and set it in place. One day, He will return to evaluate our life work. Each gift He has given to us with this love and grace is to be used for His service.

We all need to ask ourselves the question, "Which servant do I most resemble?"

## **Topic 7: Knowing, Being, and Doing**

### **QUESTION 17**

As you reflect upon the story of the rich young ruler and the parable of the minas, what do you learn about the nature of God?

### **QUESTION 18**

Of the three servants, which do you most resemble? Why? What would have to change for you to become more like the first servant?

## Lesson 4 Self Check

### QUESTION 1

Peter seems to have believed that it is proper to work for eternal rewards in Luke 18:28-30, and Jesus agrees with him. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 2

According to the parable of the minas, there will be equality in heaven. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 3

The references to entering the kingdom in the Gospels all refer to initial salvation. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 4

When Jesus said that in order to enter eternal life, the lawyer needed to do good works, He was referring to earning one's salvation in heaven. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 5

Which servant in the parable was a faithful believer?

- A. The third servant.
- B. Only the first servant.
- C. The first and second servant.
- D. All were faithful believers.

### QUESTION 6

Which of the following best describes the salvation that came to the house of Zacchaeus?

- A. Initial entrance into heaven
- B. The experience of a rich and meaningful life
- C. Reward in heaven
- D. Deliverance from the Roman oppression

### QUESTION 7

What is the possible resolution suggested in the lesson regarding the apparent contradiction in the accounts of the healing of the blind men?

- A. The healing of blind Bartimaeus and the healing of the two blind men are two separate events which occurred as Jesus entered Jericho.
- B. Bartimaeus was healed as Jesus entered Jericho and the two blind men were healed as Jesus left.
- C. There were not two blind men at all. This is a contradiction in the gospel narrative.
- D. The healings are two parts of one event condensed into one account. Bartimaeus cried out as Jesus entered the city and together with the second blind man, healed upon Jesus' departure from the city.

**QUESTION 8**

To what does “inheriting eternal life” refer?

- A. Initial salvation
- B. Final entrance into heaven
- C. A rich experience of eternal life
- D. Rewards in heaven

**QUESTION 9**

What was a major problem for the rich young ruler?

- A. He trusted in riches.
- B. He gave all of his money away.
- C. He thought that his works would save him.
- D. He did not believe Jesus' miracles.

**QUESTION 10**

The great principle taught in the parable of the minas is that faithfulness in little things results in greater reward and responsibility in the kingdom. *True or False?*

## Lesson 4 Answers to Questions

### QUESTION 1

<i>Phrase</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Saved	Finding true life now
Entering the kingdom	A deeper experience of the kingdom
Inheriting eternal life	An enhanced experience of Christ
Treasure in heaven	Reward in heaven
Inherit the kingdom	To possess or rule in the kingdom

**QUESTION 2:** True [Reward as motivation is a common theme in Jesus' ministry, and He in no way viewed it as mercenary. Rather, it is a proper and powerful motivation for a life of discipleship. Sacrifice now will be abundantly rewarded ten thousand years from now.]

### QUESTION 3

- A. It shows that we should not devalue menial service or overestimate prominent work in this life.
- B. It indicates that though the Lord will generously reward those whose devoted labor for Him produces great results, He will be equally generous to others whose faithful service in more difficult and out-of-the-way places brings forth more meager results.
- D. It demonstrates God's disregard for inequities between the more- and less-gifted in this life.

**QUESTION 4:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

(1) Sacrifice will be abundantly rewarded, and (2) rewards are given with consideration to one's faithfulness to opportunity and circumstances, as well as in accordance with the grace and sovereignty of God.

### QUESTION 5

<i>Prediction</i>	<i>Fulfillment</i>
Psalm 22:16	Luke 23:33
Psalm 22:18	Luke 23:24
Isaiah 53:9	Luke 23:50-53
Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:14
Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:1-5

**QUESTION 6:** *Your answer*

### QUESTION 7

- D. It shows that Bartimaeus "entered the kingdom" in the sense that he entered into an experience of the power of the kingdom.

**QUESTION 8:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Son of David was a title for the Messiah. Solomon was David's immediate son, the prophecies said that a descendent of David, a greater son, would one day sit on David's throne and rule forever. When Jesus responded to the blind man who called Him the Son of David, He was, in effect, acknowledging that these Scriptures applied to Him. He was saying that He was the promised Messiah.

**QUESTION 9:** *Your answer*

### QUESTION 10

- A. Although it is often impossible for rich men to experience the fullness of kingdom life, Zacchaeus, who was saved when he received Christ into his home with joy (Lk 19:6), did enter into salvation in a fuller sense by making decisions for discipleship.

### QUESTION 11

<i>Character</i>	<i>i-Bold{Identity}i</i>
King	Jesus
First servant	A very faithful believer
Second servant	A faithful believer
Third servant	An unfaithful believer
The citizens	Unbelieving Jewish leaders

**QUESTION 12**

B. There is an interval between the king’s reception of the kingdom and his exercising ruling authority on earth. [This seems to be an explanation for the delay of the consummation of the kingdom. They thought the kingdom would appear immediately. Jesus says it was inaugurated when the king received the kingdom in the far country, but there will be a period of time before it is consummated in the messianic kingdom upon the earth.]

**QUESTION 13:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Commendation =“Good and faithful servant.” Reason =“You have been faithful in a very little thing.”

Promotion =“Be in authority over ten cities.”

**QUESTION 14:** False

**QUESTION 15**

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Consequence</i>
1 Corinthians 6:9-11	Disinheritance
2 Corinthians 5:10	Rewards for the bad
1 John 2:28	Shame at His arrival
1 Corinthians 3:14-15	Total loss of reward and all that he has invested his life in at the judgment seat of Christ

**QUESTION 16:** True [The master adds to the first slave’s responsibility by taking the investment from the third slave and giving it to the first, giving him twelve minas in total. The faithful slaves receive additional responsibility and reward, while the unfaithful slave suffers loss.]

**QUESTION 17:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 18:** *Your answer*

## Lesson 4 Self Check Answers

**QUESTION 1:** True

**QUESTION 2:** False

**QUESTION 3:** False

**QUESTION 4:** False

**QUESTION 5**

C. The first and second servant.

**QUESTION 6**

B. The experience of a rich and meaningful life

**QUESTION 7**

D. The healings are two parts of one event condensed into one account. Bartimaeus cried out as Jesus entered the city and together with the second blind man, healed upon Jesus' departure from the city.

**QUESTION 8**

C. A rich experience of eternal life

**QUESTION 9**

A. He trusted in riches.

**QUESTION 10:** True

# Lesson 5: The First Coming of the King

---

There was only one road from Jericho to Bethany: a winding, steep, narrow path. For the Sabbath, on Saturday, March 28, AD 33, Jesus rests at the home of Simon the Leper, a man who is mentioned only here in the Gospels.

In Topic 1, we will look at what transpires that evening when Mary lovingly anoints Christ's head—a powerful symbolic act in anticipation of His burial.

In Topic 2, we will see the amazing prophetic fulfillment of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when He is hailed by the multitudes as the Messiah.

In Topic 3, we will see Jesus pass metaphorical judgment on a barren fig tree that symbolizes fruitless Israel. With righteous anger, He enters the temple and overturns the tables of the moneychangers. His parables in response to the Pharisees, who challenge Him, only enrage them further.

In Topic 4, Jesus tells three parables to explain the coming conflagration, which will destroy the temple. The nation and her leaders have rejected Him while He was among them.

In Topic 5, the frustrated leaders try a political tactic to trap Jesus, raising the sensitive subject of the poll tax. Depending on His answer, He will either lose the support of the nationalist Jews who believe He is their messianic hope, or be tried by Rome for treason.

Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem to celebrate the fourth Passover of His ministry. "Many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover, to purify themselves" (Jn 11:55). Purification was very important to the Jews, particularly for those who socialized or had regular contact with the Gentiles (Num 9:10; 2 Chr 30:17-18). Some estimate that about 125,000 people flooded the city at this time.

Skeptical crowds, realizing that the chief priests plan to kill Jesus, discuss and doubt rumors of His arrival (Jn 11:55-57).

But He is on His way. Before entering Jerusalem, however, Jesus makes a final stop at His beloved Bethany. Here, the Savior finds solace and love in preparation for His coming ordeal.

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Anointing for Burial

Topic 2: The First Coming of the King

The Triumphal Entry

Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks

Prophecy and Probability

Topic 3: Warning and Condemnation

The Cursing of the Fig Tree

The Destruction of the Temple

Casting the Mountain Into the Sea

Topic 4: The Parables of Rejection

The Parable of the Two Sons

The Parable of the Vine Growers



## The Parable of the Wedding Feast

Topic 5: Give to Caesar

Topic 6: Matching Events

Topic 7: Knowing, Being, and Doing

### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand that the fact that “the poor are always present” (Deut 15:11) is not an excuse for stinginess in almsgiving
- Explain how Jesus came in specific fulfillment of prophecy, to offer Himself to the nation of Israel as their long-awaited Messiah
- Explain the prophetic acts Jesus performed during the final week and how they announced the coming destruction of the temple
- Discuss how the blame for the eventual national catastrophe lay squarely on the shoulders of the Jewish leaders
- Shoulder believers’ responsibility to support both church and state, since each institution is ordained by God and has its proper function

### Topic 1: Anointing for Burial

#### Saturday, March 28, AD 33

The only route for the twenty-nine kilometer journey from Jericho to Bethany leads Jesus along a narrow, winding path, past the places He had described in the parable of the good Samaritan. Despite the steep incline and loose footing, Jesus likely completes His trek by three in the afternoon, allowing for the traditional three-hour rest before the Sabbath begins at six in the evening.

The evening of Friday, March 27, AD 33, Jesus rests for the Sabbath in Bethany at the home of Simon the Leper, an unknown follower who is mentioned only here in the Gospels. On Saturday evening, March 28, Simon throws a dinner party in Jesus’ honor, possibly because of the raising of Lazarus. The fact that Martha serves at dinner here may suggest that Martha and Simon were married; however, it can safely be assumed that they were at least friends and neighbors, and Martha was simply acting out her gift of service (Jn 12:2).



### Assignment

- Read Matthew 26:7-13; Mark 14:3-9; and John 11:55-12:2; 12:3-11.

The pouring of ointment upon the head of Christ was a token of the highest respect. Where there is true love in the heart to Jesus Christ, nothing will be thought too good to bestow upon Him. This act of faith

and love was so remarkable that it would be reported to all future ages as a memorial of Mary's faith and love, wherever the gospel is taught. This prophecy has been repeatedly fulfilled.

With a liter of pure nard, a woman named Mary knelt at Jesus' feet as He reclined at the table and anointed Him. The perfume that poured over His feet filled the entire house with fragrance. In an intimate expression of complete adoration, Mary then wiped the Lord's feet with her hair.

### **Spikenard**

Spikenard, often called simply nard, was a favorite perfume in ancient times, native to northern India and Nepal. The prefix *spike-* refers to the shape of the plant from which the oily perfume was extracted. Romans used nard for anointing the head. The best spikenard was imported from India in sealed alabaster boxes, which were opened only on very special occasions. It was worth about six months' wages, about three hundred denarii. This ointment rivaled gold in its desirability, and only the wealthy possessed it.

We cannot be sure which Mary performed this beautiful, symbolic act. It is possible that she was the same as the sinful woman in Luke 7:36-39. However, in view of the locale—Bethany—it seems more likely that Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, is the person referred to here.

### **QUESTION 1**

Based on Leviticus 21:10; Exodus 29:7; Psalm 133; and Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-10, Jesus' anointing by Mary may have been a symbolic representation of His anointing as a \_\_\_\_\_.

### **QUESTION 2**

Judas became angry when he saw Jesus accept Mary's precious gift of anointing Him with nard. What is the central message we learn from this incident?

- A. Ministry to the poor will always be possible, but was less important at this particular moment than worshipping God.
- B. Judas was a hypocrite.
- C. We will always have poor in our cities.
- D. It is more important to perform acts of worship than it is to give to the poor.

Mary's act of love to Jesus is the last one recorded in Scripture. Jesus announced that, like the aroma filling the house, the adoration in her gesture would be recounted throughout the world wherever the gospel was preached.

### **QUESTION 3**

What parallel do you see between the aroma of Mary's perfume and the act of worship?

## Topic 2: The First Coming of the King

**Monday, March 30, AD 33**

Jesus rests at Simon's house through Sunday, March 29, AD 33. But on Monday morning, March 30, He begins His final trek into the city of Jerusalem, starting from Bethany and then a short distance farther on at Bethphage. Bethphage is halfway up the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, just over three kilometers directly east of the Eastern Gate of Jerusalem.

At long last, riding a young donkey, Jesus makes His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, an event that is mentioned in all four Gospels.

Previously, Christ has shunned all such public displays. But today, making an official presentation of Himself to the nation as their King, He is hailed by the multitudes as the Messiah.

### The Triumphal Entry

#### Assignment

- Read Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; and John 12:12-19.

The last time Jesus entered Jerusalem was at the Feast of Tabernacles. At that time, He entered the city secretly (Jn 7:10); now He enters publicly. Then, He entered on foot; now, He enters on the back of a donkey.

#### Donkey

The donkey was esteemed in the Middle East of Jesus' time. It was a valuable beast of burden for work in the fields and the mills, as well as for riding. Solomon had introduced the horse to Palestine from Egypt, but it was primarily used for war. The donkey, on the other hand, was a symbol of peace. For the Jews, it also had national significance: Moses had led his wife seated on a donkey, and the judges rode them as well. Abraham, the friend of God, rode one. Furthermore, every Jew anticipated that when the Messiah came, He would enter the city seated upon a donkey. No act of Jesus could have associated Him more directly with the fulfillment of prophecy and more clearly announced Him as the King of Israel.

#### QUESTION 4

Read Zechariah 9:9. Which messages was Jesus conveying to the people of Jerusalem by riding into the city on a donkey? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. The King of Israel comes humbly, as a servant, and not as a political messiah who will overthrow Rome.
- B. He is, in fact, the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament.
- C. Their salvation from Roman tyranny is near.
- D. The Jewish authorities are about to be overthrown.

#### QUESTION 5

In response to the cries of the multitude, Jesus humbly accepts their acknowledgment of His kingship. *True or False?*

## Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks

It was about 580 BC. King Nebuchadnezzar had recently destroyed Jerusalem and taken thousands of Jews captive to Babylon. Among them was an unusually gifted young teenager named Daniel, who quickly rose to a prominent position in Babylon.

One day, Daniel was perusing the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer 25:11; Jer 29:10) regarding the seventy years of Israel's deportation to Babylon. This passage explains Israel's captivity (Jer 2:17-19).

But Daniel could not see how this prediction of Israel's great future and global dominion could ever be fulfilled in view of their current desolation and captivity. He went to the Lord in prayer in Daniel 9:1-19, confessing the sins of the nation and calling upon God to keep His promises, look upon Jerusalem's destruction and the people's exile, and deliver them all.

God responded with an incredible prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27.

### The Beginning Point of the Prophecy

God told Daniel that a period of seventy weeks would elapse before the prophetic promises would be fulfilled. The Hebrew word translated "weeks" is *sabua*, which refers not to a "week" of seven days, but to a "week" of seven years. So in this case, the seventy weeks refer to a total of 490 years.

According to the prophecy, sixty-nine *sabua* (483 years) would pass, and then Messiah would come. Israel used a 360-day year. So we see that:

$483 \text{ years} \times 360 \text{ days/year} = 173,880 \text{ days}$

According to historical records and Jewish custom, the decree to restore and rebuild the city was given on Nisan 1 in 444 BC, the twentieth year of the Persian king Artaxerxes' reign (Neh 2:1). Astronomical tables inform us that this makes March 5, 444 BC the exact beginning date of the prophetic countdown.

### The End Point of the Prophecy

The prophecy would be fulfilled when the Messiah came, presenting Himself to the nation. How does Christ's life align with the timing indicated by this prediction?

We can determine the date of Christ's triumphal entry by first considering the known date of His death. According to the Gospels, Jesus was crucified on Passover, which fell on Friday, April 3, AD 33. Jesus' triumphal presentation of Himself as Messiah occurred five days earlier, on Monday, March 30, AD 33.

Between March 5, 444 BC and March 30, AD 33, there are exactly 173,880 days. Daniel's prophecy was fulfilled to the exact day!

### QUESTION 6

When Jesus spoke of "this day" in Luke 19:42, He was referring to the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 7

There were \_\_\_\_\_ days in the prophecy.

The information about the prophecy in Daniel makes certain assumptions when calculating the time of Messiah's arrival. Critical to this interpretation are the meanings of the phrases "one week" and "half of the week." Read Genesis 7:11; 8:4; 29:27; Daniel 7:24-25; 9:27; and Revelation 12:7, 14.

## QUESTION 8

According to these Scriptures, which of the following is true? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Times, time, and half a time equals three and a half years
- B. Times, time, and half a time equals 1260 days
- C. A year in biblical reckoning was 360 days.
- D. A “week” can equal seven years.

## Prophecy and Probability

Some of the most powerful evidence for the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and His deity is the amount of Old Testament prophecy He fulfilled. The amazing prediction of Daniel 9 is only one of many. One writer tabulated sixty-one specific predictions from the Old Testament literally fulfilled in the life of Christ.

## QUESTION 9

Match the Scriptures with the prophetic fulfillment in the New Testament.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Prophetic Fulfillment</i>
Daniel 9:25	Matthew 27:3-7
Psalms 22:14-17	Matthew 27:57
Zechariah 9:9	Luke 19:28-38
Isaiah 53:9	Luke 23:34
Zechariah 11:12	John 12:13-16
Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 26:14-15

We can see that each of these six Old Testament prophecies was fulfilled in the New Testament life of Christ. How likely is it that one man could meet these specific qualifications?

- Ride into Jerusalem on a donkey announcing himself as king
- Make that entrance exactly sixty-nine “weeks” of years after Daniel’s prophetic countdown began
- Be crucified
- Be buried in a rich man’s tomb
- Be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver
- Have the silver pieces of his price later thrown in the temple.

Taking just these six prophecies into consideration, we can see that the likelihood of all six of them being fulfilled in one person (Christ) is nearly impossible. (For a mathematical example, see the article “Prophetic Probabilities.”)

The chance of His fulfilling even one of the prophecies is something like one out of every five hundred million or more!

Now consider that there are sixty-one such prophecies. In order for Jesus to be the Messiah as He claimed, He must fulfill each and every one of them.

To visualize the expanse of these probabilities, imagine the country of Burma, or Myanmar (678,500 square kilometers), buried a third of a meter deep in silver coins. Choose one coin, mark it, and mix it in

with all the rest. You would have a greater chance of flying over Burma in a plane and blindly choosing that one marked coin than one man would have of fulfilling all of those prophecies by random chance.

The magnitude of these statistics strongly verifies Jesus' claim to be God.

## Prophetic Probabilities

Mathematics shows the likelihood of Jesus fulfilling all of the scriptural prophecies with dramatic numerical contrast.

To find the probability of multiple events occurring at the same time, multiply the probability that each event will occur by the probability of each other event.

Let us suppose that each of these six prophecies has a probability of 1/100—that is, out of every hundred people who ever lived, one of them fulfilled the prophecy's requirements. So, out of every hundred individuals, one of them was crucified, one rode into Jerusalem on a donkey proclaiming himself to be king, one was buried in a rich man's tomb, etc.

In mathematical form, it looks like this:

Probability (one man fulfills all six of these prophecies) =  $1/100$  (entered Jerusalem on a donkey) x  $1/100$  (did so in Daniel's time frame) x  $1/100$  (was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver) x  $1/100$  (silver was thrown in temple) x  $1/100$  (was crucified) x  $1/100$  (was buried in rich man's tomb)

Or,

$P$  (Fulfillment) =  $1/100 \times 1/100 \times 1/100 \times 1/100 \times 1/100 \times 1/100$

$P$  (Fulfillment) =  $1/1,000,000,000,000$

The probability that one man could fulfill just these six prophecies is one in a trillion!

Now, consider that there are sixty-one messianic prophecies in the Old Testament and that each of them has a much lower probability than 1/100—probably more like one in five hundred million.

Doing the math problem with realistic numbers for probabilities would produce a number far too large to record in the small space we have here. And so we can see that Jesus fulfilling all of those prophecies by random chance without being God would have been nearly impossible.

## Topic 3: Warning and Condemnation

### Tuesday, March 31, AD 31

The crowd's cries of "Hosanna" still ring in the disciples' ears when they are suddenly brought to an abrupt realization of the tragic upcoming catastrophe. While passing a barren fig tree, a symbol of fruitless Israel, Jesus metaphorically pronounces judgment on the nation. In righteous anger, He enters the temple and overturns the tables of the money changers. The Pharisees challenge His authority to do such a thing, and Jesus responds with three parables that point to the Pharisees and enrage them further: the parable of the two sons, the parable of the vine growers, and the parable of the wedding feast.

## The Cursing of the Fig Tree

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 21:12-19; Mark 11:12-19; and Luke 19:45-46.
- Read “Fig Tree.”



Typical Palestinian Fig Tree

### The Fig Tree

There are several varieties of Palestinian figs, some of which are inferior (cf. Jer 24:1-8; 29:17). Two crops are gathered; the first is ripe about June and grows from the midsummer shoots of the previous year, while the second, ripe about August, is produced from the new spring shoots. By December all figs in the mountainous areas have shed their leaves, and new leaf buds appear only in March (cf. Mt 24:32), when the tiny figs appear simultaneously in the leaf axils. The figs grow to about the size of a small cherry and then the majority fall off (cf. the “winter fruit” of Rev 6:13; AV “untimely figs”). Known to the Arabs as taksh, this underdeveloped fruit is often gathered for sale in the markets. In April and May the fig leaves develop and the fruit reaches maturity about June (cf. Isa 28:4; Jer 24:2; Hos 9:10), being then of delicate flavor (e.g., Mic 7:1). Frequently, ripe winter figs can be found, hidden by leaves, when the summer figs are growing in August and September.

Christ’s miracle (Mt 21:18) during the Passover season (about April) can be understood in the light of these observations. When the young leaves are appearing in spring, every fertile fig will have some taksh on it, even though the season for edible figs (Mk 11:13, AV) has not arrived. When the leaves are fully developed the fruit ought to be mature also. But if a tree with leaves has no fruit, it will be barren for the entire season. Thus the fig tree was cursed for its pretentiousness, predicting the fate of the fruitless Jewish nation.

Years of labor are required (cf. Lk 13:7) before newly planted figs bear profitably, since the tree grows slowly. Thus the destruction of the fig (see also Ps 105:33; Jer. 5:17; Hos 2:12; Amos 4:9) would have serious economic implications. Obversely, the state where the individual dwelt securely under his own fig tree was one of safety and prosperity (1 Kgs 4:25; see also 2 Kgs 18:31; Isa. 36:16; Mic 4:4; Zech 3:10). Only a supreme faith in God could bring rejoicing in the absence of a flourishing fig tree (Hab 3:17).

Dried figs were always a more important dietary item than fresh figs. Cakes were made by pressing the figs together (1 Sam 30:12). Abigail gave David two hundred such cakes (1 Sam 25:18); the people of northern Israel sent fig cakes with other gifts to the newly crowned David (1 Chr 12:40). A poultice of figs was applied to Hezekiah’s boil (Isa 38:21), following contemporary therapeutic practices. (*R. K. Harrison in Bromiley, G. W. (1988; 2002). The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised (2:302). Wm. B. Eerdmans*)

During this time, three events that many consider to be symbolic and connected occur.

1. The cursing of the fig tree (Mk 11:12-14)
2. The destruction of the temple foretold (Mk 11:15-19)
3. The explanation of faith that can cast a mountain into the sea (Mk 11:20-26)

## QUESTION 10

After reading Jeremiah 8:11-13 and the notes regarding the fig tree, what symbolic significance might there be in the cursing of the fig tree?

## The Destruction of the Temple

After He curses the fig tree, Jesus enters the temple and turns over the tables of the robbers and thieves. Mark notes immediately after this that the fig tree had withered.

### Robbers and Thieves

The word translated from Greek as “robbers” (*lestes*) does not necessarily refer to swindlers. It was commonly used of violent thieves or bandits living in caves. These men were not merely highwaymen; they were revolutionaries. Barabbas, the leader of the murderous civil uprising in Jerusalem, was called *lestes* (Mk 15:7; Jn 18:40), as were the two who were crucified with Jesus. Crucifixion was a punishment not for thieves, but for revolutionaries.

## QUESTION 11

Given the connections, what was the **main** reason Jesus entered the temple and drove out these selling there? Read Jeremiah 7:3-15 and Isaiah 56:6-10 for historical background.

- A. He was cleansing the temple from robbers and thieves.
- B. He was indignant about the corruption that was occurring in the temple of His Father.
- C. He was against selling merchandise in His Father’s house.
- D. He was, by His actions, prophesying the destruction of the temple.

Furthermore, without the temple taxes these robbers collected, sacrificial animals could not be supplied for worshippers to purchase. Driving out the sellers of sacrifices was Jesus’ symbolic judgment on the temple system and all it stood for. This sacrilege was a major reason the authorities decided He must be executed.

Jesus’ actions in the temple were also a dramatic prediction of the national judgment coming in AD 70—specifically the Roman destruction of the temple, which did, in fact, end the sacrificial system.

His fury subsiding, Jesus departs from Jerusalem and retires to Bethany for the evening (Mk 11:18-19; Lk 19:47-48).



With a prophetic action, Jesus casts out the robbers announcing the destruction of the Temple



## **Casting the Mountain into the Sea**

The next morning, upon returning to Jerusalem for another day of teaching in the temple, Jesus and His disciples once again pass the cursed fig tree. The tree has withered from the roots up (Mk 11:20).

When Jesus, standing in Jerusalem, says, “I tell you the truth, if someone says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him” (Mk 11:23), “this mountain” almost certainly refers to the Temple Mount.

He is announcing that the temple, which they were no doubt looking at, will be taken up and cast into the sea, if one believes God. Jesus is using hyperbole to challenge His disciples to believing prayer.

Peter’s amazement at the withering of the fig tree (Mk 11:21) gives Jesus an opportunity to teach the Twelve the importance of believing in prayer and what God will do through those who exercise it. (Mk 11:22-23).

### **QUESTION 12**

Read Matthew 17:20; 21:21; Luke 17:6; and Mark 11:23 and consider the context of each. Write out the conditions for answered prayer in your own words and comment on the natural questions the scriptural promises raise in your Life Notebook.

## **Topic 4: Parables of Rejection**

### **Wednesday, April 1, AD 33**

Jesus’ prediction of the destruction of the temple and the fall of the nation only fuels the continuation of His confrontation with the religious authorities. In a series of three parables, He explains the reason for the coming disaster: The nation and her leaders have rejected the time of Christ’s visitation. Instead of embracing Christ as Messiah, they have concluded that He is a demon-possessed fanatic whose popularity is a threat, plotting false charges in order to have Him executed.

On Tuesday of His final week, Jesus teaches the parables of the two sons, the vine growers, and the prince’s wedding banquet to announce judgment and point to the Jewish leaders as those who kill prophets and holy men.

### **The Parable of the Two Sons**

#### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 21:23-32; Mark 11:27-33; and Luke 20:1-8; 19:47-48.

Tuesday morning, after spending Monday night in a garden outside of the city, Jesus returns to Jerusalem and begins to teach again in the temple.

The Pharisees are very upset with Jesus’ pronouncements and particularly with the previous day’s prophetic action regarding the destruction of the temple. They come to Him demanding and accusingly. “By what authority are you doing these things?” (Lk 20:2).

Jesus traps them with a counter-question: “I will also ask you a question, and you tell me: John’s baptism—was it from heaven or from people?”

If they say, “It is from heaven,” then Jesus will say, “Why then do you not believe what he said about Me?” If they say, “from people,” the people will be angered that they deny that John is a true prophet, as

he is very popular. Knowing they are trapped, they refuse to answer. Retreating to safety, they mutter, “We don’t know.”

So Jesus begins to address them in parables that speak of rejection. The first of these is the parable of the two sons (Mt 21:28-32).

### QUESTION 13

As explained previously, “the way of righteousness” in Matthew 21:32 is usually understood as “the way of salvation,” and not “the way of right conduct.” A careful reading of the parable suggests that the point intended by the second son “doing the will of the father” is:

- A. That he chose to work in the vineyard.
- B. That while he at first would not obey, he changed his mind and did obey.
- C. That, like the prostitutes, he had made ethical decisions superior to those of his brother.
- D. That he believed.

Because the Pharisees did not change their minds or believe on Christ, they were under condemnation. This accusation, of course, infuriated them, and they continued to look for a way to kill Him.

## The Parable of the Vine Growers

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; and Luke 20:9-10.

### QUESTION 14

The parable of the vine growers (Mt 21:33-46) contains allusions to many events and characters. Match the representative character or item with its real-life counterpart.

<i>Character or Item</i>	<i>Counterpart</i>
The vineyard	Jesus Christ
The tenants	The leaders of the nation
The first, second, and third groups of servants	Israel (Isa 5:1-7)
Owner of the vineyard	The prophets
Vineyard owner’s son	God the Father

No one would have expected the owner of the vineyard to have been so patient. In fact, landowners often had their own people hired to remove troublesome tenants. The state would certainly have sided with the landlord, which would have meant death or slavery for the murderers. The landowner acted with such unexpected, extreme kindness, most would have considered him a fool.

It totally escapes the Pharisees at first that Jesus is speaking of the longsuffering and patience of God the Father, so when He asks them what the landowner should do to the wicked servants, they do not realize that He is really asking how God the Father should treat those who, like the Pharisees, who reject God’s Son. Unwittingly, the Pharisees pronounce judgment on themselves.

In explaining the parable, Jesus describes Himself as the cornerstone whom the builders (Pharisees) rejected, because of which they will be destroyed (Mt 21:44-45).

### **Cornerstone**

Ordinarily, the term “cornerstone” in the Bible is used in a figurative or symbolical sense. There appear to be two concepts: (1) the foundation stone upon which the structure rested (Job 38:6; Isa 28:16; Jer 51:26); or (2) the topmost, or “capstone,” which completed the last tier (Ps 118:22). In both cases, this important stone is figurative of the Messiah, who is “the first and the last.” Psalm 118:22 is quoted as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ in a number of New Testament passages: Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7. (Bromiley, G. W. 1988; 2002. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised (Vol. 1, Page 784)*. Wm. B. Eerdmans).

## **QUESTION 17**

There is difference of opinion regarding the meaning of Matthew 21:43. Some feel it refers to the transfer of the kingdom offer from the nation of Israel to the global church. Read Acts 1:6; Matthew 19:28, Psalm 89:20-37, and Romans 11:25-27. How might these verses affect your interpretation of this issue?

## **The Parable of the Wedding Feast**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 22:1-14.
- Read “A Call to the Wedding Celebration.”
- Optional: Review “Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth,” found in Lesson 2.

### **A Call to The Wedding Celebration Matthew 22:1-14**

The parable of the wedding celebration is one of twelve parables in Matthew concerning “the kingdom of heaven,” and one of three that speak of “the darkness outside.” The prevailing interpretation of the passage is that it concerns the loss of eternal salvation, but a close analysis of the details of the parable yields some problems with this position.

### **Explanation**

#### **The First Call of the King (Mt 22:1–3)**

*The Setting of the Story*

The parable proper begins in verse 2: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man, that is, a king, who gave a wedding celebration for his son.” The setting of the parable is the celebratory feast which Christ will enjoy with his faithful followers at the beginning of the millennial kingdom.

*The Invitation (Mt 22:3)*

The time had come for the wedding celebration to begin and the invited guests to arrive: “And he

sent his servants to call those who had been invited to the wedding celebration” (22:3a).

#### *The Response (Mt 22:3b)*

The guests initially invited reject the offer: “They did not wish to come.” To decline an invitation from a commoner without a legitimate excuse would be insulting. But to do this to a monarch would be even more so. This repudiation of the king set the stage for the second call to the wedding celebration.

### **The Second Call of the King (Mt 22:4–6)**

#### *The Second Invitation (Mt 22:4)*

The king now issued a second invitation (v 4). He sent more servants to the same group of people. This meal was ready and waiting. The king had already prepared everything in advance, anticipating the acceptance of his invitation to the banquet.

The menu of “oxen and fattened cattle” indicates a feast of great magnitude. Also, since the animals had already been slaughtered, they must be eaten without delay. There is, therefore, a sense of urgency in the message.

The second group of servants represents the post-Pentecost missionaries for Christ. Through these, God continued to offer to Israel a place at the wedding celebration for His Son.

#### *The Second Response (Mt 22:5–6)*

Those invited a second time responded in two ways. Some were apathetic; some were openly antagonistic. The rejection of the first group of people is found in verse 5: “But, paying no attention, they went away, the one to his own field, the other to his business.” The attitude of these people is one of indifference

A second group of invitees responded with open rebellion and violence: “But the others, after seizing his servants, mistreated and killed (them)” (Mt 22:6). The violence of the people against the servants is representative of the persecution and martyrdom of the post-resurrection apostles and Christian witnesses by the Jews, most particularly by the religious authorities who are here “the rest”).

### **The First Judgment of the King (Mt 22:7)**

The king, who had previously responded graciously, now responded in wrath: “And when the king heard (it), he became angry. And by sending his army, he destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

He then burned the city of the murderers. This verse seems to be a clear reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70.

### **The Third Call of the King (Mt 22:8–10)**

#### *The New Invitation (Mt 22:8–9)*

Now the king renewed his efforts to reward a select group of people with the honor of attending the wedding celebration of his son, giving his employees new instructions. “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding celebration is ready, but those who had been invited were not worthy’” (Mt 22:8).

The new orders for the servants involved an expansion of the invitation. Verse 9 says, “Go, therefore, to the streets, and whoever you should find, invite to the wedding celebration.” The imagery depicts the extension of the invitation to the banquet to all people, including the Gentiles.

### *The Response (Mt 22:10)*

The people are described as bad and good. This signifies the varying moral states of those who accepted the invitation to the banquet. The servants did not discriminate as to whom they invited. All who were willing to come were welcome.

The results of the expanded offer are expressed in v 10: “And the wedding celebration was filled with guests.” The desire of the king to have many people in attendance at the wedding celebration for his son was finally realized.

### **The Second Judgment of the King (Mt 22:11–14)**

#### *The Evaluation of the Guests (Mt 22:11–12)*

The wedding party was now in progress, and the king entered the palace to observe the guests. He immediately noticed a man dressed unsuitably for a wedding. It was customary for each person who would attend such an affair to clothe himself appropriately before going. The man obviously did not prepare himself in a fitting way for a royal banquet. The “wedding garment” is best interpreted as being a picture of good works. The wedding clothes of Matthew 22:11 correspond to the clothes worn by the bride at the wedding of the Lamb in Revelation 19:8. She is said to be clothed in “fine linen, clean and bright”. Further, this fine linen is described as “the righteous acts of the saints” And in the previous verse, it states that she “has made herself ready” (NKJV). This is in definite contrast to the man *without* the garment in Matthew 22:13, who did *not* make himself ready.

Because this man was in the kingdom and even at the banquet, we must assume he is a genuine believer, because unless one is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5). But the king recognized that the man had not adequately prepared himself to come to the royal affair, so he questioned him. “Friend, how have you entered here not having a wedding garment?” (v 12). But he received no answer. The man had no defense for his negligence.

#### *The Consequence of the Evaluation (Mt 22:13)*

*The man is cast into the darkness outside.* The king responded to the impropriety of the man in v 13: “Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him foot and hand, take (him) away, and cast (him) out into the darkness outside.’”

The man was tossed out of the wedding celebration into “the darkness outside.” Wedding celebrations typically lasted long into the night and so, in the imagery of the story, the man was cast into the darkness of night outside the well-lighted banquet hall. It is best to understand “the darkness outside” as a figure for exclusion from the joy of the banquet, an exclusion which will produce tears and regret.

This position is supported by the other two occurrences of “the darkness outside” in the NT (Mt 8:12; Mt 25:30). In Matthew 8, Jesus encountered the centurion whose servant was sick. After commending the faith of the man in Matthew 8:10, Jesus said, “And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt 8:11–12).

The only other time “sons of the kingdom” occurs is in Matthew 13:38. There, when explaining the meaning of the parable of the wheat and the tares, Jesus identifies the good seed as the “sons of the kingdom.” Therefore, the sons of the kingdom belong in the kingdom. And yet, because they were not worthy of reclining at the same table as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they were cast into “the darkness outside.” From this, it seems reasonable that, from the perspective of Matthew, the darkness is within the kingdom of heaven.

On close examination, we see that “the darkness outside” depicts the experience of the unfaithful believer within the kingdom of God. To be in the “outer darkness” is to be in the kingdom of God, but outside the circle of men and women whose faithfulness on this earth earned them a special rank or position of authority.

The experience of the man cast out of the banquet is further described as an experience of sorrow (v 13): “There will be there weeping and gnashing of teeth.” This expression (*ho klauthmos kai ho brygmos tōn odontōn*) occurs six other times, uniquely in the NT (Mt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 24:51; 25:30; Lk 13:28).

Now, imagine standing before God and seeing everything you have lived for reduced to ashes. How do you think you would feel? Just as those who are found faithful will rejoice, so those who suffer loss will weep. As some are celebrated for their faithfulness, others will gnash their teeth in frustration over their own shortsightedness and greed.

*The Explanation of the Result* (Mt 22:14)

Jesus concludes His parable with these words: “For many are called, but few (are) chosen” (v 14).

The traditional view holds that “chosen” (*eklektōi*) pertains to the doctrine of election. The chosen ones are true believers who accepted the call of God and demonstrated their faith and worthiness to take part in the banquet by the performance of good works. Thus the banquet is synonymous with the kingdom. The man without the garment is representative of either a “false believer” (=an unbeliever), since he did not manifest his salvation in works of righteousness, or a believer who loses his salvation because of disobedience. Either way, he is not chosen and is cast into hell.

But it is not necessary to see *eklektos* as having soteriological significance here. It is more suitable to the immediate context to see that it simply means that the ones properly clothed are *chosen* to be at the banquet. As has been demonstrated, the wedding garment is representative of the good works done by the believer. Since faith, not works, is the only requirement for eternal life in the kingdom, entrance and life in the kingdom are not the issues here. It has also been shown that the wedding banquet is not representative of the kingdom, but rather is an occurrence *within* the kingdom. The experience symbolized by the wedding celebration is reserved for the obedient believer.

The parable of Matthew 22:1–14 concludes in Matthew 8–14 with an extension of the offer of a place at the wedding celebration of Christ to all people, including the Gentiles. Many accepted the invitation and prepared themselves with faithful Christian living which is required for presence at the banquet. The unfaithful and disobedient believer who did not prepare himself for the banquet found himself excluded from the joy of co-reigning with Christ at the banquet.

(Adapted from Gregory P. Sapaugh. *Journal of the Grace Theological Society*. (Spring 92), p. 35-49.)

## QUESTION 15

According to “A Call to the Wedding Celebration,” the traditional view that the man with the soiled wedding garments is a non-Christian is probably incorrect for several reasons. (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. He is dressed inappropriately.
- B. He is said to be a friend.
- C. His problem is that he lacks righteous acts (Rev 19:8), not justification.
- D. How could he be at the feast and in the kingdom at all if he were not a believer?

## QUESTION 16

According to the article on the wedding feast (placed earlier in the lesson), to what does the reference to the man with the soiled garments being cast outside refer?

- A. Being cast into hell
- B. Being removed from the joy of the wedding banquet
- C. Being cast into purgatory
- D. None of the above

## Topic 5: Give to Caesar

### Wednesday, April 1, AD 33

The leaders are now quite frustrated. They simply cannot trap Jesus, and now He has pointed out that they behave like the nation of old, killing the divine messengers sent to them. Religious tactics failing, they switch angles and attempt to catch Him in a political error.

They raise a subject that always produces conflict: the payment of taxes to Caesar. Feigning sincerity, they ask, “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

Surely this clever question will trap the rabbi! If Jesus answers yes, He will be rejected by the nationalist Jews who see Him as the messianic hope. If He answers no, the Romans will call Him a traitor. The Pharisees hope He will reject the tax, which would enable them to bring a case before Pilate, Rome’s local governor, to have Jesus executed for treason.

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; and Luke 20:20-26.

An unusual alliance between Pharisees and Herodians now forms in an attempt to ensnare Jesus. These two groups hated each other but, as the saying goes, “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

#### Herodians

The Herodians were probably not a religious sect, but rather a political party that supported the dynasty of King Herod. We know little about them beyond what is stated in the Gospels. Their origin may be traced to the time of Herod the Great and his attempt to establish his rule in Palestine. They appear to be in favor of the rule of Herod Antipas, whom Jesus called “that fox.” Because of Herod’s half-Jewish background, His rule was preferred over the direct rule of the Roman prefects and governors. If the Herodians had religious leanings, it was in the direction of the Sadducees. Thus, both politically and religiously, they were enemies of the Pharisees. Yet here they are, united with the Pharisees in hatred against the Lord Jesus.

## QUESTION 17

What was the purpose of the question posed to Jesus regarding taxes?



A Roman coin with the pagan image of Caesar as God

## **QUESTION 18**

In what ways was Jesus' response a brilliant refutation and a classic statement? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. It established the government's legitimate right to organize itself and collect taxes.
- B. It revealed the leaders' total hypocrisy.
- C. It clarified the right of the church to revolt against the state.
- D. It established the principle of the separation of church and state.

Jesus is not stupid. He sees their insincerity and asks for a denarius, a Roman coin imprinted with the image of Caesar, equivalent to an average day's wage. An inscription of these coins reads, "Tiberius Caesar, Augustus, son of divine Augustus." On the other side, his mother, Livia, is portrayed as an incarnation of the goddess of peace and called a high priestess. The fact that they carry these coins reveals that they accept the state's economic system; they actively participate in it (Lk 16:14).

## **Topic 6: Matching Events**

### **QUESTION 19**

To help you memorize these events, we have compiled a list of important events in the life of Christ. Take a moment and review events 2, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 in the Matching Events chart found in the appendix. Cover the event descriptions and see if you can identify the associated Scriptures.

## **Topic 7: Knowing, Being, and Doing**

### **QUESTION 20**

Imagine that you have been asked to present a twenty-five-minute lesson on prophecies fulfilled by the life of Christ. Based on your study of this lesson, how can you introduce the subject in your lesson plan, and how will you summarize and conclude? Also, include at least five questions you can use to generate discussion with the class. You might consider breaking the class up into several groups and assigning each of them a question regarding the prophecies, then allowing interaction.

### **QUESTION 21**

As part of your preparation to facilitate this lesson with your own group of students, select five study questions and three Life Notebook questions from the lesson to use in interactive discussion. Explain why you chose these particular questions. Which specific points of life or ministry application are you emphasizing by interacting with your group using these questions?



## Lesson 5 Self Check

### QUESTION 1

Jesus' anointing by Mary was symbolic of His anointing as the King of Israel. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 2

Judas becomes angry when he sees Jesus accept Mary's precious gift of anointing Him with nard. What is the central message we learn from this incident?

- A. Ministry to the poor will always be possible, but was less important at this particular moment than worshipping God.
- B. Judas was a hypocrite.
- C. We will always have poor in our cities.
- D. It is more important to perform acts of worship than it is to give to the poor.

### QUESTION 3

According to Daniel's prophecy, the Messiah could come \_\_\_\_\_ years after King Artaxerxes issued a decree to rebuild Jerusalem.

- A. 70
- B. 173,880
- C. 483
- D. 66

### QUESTION 4

In the parable of the wedding feast, the man who appeared improperly dressed was a non-believer. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 5

To what do the wedding garments in the parable of the wedding feast refer?

- A. The blood of Jesus
- B. The righteous acts of the saints
- C. The faith of the believers
- D. The new clothes believers will wear

### QUESTION 6

As explained previously, "the way of righteousness" in Matthew 21:32 is usually understood as "the way of salvation," and not "the way of right conduct." A careful reading of the parable suggests what point is intended by the second son "doing the will of the father"?

- A. That he chose to work in the vineyard.
- B. That while he at first would not obey, he changed his mind and did obey.
- C. That, like the prostitutes, he had made ethical decisions superior to those of his brother.
- D. That he believed.

### QUESTION 7

The central point in Jesus' rebuke of Judas for his complaint about the wasted ointment was that we will always have the poor with us. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 8**

What was the *main* reason Jesus entered the temple and drove out those selling there?

- A. He was cleansing the temple from robbers and thieves.
- B. He was indignant about the corruption which went on in the temple of His Father.
- C. He was against the selling of merchandise in His Father's house.
- D. He was, by His actions, prophesying the destruction of the temple.

**QUESTION 9**

The darkness outside in the parable of the wedding feast refers to being cast out of the kingdom. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 10**

When Jesus said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" what did He mean?

- A. God has no need for money.
- B. The church must be separate from the state.
- C. The state has the right to collect taxes.
- D. Believers have no need to obey the state.

## Lesson 5 Answers to Questions

**QUESTION 1:** Priest

**QUESTION 2**

- A. Ministry to the poor will always be possible, but was less important at this particular moment than worshipping God.

**QUESTION 3:** *Your answer could be similar to the following:* As the aroma of the ointment filled the room, so the fragrance of worship radiates from and fills the life of a believer who is dedicated to worshipping God.

**QUESTION 4**

- A. The King of Israel comes humbly, as a servant, and not as a political messiah who will overthrow Rome.  
B. He is, in fact, the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament.

**QUESTION 5:** False [Jesus' response was not acceptance, but weeping. He knew that the multitudes were fickle and soon would reject this day of visitation (Lk 19:42).]

**QUESTION 6:** True [Daniel's great Messianic prophecy predicted, to the very day, Christ's official presentation of Himself to Israel as her coming King.]

**QUESTION 7:** *Your answer should be one of the following:*  
173,880, 173880

**QUESTION 8**

- A. Times, time, and half a time equals three and a half years  
B. Times, time, and half a time equals 1260 days  
C. A year in biblical reckoning was 360 days.  
D. A "week" can equal seven years.

**QUESTION 9**

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Prophetic Fulfillment</i>
Daniel 9:25	Luke 19:28-38
Psalms 22:14-17	Luke 23:34
Zechariah 9:9	John 12:13-16
Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57
Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:14-15
Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 27:3-7

**QUESTION 10:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

He could be announcing the temple's doom. Jesus came to the nation seeking fruit, but He found none. As a result, the cursing of the fig tree is a kind of enacted parable, predicting the destruction of the temple.

**QUESTION 11**

- D. He was, by His actions, prophesying the destruction of the temple. [The Babylonian invasion predicted by Jeremiah (Jer 7:3-5) provides a historical background for understanding Jesus' actions. The problem was not just economic trickery; the temple had become a den of revolutionaries intent on resisting the authority of Rome. It had become the focal point of national liberation and was regarded as a guarantee of security against the pagans. It did not take a prophet to see that this could only lead to a national catastrophe. This style of resistance was not the way of the kingdom of heaven (N. T. Wright, "Jesus and the Victory of God," p. 420).]

**QUESTION 12:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 13**

- D. That he believed. [The "will of the Father" here refers to believing on Christ, verse 32. The second son repented in the sense that he changed his mind. At first he did not believe, neither did the prostitutes and tax collectors. However, they changed their minds, repented, and believed in the "way of righteousness" that John taught. They believed the way of salvation in Christ and were saved.]

**QUESTION 14**

<i>Character or Item</i>	<i>Counterpart</i>
The vineyard	Israel (Isa 5:1-7)
The tenants	The leaders of the nation
The first, second, and third groups of servants	The prophets
Owner of the vineyard	God the Father
Vineyard owner's son	Jesus Christ

**QUESTION 15:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

These passages seem to affirm that one day, the promises to David regarding Israel's global kingdom will be fulfilled, but only when the nation has come to faith and God has forgiven their sins. There are no promises to a nation in unbelief. If this interpretation is correct, then the nation to which the kingdom has been given is not the church, but the believing nation of Israel in the last days to whom the promises were made. (See Rom 11:25-36).

**QUESTION 16**

- B. He is said to be a friend.
- D. How could he be at the feast and in the kingdom at all if he were not a believer?

**QUESTION 17**

- B. Being removed from the joy of the wedding banquet

**QUESTION 18:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

They wanted to incriminate Him with a yes or a no answer. If He said yes, He would lose credibility with that segment of the population which looked for a political messiah. If He said no, He would be in trouble with the Romans.

**QUESTION 19**

- A. It established the government's legitimate right to organize itself and collect taxes.
  - B. It revealed the leaders' total hypocrisy.
- [Both the state and the people of God have a legitimate place in God's economy. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the state collecting taxes. Jesus rejects the nationalistic, Zealot-like approach. He makes it clear by this statement that His kingship is not designed for the purpose of overthrowing Rome.]

**QUESTION 20:** *See Matching Events chart***QUESTION 21:** *Your answer***QUESTION 22:** *Your answer*

## Lesson 5 Self Check Answers

**QUESTION 1:** False

**QUESTION 2**

- A. Ministry to the poor will always be possible, but was less important at this particular moment than worshipping God.

**QUESTION 3**

- C. 483

**QUESTION 4:** False

**QUESTION 5**

- B. The righteous acts of the saints

**QUESTION 6**

- D. That he believed.

**QUESTION 7:** False

**QUESTION 8**

- D. He was, by His actions, prophesying the destruction of the temple.

**QUESTION 9:** False

**QUESTION 10**

- C. The state has the right to collect taxes.

# Lesson 6: The Discourse on the Mount of Olives

---

**Wednesday, April 1, AD 33**

The final week of Jesus' public ministry propels Him toward completing His life purpose. The nation has made its decision, rejecting its long-awaited Messiah. The Pharisees and Sadducees have had their last chance, and the doom of the nation is now sealed. Jesus withdraws from the public for the last time to speak privately to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, across the Kidron Valley. Still in sight of the majestic temple, Jesus announces the unavoidable doom of the nation and explains many details concerning His future return.

In Topic 1, the Sadducees, who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, challenge Jesus with a popular conundrum: If a woman is married seven different times, whose wife will she be at the resurrection?

In Topic 2, the Pharisees take their turn to subtly attempt to trap Him, asking Him which of the commandments is greatest.

Topic 3 discusses a group of Greeks who visit Jerusalem for the Passover and come to see Jesus, bearing gifts.

Finally, in Topic 4, we will turn to the Olivet Discourse, this lesson's major emphasis. On the Mount of Olives with His close companions, Jesus describes the events which will characterize the world in the days before His return.

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Whose Wife Will She Be?

Topic 2: Confrontation with the Pharisees

The Greatest Commandment

Who Is David's Lord?

Blind Guides

Topic 3: Greeks Bearing Gifts

A Grain of Wheat

His Rejection Foretold

Topic 4: The Olivet Discourse

Background and Context

The Destruction of the Temple

The Tribulation and the Second Coming

The Parable of the Fig Tree

Taken for Salvation

## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand how one day we will all be physically resurrected from the dead and held accountable for how we have lived our lives
- Demonstrate Jesus' skill in dealing with opposition and point out the principles He modeled for us to apply in similar situations
- Explain that true life and reward in heaven are based upon a willingness to die to ourselves and serve Christ without reservation
- Explain the prophetic teaching of the Olivet Discourse and how it correlates with similar passages in Luke 21 and Matthew 13

## Topic 1: Whose Wife Will She Be?

**Wednesday, April 1, AD 33**

Near the end of a long, tiring day, Jesus is teaching in the temple. The Sadducees, a religious sect that denied the resurrection, choose this time to challenge Him. They are the final group to try to embarrass Him (following the Pharisees, chief priests, scribes, and the Herodians); and like the others, they fail miserably.

### Pharisees

The word *Pharisee* means “separated one.” They were also known as *Chasidim*, meaning “loved of God” or “loyal to God.” They first appeared in 135 BC. At the height of their popularity, these Jewish religious leaders numbered about six thousand. They believed in the immortality of the soul, predestination, and the hierarchy of angels—doctrines denied by the Sadducees. They also opposed the Sadducees in believing that both the Torah *and* oral tradition were inspired. The Pharisees pledged themselves to obey all facets of not only the Torah, but the minutest details of the oral tradition; they were fanatics for ceremonial purity. In the time of Christ, the Pharisees inspired a historically unrivaled national and religious consciousness. This very consciousness was leading toward a national catastrophe due to the Pharisees' approval of zealotry against Rome.

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; and Luke 20:27-40.

The Pharisees challenged Jesus' authority, attempting to trap Him politically, and were tidily addressed. Now the Sadducees went after him religiously, using an internal Jewish squabble.

Their challenge to Jesus was based on the marriage laws of the Old Testament (Gen 38:8; Deut 25:5; Ruth 4:1-12). With an argument they had often used against the Pharisees, they arrogantly assumed that they could trap Jesus with an unanswerable objection to the doctrine of the resurrection. Make sure to read the above Scriptures before answering the questions.

### **QUESTION 1**

What misunderstandings were behind the Sadducees' objection to the resurrection? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. The afterlife is very similar to this life.
- B. One may be married only one time.
- C. The woman's dilemma illustrates the absurdity of the resurrection hope.
- D. The Old Testament does not teach the doctrine of the resurrection.

### **QUESTION 2**

By quoting Exodus 3:6, Jesus refutes the Sadducees. Which of the following best summarizes His main point? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Deuteronomy 25:5 is confirmed by Exodus 3:6.
- B. God is the God in whom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob believed.
- C. If God speaks of Himself as the God of Abraham, then Abraham must exist.
- D. God is the God of promise; if the patriarchs are dead, then the promise to them can never be fulfilled.

### **QUESTION 3**

In Luke 20:35, to whom is Jesus referring when He speaks of those who are considered worthy to take part in the resurrection?

- A. Those who have earned the right to take part by their righteous lives
- B. Those who have lived righteously and earned higher rewards in the afterlife than others
- C. Those who believed in Christ and demonstrated their belief by a life of good works
- D. Those whose worthiness comes from merely believing in Christ

The Sadducees, like all of the Jewish leaders, fail to trick Jesus into saying something that would condemn Him to death. Whether the attack is personal, political, or theological, Jesus remains in control of the situation. His self-mastery is supreme, His command of cultural and biblical issues is unparalleled, and His presence is one of authority. Jesus, not His opposition, commands true leadership of the Jewish people. This passage also discusses and establishes a central aspect of the Christian faith—the resurrection from the dead. Resurrection is not merely wishful thinking, an intellectually stimulating philosophy, or manmade folklore designed to help us deny our eventual demise. We will one day meet resurrection's reality either with joy or dread. When we stand before Christ in glorified resurrection bodies, He will evaluate our lives and determine our eternal futures. Belief in final accountability should dramatically affect the way we live.

## **Topic 2: Confrontation with the Pharisees**

In this topic, we will consider four closely related responses of Jesus to the leaders.

Avoiding the Pharisees' newest attempt to trap Him with a question regarding the greatest commandment, Jesus raises a question from Psalm 110:1 that addresses the identity of David's "Lord." He berates the Pharisees, pronouncing seven woes on them for their hypocritical religion.



In contrast with their blatant hypocrisy, Jesus takes particular note of a poor widow's contribution to the temple coffers. Unlike the arrogance and pride of the Pharisees, this woman's generous humility speaks of a heart that gives everything it has to God.

Some Greeks who are worshipping at the Passover feast make an effort to seek Jesus out. Unlike the leaders of His own people, these Gentiles apparently understand that a divine visitation is occurring. Jesus quotes Isaiah 53:1-3, explaining that His rejection by Israel's leaders was predicted long ago.

## **The Greatest Commandment**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 22:34-40 and Mark 12:28-34.

### **QUESTION 4**

Most Jews would have considered the greatest commandment to be Deuteronomy 6:4, known in Judaism as the *Shema*. With this verse in mind, what were the Pharisees hoping Jesus would answer when they asked, "What is the greatest commandment?"

- A. They hoped He would ignore the Shema and quote another verse.
- B. They hoped He would quote the first verse of the Shema because they could then condemn Him for His claim to be God.
- C. They hoped to use His response, whatever it was, to draw Him into a discussion in which He would contradict Himself.
- D. They wanted Him to answer exactly as He did.

## **Who is David's Lord?**

Sensing the Pharisees' attempt to trap Him by getting Him to openly confess His deity, he asks a question based upon Psalm 110:1.

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:34-37; Luke 20:41-44; and Luke 21:37.

Jews did not view Psalm 110:1 as messianic. They believed that the Messiah would be a king, so kingly passages like this might apply to Him and His role; but this text itself was not seen in messianic terms. Jesus intends to respond to their attempt to use the *Shema* to trap Him by challenging their viewpoint of this passage.

Many of us would deal with such a situation by a direct assertion. We might say, "Look, if David calls his son Lord, then the Messiah must be divine."

However, Jesus recognizes that direct argument rarely works to persuade. The ego involved will resist the confrontation. So, in a wise example of confronting and refuting a commonly held opinion, Jesus asks a question, leaving the Pharisees to ponder it for themselves. Personal reflection and discovery are often the most effective route to a changed viewpoint.

### **QUESTION 5**

What was Jesus saying about Himself in Matthew 22:43-45 by quoting Psalm 110:1?

Rather than directly claiming to be the Messiah or God or directly refuting His listeners' understanding of the Messiah, Jesus raises a theoretical question regarding the reason the Messiah is referred to as David's Lord. However, a full explanation of this awaits Luke 22:69, where Jesus finally uses this passage to make His Messianic claim explicit and assert His deity.

In this passage, Jesus also significantly declares that David wrote Psalm 110 (Mk 12:36). Some modern critics of the Psalms insist on different authorship.

## **Blind Guides**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 23:1-39, Mark 12:38-40; and Luke 13:34-35; 20:45-47; 21:38.

Jesus continues on the offensive. In the most derisive passage in the Gospels, He rebukes the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees who strut around with their phylacteries, piously pretending godliness when they are internally totally corrupt. These spiritual leaders love walking about in long robes, receiving attention and formal greetings in the market place, places of honor in the synagogue, and receiving the first seats at the dinner table.

#### **First Seats at the Dinner Table**

Jesus had earlier addressed this problem with His disciples in Luke 14:7-14. These prestigious seats, which the scribes loved, were the ones nearest the host, likely at the center of a horseshoe-shaped table.

#### **Places of Honor**

The synagogue had places called the "first seats," likely a row of seats close to the front and near the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. The Pharisees liked the honor of sitting here, and, in fact, usually demanded it.

Jesus rebukes the leaders harshly, simultaneously warning His disciples not to be like them (Mt 23:2-3).

## QUESTION 6

Jesus scathingly denounces the scribes and Pharisees for seven things. Match the Scripture with the characteristic.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Characteristic</i>
Matthew 23:13	Causing innocent Jewish proselytes to become more pharisaic than the Pharisees themselves
Matthew 23:14	Emphasizing outward display rather than inward piety
Matthew 23:15	Joining with the OT Jewish leaders as killers of the prophets
Matthew 23:16	Distorting and confusing Scripture
Matthew 23:23	Substituting legalism for justice and mercy
Matthew 23:25-28	Distorting the way of salvation
Matthew 23:29-35	Devouring the helpless while pretending great piety

## QUESTION 7

Jesus berates the scribes and the Pharisees ferociously for their pretended piety, and then, in striking contrast, He commends a poor widow who placed two tiny copper coins into the temple offering box. She gave everything she had, He declares. In fact, she put in more than anyone else who had given. What lessons regarding giving might we learn from her example?

### Copper Coins

Her copper coins were called *lepta*. They were the smallest coins in Palestine. Two *lepta* equaled less than 2 percent of a day's wages.

In contrast to the leaders who take from those in need and leave them devastated (i.e., “devour widows’ houses,” Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47) while pretending righteousness, this poor woman enacts true worship by giving all that she has. It seems that the Lord sees not only what we give, but also what we have left after giving. The widow’s sacrificial act illustrates her trust in God’s care.

## QUESTION 8

It is easy to look at the Pharisees and think, “These are evil people,” forgetting that some of these tendencies show up even in us! In your Life Notebook reflect carefully on the tendencies you may have observed in your own life.

## Topic 3: The Close of His Public Ministry

Wednesday, April 1, AD 33

Unable and unwilling to see the divine visitation before their very eyes, the leaders of the nation are condemned by the Jesus as sons of gehenna. But now, Greeks arrive and request to see the Lord. Symbolically, these Greeks represent the non-Jewish world; their desire to see Jesus, or have an interview with Him, stands in stark contrast with the Jewish Pharisees' exasperation and murderous intent.

### Sons of Gehenna

When Jesus calls the Pharisees "sons of *gehenna*" (Mt 23:15), He may be saying they are bound for eternal damnation. However, in view of the fact that *gehenna* referred more frequently to a garbage dump outside Jerusalem, the word also spoke of judgment; the concept of one's body burning in the city dump was a powerful symbol of shame and disgrace. Therefore, Jesus may be referring to the shame of a wasted life. This of course, does not deny that since they are non-believers, they will experience eternal damnation as well.

This request for an interview allows John to introduce Jesus' teaching regarding His coming death and the affirmation of the Father. Jesus concludes His public ministry with a quotation from Isaiah, in which His rejection was predicted.

## A Grain of Wheat

### Assignment

- Read John 12:20-36.

To the Greeks, Philip was the most approachable of the disciples. Philip had a Greek name. Or perhaps they came from Decapolis, which was near Philip's hometown in Bethsaida of Galilee. Whatever the case, Scripture does not relate how Jesus responds to the request for an audience. Instead, we hear Him speak of the immediacy of the need for discipleship, especially in view of His imminent death.

### QUESTION 9

When Jesus speaks of a kernel of wheat falling into the ground and dying, what is He saying about dedicated discipleship?

- Unless a person is willing to lose his life, he will be damned.
- Finding salvation is conditional on the disciple's heart intent to give up everything.
- We must hate life in this world in order to obtain eternal life.
- One who believes in Christ will be living for Him, and not for this world.

The seed in Jesus' example demonstrates this principle: Death is necessary to obtain life. This is true of Jesus, and it is true of His followers. In the same way that Jesus was glorified in His death, we will be honored by the Father at the judgment seat of Christ with regard to our willingness to die to ourselves and serve without reservation. Dying to self is not a life of self-denial; it is a life signified by allegiance to Christ.

## His Rejection Foretold

### Assignment

- Read John 12:36-50.
- Read the “The Structure of the Olivet Discourse.”

### The Structure of the Olivet Discourse

The magnificent sermon Jesus delivered on the Mount of Olives announced the destiny of the generation that had rejected Him. In this message He spoke to His disciples of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, the future tribulation on the earth, and His second coming.

Many details of the passage are subject to various interpretations. We will follow the outline of the Sermon suggested by J. R. Edwards in his scholarly commentary “Mark” in the *Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

Edwards suggests that in this sermon, Jesus speaks of both things that will occur in the present, “these things,” and things that will happen at the end of the age in “that day.” The phrase “that day” is common in the Old Testament and refers to the day of the Lord at the end of history (Zech 14:6,8; Isa 2:11; 4:2; 11:10, 11; 12:1, 4; 52:6; Jer 30:7, 8; Ezek 38:10, 14;39:11, etc.)

When Jesus said that the magnificent temple would be destroyed (Mt 24:2), the amazed disciples asked, “When will these things happen?” (Mt 24:4). They also asked, “What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” These are really one question, as Mark 13:4 indicates. The answer to this second question relates to “that day,” the predicted Old Testament day of the Lord when the Messiah would come and establish His kingdom.

Thus, the sermon can be divided into four sections following an A-B, A'-B' pattern, where A refers to the generation then living and the destruction of the temple, and B refers to the future day of Christ's return.

A The End of the Temple and the Fall of Jerusalem (Mt 24:1-14; Mk 13:1-13).

B The Tribulation and Second Coming (Mt 24:15-31; Mk 13:14-27)

A'. The End of the Temple and the Fall of Jerusalem (Mt 24:32-35); Mk 13:28-31)

B' The Second Coming and Watchfulness (Mt 24:36-51; Mk 13:32-37)

## Structure of the Olivet Discourse

Teaching		Application	
<p><b>The Destruction of the Temple</b></p> <p>"But all <b>these things</b> are the beginning of birth things" v. 8</p> <p>"These things" vv. 3, 6, 8,</p> <p><b>Mt. 24:1</b>      <b>14</b></p> <p>The Destruction and of the Temple and the Fall of Jerusalem (70AD)</p>	<p><b>The Second Coming of Christ</b></p> <p>"But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in <b>those days!</b>" v. 19</p> <p>"That day, those days" vv. 19, 22,</p> <p><b>15</b>                      <b>31</b></p> <p>The Tribulation and the Second Coming</p>	<p><b>The Parable of the Fig Tree</b></p> <p>"This generation will not pass away until all <b>these things</b> take place" v. 34</p> <p>"These things" vv. 33, 34</p> <p><b>32</b>                      <b>35</b></p> <p>The Destruction and of the Temple and the Fall of Jerusalem (70AD)</p>	<p><b>Taken to be with Him</b></p> <p>"But of <b>that day</b> and hour no one knows." v. 36</p> <p><b>That day</b> = the future day when believers are taken to be with Christ</p> <p>"Be on the alert" v.42</p> <p>"That day, those days" vv. 36, 38,</p> <p><b>36</b>                      <b>51</b></p> <p>The Tribulation and the Rapture</p>

### Matthew 24:1-14 – The Destruction of the Temple

As Jesus left the temple for the last time, His disciples commented, "Look, see these massive stones." Jesus responded by saying that the entire edifice would be reduced to rubble, referring to the Roman siege that occurred in AD 70. It is possible that because the disciples' questions and the book of Zechariah both connected that destruction with the final day of the Lord (Zech 14:1-8), the second coming, that this local destruction is intended to prefigure the final one.

The disciples asked, "When will these things be?" referring to the destruction of the temple. What would be the sign when "these things" would be fulfilled?

Jesus then warned them of events that would occur leading up to the destruction of the city and the temple in AD 70. But He told them to be wary of signs, which could deceive; in fact, there would be false prophets who would deceive many. In the mid-forties, Theudas (Acts 5:36) boasted of various signs (including the ability to part the Jordan River) that, according to the Jewish historian Josephus, "led many astray" (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 20.97–98). Josephus adds another account about an Egyptian who claimed to be a prophet who likewise succeeded in deceiving the populace (Josephus, *War of the Jews*, 2.261–63).

Other threats would develop—wars and rumors of wars. This was fulfilled from AD 37-41, when Emperor Caligula attempted to erect a statue of himself in the temple in Jerusalem. Edwards says,

Josephus uses a phrase very similar to 13:7 to describe the rumors of war circulating in Caligula's day. The rumors of Caligula's day turned out to be only that, but twenty-five years later total war broke out in AD 66 when the Zealot revolt plunged Palestine into a catastrophic defeat by Rome. There were famines during the reign of Claudius (Roman emperor, AD 41–54; see Acts 11:28). Earthquakes struck Phrygia in AD 61 and leveled Pompey in AD 63. The language of vv. 7–8 finds striking parallels in Tacitus's description particularly of the last years of Nero's megalomania and the civil wars that followed his suicide in AD 68. Not surprisingly, toward the end of the first century, Revelation 6 contains a similar list of wars, famine, earthquakes, and persecutions.

Persecution would follow, and many disciples would be brought before courts and flogged in the synagogues. However, all these trials would not signify the end of history because the gospel must be preached in the entire world before the end can come (Mt 24:14).

### **Matthew 24:15-31 – The Tribulation and the Second**

Coming

The natural question is, “What is the sign of the end?” To answer that, Jesus jumps to the end of history in Matthew 24:15-31.

The key sign that the day of the Lord has come is the abomination of desolation. The same phrase is used in 1 Maccabees 1:54 to describe Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), the Syrian general who outraged the Jews in 168 BC by erecting an altar to Zeus on the altar of burnt offering in the temple and sacrificing a sow on it.

Many scholars believe that this refers to the future blasphemy of the Antichrist predicted in 2 Thessalonians 2:4. In the middle of the final seven years of history, he will be revealed (2 Thess 2:3). He will be known as a peace-bringing world leader at first, but his true nature will become known when he declares himself an object of worship and cancels the sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem. At this time he will set up an image of himself in the temple in Jerusalem. After a three-and-one-half year rise to power, he finally will become a world dictator and be given authority over the world for forty-two months (Rev 13:5).

During this time, the great tribulation will occur (Mt 24:21) and immediately afterward, the second coming (Mt 24:29-31). Christ will gather the elect of Israel to the land (Mt 24:31), and they will believe on Him (Zech 12:10) and all Israel will be saved, as promised in the Old Testament (Isa 11:12; 40:11; 43:5; 49:5; 54:7; 56:8; Jer 23:3; 29:14; 31:8; 10; 32:37; Ezek 20:41; 28:25; 34:13; 37:21-22; 38:8; 39:28; Mic 4:6,12; Zeph 3:20; Zech 10:8, 10:10).

Exactly 1,260 days after the revelation of the Antichrist, the second coming will occur. Daniel tells us that this final period of history will last a “week,” a period of seven years (Dan 9:27). This is confirmed by the book of Revelation. This three-and-one-half years is apparently the last half of the “week,” where the Antichrist breaks the covenant he made with Israel (Dan 9:27) and sets up an image of himself in the temple in Jerusalem, the abomination of desolation (Mt 24:15).

Each year had 360 days, thus 2,520 days would elapse between the beginning of the week with the signing of the treaty with Israel and the second coming to earth. (See Rev 11:2-3 where the time period of forty-two months is said to be 1,260 days and then in Rev 13:5 the Antichrist is given forty-two months to rule the world.) Daniel specified that there would be 1,290 days from the abomination of desolation until some unspecified event. Since the last half of the week is only 1,260 days, it is uncertain what the extra thirty days refer to. Perhaps, the announcement of the image that will be set up (the abomination) is made thirty days before the middle of the week, and before the actual image is installed in the temple. All this is uncertain speculation.

### **Matthew 24:32-35 – The Destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 – The Parable of the Fig Tree**

Following the A - B, A' - B' pattern described at the beginning of this article, Jesus now returns to “these things,” (Mt 24:34) the things that related to the destruction of the city and the temple by the Romans in AD 70.

In the parable of the fig tree, He told His disciples that when they saw it blossom, they would know that “it,” or the time of Jerusalem’s destruction, is near. It is unfortunate that the Greek pronoun “it” is sometimes translated “He,” reading “He is near.” This has led to the confusing idea that the reference is to the nearness of Christ’s coming, which, of course, did not occur in the first century

AD. The reference is not to the nearness of Christ's coming, but to the nearness of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

"All these things" probably refers to the terrible situation leading up to this event described in Matthew 24:8 as the "beginning of birth pains."

### **Matthew 24:36-51 – The Tribulation and the Removal of Christians**

Once again Jesus switches to the distant future and begins to discuss the time of the arrival of "coming of the Son of Man" which begins "that day," the day of the Lord. He says that no one can know when He will return (Mt 24:37). It will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night (Mt 24:43). This is in contrast to the second coming, which can be calculated precisely, 2,520 days after the signing of the covenant by the Antichrist and the abomination of desolation.

But then He announced that before that day begins, the believers will be taken (Mt 24:40-41) and the rest will be left to endure the terrible judgments of the day of the Lord.

The Greek word for taken is *paralambano*. This is the same word Jesus uses in John 14:3, one night later (Thursday evening) later in describing the rapture of the church as the time when He will come again and receive (Greek *paralambano*) us to Himself.

Many sincere Bible scholars have different opinions as to when the rapture occurs (1 Thess 4:13-18). Some believe it occurs that the end of the tribulation at the same time as the second coming. This passage seems to suggest that the coming of the Lord in Matthew 24:37 is a different stage in His coming to earth than the coming in Matthew 24:30. Why? There are at least two reasons.

First, the stage of His coming mentioned in verse 30 can be calculated as to its time of occurrence. It will happen exactly 2,520 days after sign of the abomination of desolation. But the coming in verse 37 comes unexpectedly, like a thief in the night, and no one knows the day or the hour.

Second, the second coming in verse 30 occurs at a time of worldwide catastrophe, right at the close of the most terrible tribulation which has ever come upon the earth (Rev 6-19).

It is time of war, famine, and plagues (Rev 6:1-8). As it draws to a close the earth is filled with terror. Earthquakes occur, the sun is darkened, and the kings of the earth hide in caves and beg the mountains, "Fall upon us and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb!" (Rev 6:12-17). A third of the sea has become blood (Rev 8:8) and a third of the waters of the rivers and lakes are poisoned (Rev 8:9-10). A third of mankind is killed (Rev 9:18) by terrible plagues. Satan is cast out of heaven and falls upon the earth (Rev 12:13), where he launches a terrible persecution of the Jews (Rev 12:17). The Antichrist rises to power and rules the world for the final forty-two months (Rev 13:5) of this seven-year period. Those who do not worship him are killed (Rev 13:15). He makes war upon all who come to Christ during this time (Rev 13:7). The image of the beast, the abomination of desolation which he installed in the temple in Jerusalem at the middle of the tribulation is given life and speaks (Rev 13:15).

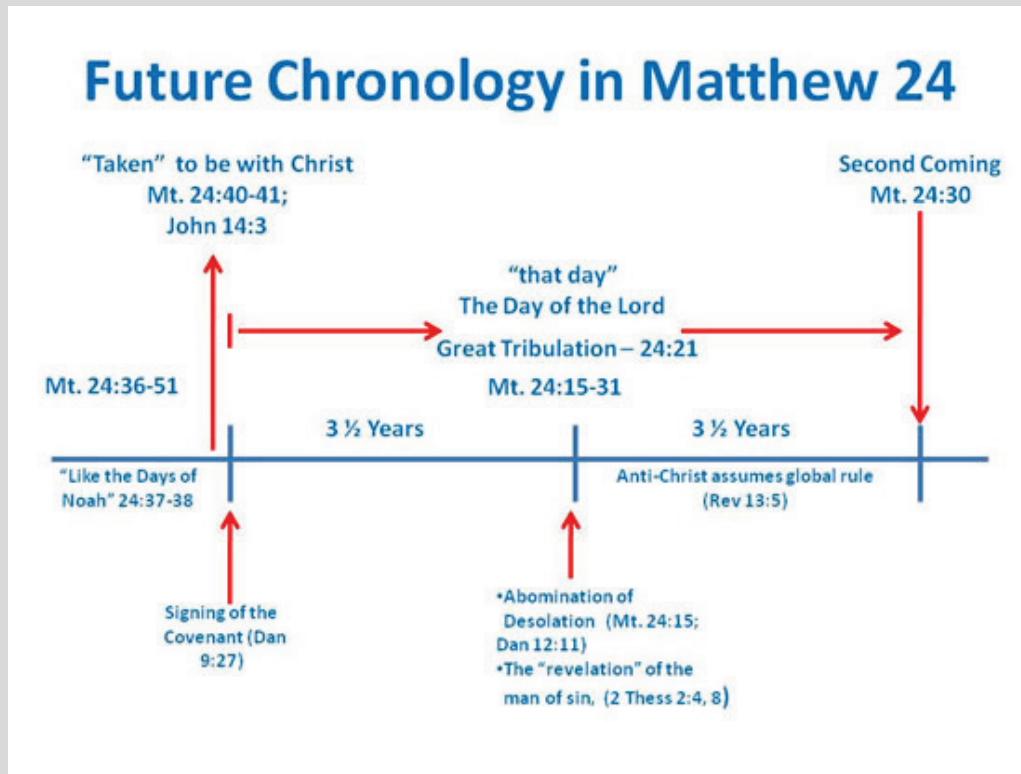
How does all this compare with the coming of Christ mentioned in Matthew 24:37? The contrast could not be more complete. The "coming" of this passage occurs at a time when there is eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. Life will go on as normal, as it did "until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mt 24:37-39). This is hardly the situation when Christ returns as described in the verses above.

But when does this taking occur? The events before the day of the Lord are as they were before the flood. Just as Noah was taken to safety in the ark and then the flood came, believers will be taken to be with Christ (Jn 14:3) and then the day of the Lord and the rule of Antichrist will begin. In another comparison, Jesus notes that just as Lot was removed before the judgment on Sodom, so the believers will be removed prior to the beginning of the day of the Lord (Lk 17:28-30).



In this section of the sermon, Jesus moved from doctrine to application. In view of the fact that the taking of the believers can occur unexpectedly and without any warning, we should live as if any moment could be that last moment. We should always be prepared for His return. We should never be engaged in thoughts or actions which we would find embarrassing if He should suddenly appear.

The chronology of the future events surrounding the rapture and the second coming in the Olivet Discourse may be diagrammed this way.



Because of the nation's unbelief and rejection of the Messiah, God hardened the people so that their condemnation was both just and certain. This created problems for the early Christians when they presented Jesus as the Messiah. Why would the Jews reject Him if He was the answer to prophecy?

Their answer was that this rejection was necessary—not only because it was predicted in Isaiah 53:1-4 and Isaiah 6:1-10, but because the Messiah had to die to redeem the world of its sins (Isa 53:4-6).

### QUESTION 10

Read Isaiah 6:1-10. Who did Isaiah see?

- A. Elijah
- B. John the Baptist
- C. Jesus
- D. Moses

Sadly, in the face of such national rejection, some of the rulers who had believed in Jesus were hesitant and fearful to come forward (Jn 12:42). Some believe this means that these Pharisees were not really saved at all. Others believe that they were truly saved, but like many since then, were unwilling to take a public stand because of fear.

Our Lord has completed His public ministry to the nation. He has warned them amply and provided solid evidence, leaving no excuse for their rejection. Even Jesus' Father has testified from heaven. The nation will be left to continue on her path to the destruction that will be brought upon her in thirty-seven years.

Jesus completely devotes His final forty-eight hours to preparing His disciples for the catastrophic events of the next days.

## **Topic 4: The Olivet Discourse**

### **Wednesday, April 1, AD 33**

Jesus departs the temple area and walks with His disciples across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives. As they walked, the disciples, awestruck by the sight of the magnificent Temple, commented, "Teacher, look at these tremendous stones and buildings!" (Mk 13:1).

It was indeed a magnificent structure. Herod's massive, eighty-year refurbishment of the magnificent temple was being carried out. The foundation and walls were expanded using white marble stones twenty-two meters long, four meters high, and six meters wide. Gold- and silver-plated gates and doors flashed in the sun, adorning the resplendent temple complex. This holy building was the center of Jewish national identity, and because Yahweh dwelt there, it was believed to be impregnable and thought to be a fortress against Roman conquest.

Jesus makes it clear that the disciples should not be impressed. The temple and all it stands for will be catastrophically destroyed. Shocked, the disciples naturally want to know when this will happen. In His answer, Christ outlines with detail the events leading up to the destruction of the temple and also describes end time events that speak explicitly of His second coming.

### **QUESTION 11**

Read the article on the structure of the Olivet Discourse (placed earlier in the lesson). Which sections of Matthew 24 relate to "these days" and which sections relate to "that day?" Do you agree with the article? Why or why not? What is a possible meaning of the phrase "this generation will not pass away"?

## **Background and Context**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 24:1-3; Mark 13:1-4; and Luke 21:5-9.

There are several different understandings of the Olivet Discourse, and we do not have space within this lesson to present them all. Instead, we will offer a suggested outline of this amazing chapter in the article on the structure of the Olivet Discourse (placed earlier in the lesson).

One of the major problems in understanding this discourse is Jesus' perplexing statement, "This generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (Mt 24:34). Does this refer to events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem, or does it refer to events of the great tribulation that will lead to His second coming? Some believe most of the discourse refers to events in the close future, such as the Roman siege of Jerusalem in AD 70. Others say it refers exclusively to events of the predicted great tribulation and second coming. This topic presents Jesus' words as referring to the immediate future in some sections, and to the events of His future return in others.

## QUESTION 12

Please read the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24–25 carefully and match the Scripture passage with its title.

<i>Scripture Passage</i>	<i>Title</i>
Matthew 24:1-14	The Destruction of the Temple
Matthew 24:15-31	The Parable of the Talents
Matthew 24:32-35	The Sheep and the Goats
Matthew 24:36-51	The Second Coming
Matthew 25:1-13	The Parable of the Fig Tree
Matthew 25:14-30	Taken to be with Christ
Matthew 25:31-46	The Parable of the Ten Virgins

The sobering news of the majestic temple’s destruction likely silences the disciples on the rest of their trek across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives. The quiet provides them with some needed time for reflection.

Upon arrival, they ask Jesus two questions: “When will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age?” (Mt 24:3) Based on Zechariah 12:1-3; 13:8-9; 14:1-4, they know that just before the Messiah came to establish His kingdom, Jerusalem will be destroyed and many will be slaughtered. They naturally connected His announcement of Jerusalem’s catastrophe with the end of the age.

Understanding this discourse and correlating it with other Scriptures takes some study. You may have difficulty answering the questions to follow unless you have spent some time reflecting on the sequence of events laid out in the article on the structure of the Olivet Discourse (placed earlier in the lesson).

## QUESTION 13

I have read the article and looked up the Scriptures. *True or False?*

## The Destruction of the Temple

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 24:4-14 and Mark 13:5-12.

In this section of the discourse, Jesus answers the question, “When will *these things* happen?”

He predicts events that will lead up to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70: false messiahs, wars, rumors of wars, famine, and earthquakes. Scholars note that many catastrophes of this kind occurred between AD 40 and 70. However, other scholars hold that these events refer to the future tribulation preceding Christ’s return.

Christ’s first-century followers will face severe persecution. Jesus now encourages them, saying that those who endure to the end will be saved. This passage is subjected to much debate: The end of what—their lives? The persecution? Saved from what—final damnation? A wasted life? Persecution?

The following question explores these options.

## QUESTION 14

According to Jesus, “those who endure to the end will be saved” (Mt 24:13). What does this mean?

- A. Those who endure the persecutions of the great tribulation will one day be vindicated by God and rewarded.
- B. Those who endure the persecutions prove by their endurance that they are truly saved people.
- C. Those who endure the persecutions leading up to and during the siege of Jerusalem will be vindicated by God and rewarded.
- D. Those who endure the persecutions will not forfeit salvation, but if they fail to endure, salvation will be lost.

## QUESTION 15

Throughout the Olivet Discourse, Jesus continually addresses “you.” To whom is He referring?

- A. Believing Jews in the last days
- B. Believers living at the time of the prophetic fulfillment
- C. The apostles
- D. The church during the age before the tribulation

## The Tribulation and the Second Coming

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 24:15-31; Mark 13:28-31; Luke 17:22-25; 21:25-34; and Revelation 6:1-16.
- Read the article “The Antichrist.”

### The Antichrist

Scripture has a great deal to say concerning the individual who will appear in the end time as the head of the Gentile powers in their ten-kingdom federation. His person and work are presented in Daniel 7:7-8, 20-26; 8:23-25; 9:26-27; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10; Revelation 13:1-10; 17:8-14. A synthesis of the truths in these passages will reveal the following facts concerning his activities:

1. He will appear on the scene in the “latter times” of Israel’s history (Dan 8:23).
2. He will not appear until the day of the Lord has begun (2 Thess 2:2).
3. His manifestation will be hindered by a restrainer (2 Thess 2:6-7).
4. This appearance will be preceded by a departure (2 Thess 2:3), which has been understood either as a departure from the faith or a departure of the saints to be with the Lord (2 Thess 2:1).
5. He is a Gentile. Since he arises from the sea (Rev 13:1) and the sea depicts the Gentile nations (Rev 17:15), he must be of Gentile origin.
6. He rises from the Roman empire, since he is a ruler of the people who destroyed Jerusalem (Dan 9:26).

He is the head of the last Gentile dominion, for he is like a leopard, a bear, and a lion (Dan 7:7-8, 20, 24; Rev 13:1; 17:9-11). As such, he is a political leader. The seven heads and ten horns are federated under his authority.

7. His influence is worldwide, for he rules over all nations (Rev 13:8). This influence comes through the alliance with he makes with other nations (Dan 8:24; Rev 17:12).
8. He has eliminated three rulers in his rise to power (Dan 7:8, 24). One of the kingdoms over which he has authority has been revived, for one of the heads representing a kingdom or a king (Rev 17:10) has been healed (Rev 13:3).
9. His rise comes through his peace program (Dan 8:25).
10. He is marked by his intelligence and persuasiveness (Dan 7:8, 20; 8:23) and by his subtlety and craft, so that his authority over the nations is by their own consent (Rev 17:13).
11. He rules over the nations in his federation with absolute authority (Dan 11:36), where he does his own will. This authority is manifested through the change in laws and customs (Dan 7:25).
12. His chief interest is in might and power (Dan 11:38).
13. As head of the federated empire, he makes a seven-year covenant with Israel, which is broken after three and one-half years (Dan 9:27).
14. He introduces an idolatrous worship (Dan 9:27) in which he sets himself up as god (Dan 11:36-37; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:5).
15. He bears the characterization of a blasphemer because of the assumption of deity (Dan 7:25; Rev 13:1-6).
16. He is energized by Satan (Rev 13:4), receives his authority from him, and is controlled by the pride of the devil (Dan 8:25).
17. He is the head of Satan's lawless system (2 Thess 2:3) and his claim to power and to deity is proved by signs wrought through satanic power (2 Thess 2:9-19).
18. He is received as God and as a ruler because of the blindness of the people (2 Thess 2:11).
19. This ruler becomes the great adversary of Israel (Dan 7:21, 25; 8:24; Rev 13:7).
20. There will come an alliance against him (Dan 11:40-42), which will contest his authority.
21. In the ensuing conflict he will gain control over Palestine and adjacent territory (Dan 11:42) and will make his headquarters in Jerusalem (Dan 11:45).
22. This ruler, at the time of his rise to power, is elevated through the instrumentality of the harlot, a corrupt religious system, which consequently seeks to dominate him (Rev 17:3).
23. This system is destroyed by the ruler so that he may rule unhindered (Rev 17:16-17).
24. He becomes the special adversary of the Prince of Princes (Dan 8:25), his program (2 Thess 2:4; Rev 17:14), and his people (Dan 7:21, 25; 8:24; Rev 13:7).
25. While he continues in power for seven years (Dan 9:27), his satanic activity is confined to the last half of the tribulation period (Dan 7:25; 9:27; 11:36; Rev 13:5).
26. His rule will be terminated by a direct judgment from God (Dan 7:22, 26; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45 Rev 19:19-20).

27. This judgment will take place as he is engaged in a military campaign in Palestine (Rev 19:19), and he will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20).
28. This judgment will take place at the second advent of Christ (Dan 7:22; 2 Thess 2:8) and will constitute a manifestation of His Messianic authority (Rev 11:15).
29. The kingdom over which he ruled will pass to the authority of the Messiah and will become the kingdom of the saints (Dan 7:27).

J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978, 332-334.

In Matthew 24:4-14, Jesus was explaining when the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem would occur (Mt 24:3, 8). Now He takes them to the distant future, “those days,” (Mt 24:19, 22) and addresses their second question: “What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?”

### QUESTION 16

Read the passages above and match the Scriptures with the sign or situation on the earth in the days before the second coming.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Situation on Earth</i>
Matthew 24:15	The elapsing of exactly 1,260 days, or forty-two months, after the Antichrist assumes control, followed by Christ’s return
Revelation 6:15-17	Men fainting from terror
Matthew 24:21	Millions hiding in caves, begging for sudden death
Luke 21:26	Nations in perplexity; turmoil all over the world
Luke 21:25	The abomination of desolation
Matthew 24:22	The worst tribulation in history
Revelation 13:5	Global catastrophe so severe that, unless it ends, all flesh on earth will be killed

Jesus, continuing His answer to the question about the signs that will mark the end, says the end of the age will come after the abomination of desolation is set up in the Holy Place. This abomination seems to refer to a statue of the Antichrist being erected in the temple in Jerusalem.

### QUESTION 17

The Bible shares many details about the career of the Antichrist and this abomination in particular. Review the article “The Antichrist,” (placed earlier in the lesson) and then match the Scripture with an aspect of his career.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Events in the Antichrist’s Career</i>
Daniel 9:27	He will be cast into the lake of fire.
2 Thessalonians 2:4	He sets himself up as a god.
Revelation 17:3	He makes a seven-year covenant with Israel.
Revelation 19:20	He rises to power on the back of a false religious system.
Revelation 13:8	He will be a dictator over all the world.

The term “great tribulation” (Mt 24:21) refers to the final forty-two months (1,260 days) of Daniel’s predicted seventieth week (Rev 11:3; 13:5). This is a time of tribulation more severe than any other

recorded in history (Mt 24:21), which implies that it does not refer to the church's often severe tribulation since Christ's departure.

When the nations of earth launch a revolt against the Antichrist's dictatorship, catastrophic war ensues. The Antichrist invades Palestine, and slaughter reigns at the battle of Armageddon (Dan 11:45; Rev 16:16).

As this period of terror nears its end, darkness settles tensely over the entire earth (Mt 24:29). Suddenly, lightning flashes from one end of the heavens to the other, shattering the pervading darkness as the Son of Man appears (Mt 24:30)! He gathers the Jewish people (his elect) from the four corners of the earth (Mt 24:31).

### **QUESTION 18**

Based on Revelation 19:17-18 what might be a plausible symbolic interpretation of Matthew 24:28?

### **QUESTION 19**

List at least five things which Jesus says will characterize His coming in Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:28-31; Luke 17:22-25, 21:25-34; and Revelation 6:1-16.

### **QUESTION 20**

What is the sign of His coming?

## **The Parable of the Fig Tree**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-37; and Luke 17:26-27.
- Read "This Generation."

### **This Generation**

There have been a number of different interpretations of this perplexing phrase.

### **The disciples would see the end before they died**

Some feel that Jesus was simply wrong. He predicted His second coming would occur before all of the disciples died, but it did not happen.

This is the most intrinsically unlikely of all the views. If Jesus had really meant this, would the early church have included this error in the New Testament writings? No. They would have buried this embarrassing saying or else abandoned the hope of the second coming. They did neither.

Others reinterpret the meaning of “coming” and argue that His coming occurred in AD 70, when God brought judgment on the city of Jerusalem by the Roman armies. However, this does not fit the passage. Jesus’ coming in Matthew 24:29-31 is a personal, physical return in total judgment—not just on the city of Jerusalem, but on the whole world.

### **The judgment of AD 70 is a type of the final judgment**

Some have argued that when Jesus referred to the judgment that would come upon “this generation,” He simply meant that the invasion of AD 70 was a type of the judgment that will come at the end of the world. Thus, Jesus was really saying that this group of disciples would experience the catastrophe of AD 70 in their lifetime, and this event reflects the beginning of end-time events. However, when Jesus speaks of “these things” in Matthew 24:34, He is speaking of end-time events, and not AD 70.

This view has some plausibility and should be considered as a possible option.

### **“Generation” means “race”**

Because the word “generation” could refer to a race, some have argued that Jesus is saying that the Jewish race will not pass away until the end occurs. There is a future for Israel. Or some say the “race of disciples.” In other words, there will always be disciples until the end of the age. Yet there is little evidence in Scripture that “generation” can mean “Israel.” A serious objection to this view is the word “until.” It suggests then that the Jewish race will not pass away “until” the end occurs. This would presumably imply that the Jewish people or the disciples will pass away *after* the end occurs, a conclusion contradicted by many other passages.

### **“Generation” means “ungodly people”**

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus refers to “this generation.” The term is primarily a descriptive terms of a certain kind of people, unbelieving and corrupt. In this interpretation, Jesus is simply that evil men will continue to exist right up to the end and at that time they will be destroyed. This view is plausible and should be considered.

### **“This generation” refers to the end-time generation**

Jesus addresses the disciples as representatives of God’s people. In this interpretation, He means that the future generation that sees the beginning of these things will also see the end. The generation that sees the beginning of the end also will see the end. When the signs come, they will come quickly.

In the parable of the fig tree, Jesus returns to their first question, “When will *these things* happen?” The subject matter is no longer, “that day,” but “these things,” the events leading up to the destruction of the temple in AD 70.

Although some see the fig tree’s blossoming to represent the re-establishment of the Jewish state in the nation of Israel (1948), this is tenuous on a scriptural basis. Symbolically, the fig tree usually represents



fruitfulness or good fortune. There is only one place in the Old Testament where it is likened to the nation of Israel.

The interpretation this course takes of this passage suggests that, just as a fig tree announces the coming of summer, so the destruction of the magnificent temple is near. In fact, it will occur within “this generation.”

### **QUESTION 21**

Regarding the signs of Matthew 24:4-28, Jesus says that “this generation” will not pass away before all these things occur. Several suggestions have been made regarding what this means. Recall what you read in the article about this generation, then open your Life Notebook and summarize which view of this term makes the most sense to you and why. Do you agree or disagree with the viewpoint presented in the article on the structure of the Olivet Discourse (placed earlier in the lesson)? Why or why not?

## **Taken for Salvation**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 24:36-42; Mark 13:32-35; and Luke 17:26-37.

Beginning with Matthew 24:32-41, a striking calmness characterizes the sermon, contrasting drastically with Jesus’ foretelling of men mourning, heavens shaking, and the dramatic signs preceding His return. Furthermore, Christ comes in this passage unexpectedly, without any signs, at a time when men are carrying on with life in a normal manner.

Some feel that those taken in Matthew 24:40 are taken in judgment like those taken in Matthew 24:39. Literary parallelism could certainly indicate this.

Others feel that those taken in verse 40 are taken to salvation at the rapture of the church.

As to when the taking will occur, some feel that it follows the events of verse 31 and others feel it precedes the events of verses 15-31. They point out that the contrasts between the two comings of verse 30 and verse 42 are so dramatically different that they must refer to two separate aspects of one coming. The scene before verse 15 is like the days of Noah, business as usual and “peace and safety” (1 Thess 5:1-3).

### **QUESTION 22**

Read Matthew 24:15-44; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; and Luke 17:22-37. In your Life Notebook, list all the contrasts you can between the descriptions of Jesus’ coming and summarize when you feel these events occur.

### **QUESTION 23**

According to the interpretation suggested in this lesson, when the disciples ask about the timing of “these things,” What explanation does Jesus give?

- A. The time of the destruction of the temple and of the city of Jerusalem will occur in “this generation.”
- B. His coming and the events of Matthew 24:4-28 will come at a time when men are carrying on business as usual.
- C. Christ does not know the timing of His coming and the events of Matthew 24:4-28.
- D. The beginning of birth pangs is the sign of His coming.

## **Topic 5: Matching Events**

### **QUESTION 24**

To help you memorize these events, we have compiled a list of important events in the life of Christ. Review events 25, 38, 43, 47, 48, 49, and 51 in the Matching Events chart found in the appendix. Cover the event descriptions and see if you can identify the associated scriptures.

## Lesson 6 Self Check

### QUESTION 1

In Luke 20:35, to whom is Jesus referring when He speaks of those who are considered worthy to take part in the resurrection?

- A. Those who have earned the right to take part by their righteous lives
- B. Those who have lived righteously and earned higher rewards in the afterlife than others
- C. Those who believed in Christ and demonstrated their belief by a life of good works
- D. Those whose worthiness comes from merely believing in Christ

### QUESTION 2

Jesus' use of Psalm 110:1 cannot be interpreted as a claim of His divine authority. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 3

The alternating pattern in the Olivet Discourse tells us that Jesus was referring to:

- A. Only the distant future.
- B. The immediate times.
- C. Near future, distant future, near future, distant future.
- D. Only the near future.

### QUESTION 4

When Jesus said "This generation will not pass away before all these things come to pass," He was probably referring to:

- A. The disciples
- B. The Jewish race
- C. Ungodly people
- D. The generation living in the first century

### QUESTION 5

When Jesus speaks of a kernel of wheat falling into the ground and dying, what is He saying about dedicated discipleship?

- A. Unless a person is willing to lose his life, he will be damned.
- B. Finding salvation is conditional on the disciple's heart intent to give up everything.
- C. We must hate life in this world in order to obtain eternal life.
- D. One who places Christ first will experience life richly now, and will continue to do so in eternity.

### QUESTION 6

As discussed in the lesson, the "abomination of desolation" refers to:

- A. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70
- B. An event discussed in 2 Thessalonians 2
- C. The placing of a statue to Caesar in the temple
- D. Any sacrilege brought against the temple in Jerusalem

**QUESTION 7**

The great tribulation refers to the first three and a half years of Daniel's Seventieth Week. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 8**

According to the book of Revelation, how much time will elapse between the abomination of desolation and Christ's second coming?

- A. 1,260 days
- B. Seven years
- C. We cannot be sure
- D. One week

**QUESTION 9**

Who is the one taken in "one will be taken and one will be left"?

- A. Taken in judgment at the beginning of the tribulation
- B. Taken in judgment at the end of the tribulation
- C. Taken to be with Christ before the tribulation
- D. Taken to be with Christ at the end of the tribulation

**QUESTION 10**

When the Bible speaks of "the Antichrist," it refers not primarily to a person, but to antichristian influences throughout the history of the church. *True or False?*

## Unit 2 Exam: Life of Christ, Volume 2

### QUESTION 1

Which of the following does the parable of the laborers in the vineyard **not** teach about such things as ability, opportunity, and length of service?

- A. It shows that we should not devalue menial service or overestimate prominent work in this life.
- B. It indicates that though the Lord will generously reward those whose devoted labor for Him produces great results, He will be equally generous to others whose faithful service in more difficult and out-of-the-way places brings forth more meager results.
- C. It teaches that all will be rewarded equally.
- D. It demonstrates God's disregard for inequities between the more- and less-gifted in this life.

### QUESTION 2

If Luke is presenting the stories of Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus as illustrations of how one enters or experiences the richness of kingdom life, how might Luke 18:42 apply?

- A. It teaches that healing is by faith.
- B. It proves that Jesus is in fact the foretold Son of David.
- C. It shows that Bartimaeus came to salvation from hell.
- D. It shows that Bartimaeus "entered the kingdom" in the sense that he entered into an experience of the power of the kingdom.

### QUESTION 3

The fact that the king in Jesus' parable went to a far country to receive a kingdom but did not exercise authority until he returned may suggest what?

- A. The kingdom has been established through God's rule from heaven over the church.
- B. There is an interval between the king's reception of the kingdom and his exercising ruling authority on earth.
- C. The kingdom is only a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men.
- D. The real kingdom is a future event.

### QUESTION 4

One standard by which we will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ is this: "The one who has receives more, and the one who had will lose what he appeared to have." *True or False?*

### QUESTION 5

Peter seems to have condemned the idea of working for eternal rewards, and Jesus agrees with him. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 6

When Jesus said that in order to enter eternal life, the lawyer needed to do good works, he was referring to earning one's salvation in heaven. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 7

When Jesus said that in order to enter eternal life, the lawyer needed to do good works, He was referring to earning one's salvation in heaven. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 8

The great principle taught in the parable of the minas is that faithfulness in little things results in greater reward and responsibility in the kingdom. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 9

What was a major problem for the rich young ruler?

- A. He gave all of his money away.
- B. He thought that his works would save him.
- C. He trusted in riches.
- D. He did not believe Jesus' miracles.

### QUESTION 10

Jesus' anointing by Mary may have been symbolic of His anointing as Israel's what?

- A. King
- B. Warrior
- C. Savior
- D. Priest

### QUESTION 11

What is the central message we learn from Jesus' anointing with nard by Mary and Judas's response to it?

- A. Ministry to the poor will always be possible, but was less important at this particular moment than worshipping God.
- B. Judas was a hypocrite.
- C. We will always have poor in our cities.
- D. It is more important to perform acts of worship than it is to give to the poor.

### QUESTION 12

To what do the wedding garments in the parable of the wedding feast refer?

- A. The righteous acts of the saints
- B. The blood of Jesus
- C. The new clothes believers will wear
- D. The faith of the believers

### QUESTION 13

What was the **main** reason Jesus entered the temple and drove out those selling there?

- A. He was cleansing the temple from robbers and thieves.
- B. He was, by His actions, prophesying the destruction of the temple.
- C. He was against the selling of merchandise in His Father's house.
- D. He was indignant about the corruption which went on in the temple of his Father.

### QUESTION 14

The darkness outside in the parable of the wedding feast refers to being cast out of the kingdom. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 15

When Jesus said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" what did He mean?

- A. The state has the right to collect taxes, and believers should pay.
- B. God requires that taxes be paid to Him rather than to the state since all money belongs to Him anyway.
- C. Churches should have more control over the government's allocation of funding.
- D. Believers are exempt from tax laws.

### QUESTION 16

What symbolic application do you see for the aroma of Mary's perfume in the lives of believers?

- A. As the aroma of the perfume offended Judas, so Christians will have an offensive aroma to hypocrites.
- B. As the aroma of the ointment filled the room, so the fragrance of worship radiates from and fills the life of a believer who is dedicated to worshipping God.
- C. The aroma of Mary's perfume is strong like the smell of the feet of those who do not allow Jesus to wash them.
- D. The aroma of Mary's ointment is a reminder that since we no longer have Christ in our midst, we should spend our money on the poor and never buy perfume.

### QUESTION 17

In response to the cries of the multitude at His triumphal entry, Jesus humbly accepted their acknowledgment of His kingship. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 18

Which of the following was not a misunderstanding behind the Sadducees' objection to the resurrection?

- A. The afterlife is very similar to this life.
- B. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive because of the resurrection.
- C. The dilemma of the woman in their tricky question illustrates the absurdity of the resurrection hope.
- D. The Old Testament does not teach the doctrine of the resurrection.

### QUESTION 19

In Luke 20:35, to whom is Jesus referring when He speaks of those who are considered worthy to take part in the resurrection?

- A. Those who have earned the right to take part by their righteous lives
- B. Those who have lived righteously and earned higher rewards in the afterlife than others
- C. Those who believed in Christ and demonstrated their belief by a life of good works
- D. Those whose worthiness comes from merely believing in Christ

### QUESTION 20

According to the book of Revelation, how much time will elapse between the abomination of desolation and Christ's second coming?

- A. 1,260 days
- B. Seven years
- C. We cannot be sure
- D. One week

### QUESTION 21

The alternating pattern in the Olivet Discourse tells us that Jesus was referring to what?

- A. Only the distant future.
- B. The immediate times.
- C. Near future, distant future, near future, distant future.
- D. Only the near future.

### QUESTION 22

As discussed in the lesson, to what does the "abomination of desolation" refer?

- A. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70
- B. An event discussed in 2 Thessalonians 2
- C. The placing of a statue to Caesar in the temple
- D. Any sacrilege brought against the temple in Jerusalem

### QUESTION 23

Throughout the Olivet Discourse, Jesus continually addresses "you." To whom is He referring?

- A. Believing Jews in the last days
- B. Believers living at the time of the prophetic fulfillment
- C. The church during the age before the tribulation
- D. The apostles

### QUESTION 24

What were the Pharisees hoping Jesus would answer when they asked, "What is the greatest commandment?"

- A. They wanted Him to answer exactly as He did.
- B. They hoped He would ignore the *Shema* and quote another verse.
- C. They hoped to use His response, whatever it was, to draw Him into a discussion in which He would contradict Himself.
- D. They hoped He would quote the first verse of the *Shema* because they could then condemn Him for His claim to be God.



**QUESTION 25**

When Jesus speaks of a kernel of wheat falling into the ground and dying, what is He saying about dedicated discipleship?

- A. One who places Christ first will experience life richly now, and will continue to do so in eternity.
- B. Unless a person is willing to lose his life, he will be damned.
- C. Finding salvation is conditional on the disciple's heart intent to give up everything.
- D. We must hate life in this world in order to obtain eternal life.

## Lesson 6 Answers to Questions

### QUESTION 1

- A. The afterlife is very similar to this life.
- B. One may be married only one time.
- C. The woman's dilemma illustrates the absurdity of the resurrection hope.
- D. The Old Testament does not teach the doctrine of the resurrection.

### QUESTION 2

- C. If God speaks of Himself as the God of Abraham, then Abraham must exist.
- D. God is the God of promise; if the patriarchs are dead, then the promise to them can never be fulfilled.

[The patriarchs must either still be alive or be resurrected in the age to come; otherwise, God is not truthful. Jesus probably quoted Exodus 3:6 instead of Daniel 12:2 because the Sadducees had much greater respect for the Torah than for the prophets.]

### QUESTION 3

- D. Those whose worthiness comes from merely believing in Christ [When a person believes on Christ, his newly-gained righteousness is the free gift of the righteousness of Christ (2 Cor 5:21)]

### QUESTION 4

- B. They hoped He would quote the first verse of the Shema because they could then condemn Him for His claim to be God.

### QUESTION 5: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

If the Messiah were simply an earthly son of David, why did David ascribe deity to Him? Jesus quoted from a messianic psalm (Ps 110:1), in which David referred to the Messiah as his Lord.

### QUESTION 6

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Characteristic</i>
Matthew 23:13	Distorting the way of salvation
Matthew 23:14	Devouring the helpless while pretending great piety
Matthew 23:15	Causing innocent Jewish proselytes to become more pharisaic than the Pharisees themselves
Matthew 23:16	Distorting and confusing Scripture
Matthew 23:23	Substituting legalism for justice and mercy
Matthew 23:25-28	Emphasizing outward display rather than inward piety
Matthew 23:29-35	Joining with the OT Jewish leaders as killers of the prophets

### QUESTION 7: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

### TEXTENTRYMULTILINE QUESTION 8: *Your answer*

### QUESTION 9

- D. One who believes in Christ will be living for Him, and not for this world.

### QUESTION 10

- C. Jesus

### QUESTION 11: *Your answer*

### QUESTION 12

<i>Scripture Passage</i>	<i>Title</i>
Matthew 24:1-14	The Destruction of the Temple
Matthew 24:15-31	The Second Coming
Matthew 24:32-35	The Parable of the Fig Tree
Matthew 24:36-51	Taken to be with Christ
Matthew 25:1-13	The Parable of the Ten Virgins
Matthew 25:14-30	The Parable of the Talents
Matthew 25:31-46	The Sheep and the Goats

### QUESTION 13: True [Good. Let's proceed!]

**QUESTION 14**

- C. Those who endure the persecutions leading up to and during the siege of Jerusalem will be vindicated by God and rewarded. [The disciples are warned that followers of Christ will face serious persecution in the immediate future, leading up to the destruction of the city.]

**QUESTION 15**

- D. The church during the age before the tribulation [Possible, but the use of a generic “you” is common in prophetic literature (e.g., Hos 12:9; Joel 2:19-27; Mic 2:12, 4:8). It usually refers to the group of people existing at the time when the events of the prophecy will occur.]

**QUESTION 16**

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Situation on Earth</i>
Matthew 24:15 Revelation 6:15-17	The abomination of desolation Millions hiding in caves, begging for sudden death
Matthew 24:21 Luke 21:26	The worst tribulation in history Men fainting from terror
Luke 21:25 Matthew 24:22	Nations in perplexity; turmoil all over the world Global catastrophe so severe that, unless it ends, all flesh on earth will be killed
Revelation 13:5	The elapsing of exactly 1,260 days, or forty-two months, after the Antichrist assumes control, followed by Christ’s return

**QUESTION 17**

<i>.. Scripture</i>	<i>Events in the Antichrist’s Career</i>
Daniel 9:27	He makes a seven-year covenant with Israel.
2 Thessalonians 2:4	He sets himself up as a god.
Revelation 17:3	He rises to power on the back of a false religious system.
Revelation 19:20	He will be cast into the lake of fire.
Revelation 13:8	He will be a dictator over all the world.

**QUESTION 18:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Vultures descend upon the carnage. Where the vultures are, judgment is. He seems to be saying that the nations of earth and the armies of the Antichrist will be left for the birds, that is, judged.

**QUESTION 19:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

(1) It will be as quick as lightning; (2) it will be visible to the entire world; (3) He will come in the clouds of heaven with great glory; (4) there will be the sound of a trumpet; (5) He will gather the believing remnant of the nation of Israel from the four corners of the earth and bring them to Palestine; (6) all the tribes of earth will mourn.

**QUESTION 20:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

It is some unspecified manifestation in the heavens called the “sign of the Son of Man.”

**QUESTION 21:** *Your answer***QUESTION 22:** *Your answer***QUESTION 23**

- A. The time of the destruction of the temple and of the city of Jerusalem will occur in “this generation.”

**QUESTION 24:** *See Matching Events chart*

## **Lesson 6 Self Check Answers**

### **QUESTION 1**

D. Those whose worthiness comes from merely believing in Christ

**QUESTION 2:** False

### **QUESTION 3**

C. Near future, distant future, near future, distant future.

### **QUESTION 4**

D. The generation living in the first century

### **QUESTION 5**

D. One who places Christ first will experience life richly now, and will continue to do so in eternity.

### **QUESTION 6**

B. An event discussed in 2 Thessalonians 2

**QUESTION 7:** False

### **QUESTION 8**

A. 1,260 days

### **QUESTION 9**

C. Taken to be with Christ before the tribulation

**QUESTION 10:** False

## Unit 2 Exam Answers

### QUESTION 1

C. It teaches that all will be rewarded equally.

### QUESTION 2

D. It shows that Bartimaeus “entered the kingdom” in the sense that he entered into an experience of the power of the kingdom.

### QUESTION 3

B. There is an interval between the king’s reception of the kingdom and his exercising ruling authority on earth.

**QUESTION 4:** True

**QUESTION 5:** False

**QUESTION 6:** False

**QUESTION 7:** False

**QUESTION 8:** True

### QUESTION 9

C. He trusted in riches.

### QUESTION 10

D. Priest

### QUESTION 11

A. Ministry to the poor will always be possible, but was less important at this particular moment than worshipping God.

### QUESTION 12

A. The righteous acts of the saints

### QUESTION 13

B. He was, by His actions, prophesying the destruction of the temple.

**QUESTION 14:** False

### QUESTION 15

A. The state has the right to collect taxes, and believers should pay.

### QUESTION 16

B. As the aroma of the ointment filled the room, so the fragrance of worship radiates from and fills the life of a believer who is dedicated to worshipping God.

**QUESTION 17:** False

### QUESTION 18

B. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive because of the resurrection.

### QUESTION 19

D. Those whose worthiness comes from merely believing in Christ

### QUESTION 20

A. 1,260 days

### QUESTION 21

C. Near future, distant future, near future, distant future.

### QUESTION 22

B. An event discussed in 2 Thessalonians 2

### QUESTION 23

C. The church during the age before the tribulation

### QUESTION 24

D. They hoped He would quote the first verse of the *Shema* because they could then condemn Him for His claim to be God.

### QUESTION 25

A. One who places Christ first will experience life richly now, and will continue to do so in eternity.

# Unit 3: The Last Supper and the Upper Room Discourse

---

The amazing prophecies described in the previous lesson are now applied to the believers' lives. In a series of parables, Jesus encouraged faithfulness and then warned against sloth and neglect.

He arranged to celebrate the Passover meal with His disciples Thursday evening, before offering Himself as a sacrifice for sin on Friday. That Last Supper was, in itself, an illustration of what was about to occur: The Passover Lamb was about to be offered for the sins of the world.

After dinner, Jesus gave His final sermon. John 15-17 is called the Upper Room Discourse because this message was delivered after the Last Supper, while they were all gathered in the upper room. In this sermon, He sought to encourage them to abide in Him in the troubling days ahead and warned them that they would face hardship. He then concluded with the "Lord's Prayer" in John 17, praying for those closest to Him—His disciples.

## Unit 3 Outline

Lesson 7: The Judgments at the Second Coming

Lesson 8: The Last Supper

Lesson 9: The Upper Room Discourse

# Lesson 7: The Judgments at the Second Coming

---

Prophecy in the Bible is not intended to satisfy our curiosity about future events, but to change our lives. Amazing predictions like those we studied in Lesson 6 remind us that God is the sovereign Lord of history. Nothing happens by accident. He is intentionally leading history to its final consummation, the establishment of His righteousness throughout the earth.

But these predictions also remind us of the fact that one day we will be held accountable for how we have spent our lives. What will be our share in the fulfillment of God's eternal plan? Christ concluded His sermon on the Mount of Olives with a series of four parables. Each of them warns us about the negative consequences unfaithful believers will face when they stand before the King at the judgment seat of Christ.

In Topic 1, Jesus describes one of His servants who is confronted with a serious choice: Will he treat those under his care with compassion and nurture, or will he take advantage of them, abuse them, and use them for his own selfish purposes?

In Topic 2, Christ speaks of ten virgins, five who are wise and five who are foolish. How can we be certain that we are like the wise virgins, whose preparation awarded them entrance into the celebratory banquet?

In Topic 3, Christ challenges His believing disciples through the parable of the talents to view the final consummation of history from a new perspective: faithfulness. When they face the Lord Jesus at the judgment seat of Christ, will they hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant"?

Topic 4 discusses the famous parable of the sheep and the goats. When Jesus returns, He will sit on His glorious throne, and all the nations of earth will be gathered before Him to receive their just rewards.

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: The Parable of the Wicked Servant

Topic 2: The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Topic 3: The Parable of the Talents

Faithfulness Will Be Rewarded

Slothfulness Will Be Rebuked

Application to Us

Topic 4: The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

The Inheritance of the Sheep

Inheriting a Kingship

What He Remembers

Final Destiny

Topic 5: Matching Events

## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- State the warnings for the shepherds of God’s people against slothfulness and neglect
- Explain how you can be prepared to meet the Lord when He returns
- Take up the challenge to faithfully invest your life well
- Describe man’s accountability for his life, which is the final destiny of all men

## Topic 1: The Parable of the Wicked Servant

### Wednesday, April 1, AD 33

During the time of our Lord’s absence between His first and second comings to earth, we are responsible to complete the work He has assigned each of us to do. He spoke of reward for its successful accomplishment and warned of punishment for neglect. He even apparently recounted this, the parable of the wicked servant, more than once. This parable describes a servant who is either faithful or who lapses into dreadful carnality of self-indulgence, sin, and tyranny over his fellow servants.

- Read Matthew 24:45-51 and Luke 12:41-48.
- Please review the article called “The Wicked Servant,” found in Lesson 2.

As we discussed in Lesson 2, this man is likely a believer. In fact, he seems to represent those who have been assigned the task of supporting God’s servants. As we view this story a second time, we see that he could have been a pastor, an elder, a teacher, disciple, or some other leader. Apparently, he grew indifferent to the Lord and His return and began to harm those whom he was assigned to care for. He then lapsed into sin. Just as he was not literally “cut in pieces” when the Lord returned, he did not literally “beat his fellow servants.” Rather, he harmed and dominated those to whom he was supposed to minister.

### QUESTION 1

According to “The Wicked Servant,” to which of the following does the punishment the wicked servant would receive by being “cut in pieces” refer? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. A public rebuke by the Lord at His return
- B. A public revealing of his sin
- C. An assignment to eternal damnation
- D. A revealing that he was not truly a Christian at all

### QUESTION 2

The fact that the word “unbeliever” in the parallel passage in Luke 12:41-48 is used for “hypocrite” in Matthew 24:51 shows that the wicked servant in Matthew 25 was not a true Christian at all. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 3

Do you agree or disagree with the viewpoint taken in the article “The Wicked Servant”? Why or why not? Write your response in your Life Notebook.



## Topic 2: The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Wednesday, April 1, AD 33

This artist's conception of a wedding procession in biblical times shows a bridegroom escorting the wedding party back to his house for a feast. Music and dancing were major parts of the celebration, which usually lasted between one and two weeks.

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 25:1-13.
- Read the article "The Parable of the Ten Virgins."

### The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Near the end of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus offered a number of parables to illustrate concepts about the kingdom of heaven, expounding on his dramatic prophetic announcements about the destruction of the temple and His own second coming (Mt 24).

Through the parable of ten virgins—five wise and five foolish—waiting for a bridegroom and a wedding feast, He was warning His own bride, the church throughout the ages, always to be prepared (Mt 25:1-3).

#### Setting the Scene

In Jewish tradition, there were six activities usually connected with marriage:

- (1) The betrothal
- (2) The transfer of the bride from her father's house to the bridegroom's house (this is the procession of the ten virgins in the parable)
- (3) The marriage celebration, which could last a week or two
- (4) The marriage ceremony
- (5) The marriage supper
- (6) The consummation

The first event, the betrothal, was a binding transaction declaring the marriage and specifying the agreement between the contracting families. Although the bride and groom were legally married, they did not usually live together while betrothed. This delay was usually one year at the time of Christ, but could last several years. During this time, the couple was considered married, and unfaithfulness was adultery.

After various contractual obligations had been fulfilled during this period, the bridegroom came with a close friend to fetch the bride from her father's house and escort her to his own home for the marriage feast. When a Jewish couple married, they stayed at home for at least a week, keeping an open house. They were treated and even addressed as prince and princess. Weddings were such grand occasions, the entire village would turn out to accompany them in a festive procession of dancing maidens and individuals engaged in swordplay, but only chosen friends were admitted to the festivities.

This parable finds ten such maidens waiting eagerly for the arrival of the groom and the feast to follow. Five are wise and prepared, but five are foolish and less ready. As evening falls, their excitement dwindles. They find themselves in dimming early evening and light the lamps that are to illuminate their way to the feast. What could be taking the bridegroom so long? Heavy eyelids prevail, and slumber overtakes them. The oil in their lamps burns low. But at midnight, they startle

awake at the sound of the shouts in the street. The bridegroom is coming! The prepared maidens refill their lamps and run out to meet him and join the procession, but the foolish virgins find themselves at a loss. There's no way to retrieve more oil, and not enough light to shine on their way to the feast. When at last they stand in the dark street outside the groom's house and plead for entrance at the feast, he turns them away. The joy of the festivities is lost to them.

### **Who Are the Virgins? (25:2)**

The vast majority of interpreters have understood the virgins to represent the church, an equation suggested by 2 Corinthians 11:2 (see also Rev 14:4). The bride herself is not a player in this parable. We may therefore assume that the ten virgins in the story, attendants to the bride, represent her. Thus they represent the church, waiting for the return of its Lord. Within the church are those who are prepared and those who are unprepared for Jesus' sudden reappearance, the beginning of His *parousia*.

Both wise and foolish are born again. Is the purity of a virgin an appropriate picture for the unforgiven sinner? Since all are called virgins, we may assume they are all born again.

### **When Is the Wedding Feast? (25:1)**

In the Jewish wedding tradition, the marriage supper occurs toward the end of the weeklong celebration. We can infer from Scripture that the feast of the Lamb described in the parable occurs on earth shortly after the second advent (Rev 19:7-10) at the beginning of Jesus' thousand-year reign.

The parable opens with the words, "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins" (Mt 25:1). When is "then"? The word is previously used of the unexpected second coming, when one is taken and another is left (Mt 24:40-41). This "coming" of Christ comes from the Greek word *parousia*, a word often used of the arrival and ensuing presence of dignitaries or kings in a local town.

So when does the *parousia* of Christ begin? We are told in the preceding context and at the end of this parable that He will come unexpectedly, at a day and hour that no one knows (Mt 24:36; 42), and like a thief in the night (Mt 24:43). This passage states that the ten virgins will not know the "day or the hour" (Mt 25:13) of His arrival for the feast. However, other passages say that the church will be able to calculate the day and the hour of His second coming to earth: 1260 days after the abomination of desolation (Rev 11:3; Dan 9:27; Mt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:3-4). Therefore, the coming of the Lord for the feast described in this parable certainly cannot refer to the second coming to earth.

Rather it is the sudden, unexpected coming that occurs seven years earlier at the rapture of the church (1 Thess 4:13-18), saving the bride of Christ from the horrors of the tribulation (1 Thess 5:9; Rev 3:10). (Differing opinions exist regarding the timing of the rapture, and we encourage students to explore Scriptural evidence and come to their own conclusions.)

The seven-year wedding celebration follows the virgins' procession at the rapture. At the end of the seven years, the marriage of the Lamb occurs (Rev 19:7), followed immediately by the formal marriage supper (Rev 19:9), and then the righteous reign of Messiah and our service to Him in the millennial kingdom to follow (Mt 25:34; Rev 2:26).

### **Oil in the Lamps (25:3-4)**

Because of the uncertainty regarding the time of the bridegroom's arrival, lamps were normally kept burning during this interlude so that there would be no delay when he returned.

The lamps were probably small, clay lamps known as "Herodian lamps," which only contained enough oil to burn for a few hours. These lamps were accompanied by an additional vessel of oil to keep the lamp burning after the oil in the lamp itself was exhausted (Mt 25:4).

All of the virgins had lamps, and even the foolish ones had *some* oil, evident in the fact that their lamps did burn for a time. When the Lord says in verse 3 that the presumptuous, foolish virgins “took no oil with them,” He means that they took no *extra* oil with them, planning only for a short wait. They thought a few hours of burning would be sufficient.

The precise symbolism of the oil is not defined, but the thrust of the parable suggests it represents preparation: Preparing to meet Christ by developing a spiritual reserve by means of good works, fellowship with other Christians, and prayer and Bible study.

### **They Slept (25:5)**

In the first century, many waited long and almost despaired the coming of Christ, but when the fullness of time came, the Messiah was born. As the church awaits His second coming in the same way, our anticipation has waned and given way to slumber.

Why the delay? He knows His reasons, plans, purposes, and goals for this period of waiting. But among them are His forbearance and grace. God desires to provide time and opportunity for all to come to acknowledge of repentance. The delay may be long, but His coming is sure.

### **The Shout of the Bridegroom (25:6)**

The word translated “meet” here provides further evidence that this event occurs with the rapture. According to 1 Thessalonians 4:17, at the second coming of the Lord, there will be a rapture “to meet the Lord in the air.” The word “meet” is the same word used in Matthew 25:6 of ten virgins going out to meet the bridegroom. At that time there will be a cry, a shout from heaven: “The Bridegroom is coming for His church! Come out to meet Him!”

### **“Give Us Some of Your Oil” (25:7-9)**

The wise virgins declined their companions’ request. “Go buy some for yourselves,” they urged (Mt 25:8). Now of course it was too late to go shopping for oil—and the excursion to purchase some late at night dramatically points out the fact that it was absolutely too late for anything to be done. Too late to buy their own oil, too late to prepare themselves for the Bridegroom’s arrival.

We see three spiritual lessons in this sad turn of events.

First, certain things cannot be borrowed. A Christian cannot live on association with other Christians without personally developing intimacy with Christ. We cannot borrow fellowship with God; we must possess it. Fellowship with other Christians is also not a substitute for knowing Him personally.

Second, because the wise virgins counsel the foolish ones to go and buy some oil, we understand that the oil does not refer to salvation or conversion. John said, “Take the water of life without cost” (Rev 22:17); salvation costs nothing and cannot be bought. As we mentioned previously, the foolish virgins represent believers also. But they were challenged to make preparation immediately by investing in something that does cost: a life of discipleship. However, their good intentions were too late.

Third, we must persist in spiritual preparation if our lives are to continue to show good works. Apparently, the foolish virgins had not persevered in their initial works and dependence upon the Holy Spirit. We need more than just good beginnings. We too must finish our course because we are “partakers of Christ [only] if we hold fast our confession firm to the end” (Heb 3:14). When the Bridegroom arrives, it will be too late to acquire the character traits, spiritual reserves, and faithful perseverance necessary to participate in the Lamb’s wedding feast.

### **The Door Was Shut (25:10)**

When the five foolish virgins knock on the door requesting entrance, they find the door shut. The foolish are excluded from the festivities of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Why? We are told that they were not arrayed with the righteous acts of the saints (Mt 22:11; see also Rev 19:6). Standing at

the judgment seat of Christ, they were confronted with their lack of preparation. In Revelation 19:7, we are told that at the marriage of the Lamb, “His bride has made herself ready”—precisely what the foolish virgins failed to do.

### **“I Do Not Know You” (25:12)**

But if the five foolish virgins are truly regenerate, albeit unfaithful, Christians, why does the Lord say to them, “I do not know you” (Mt 25:12)? Surely He would not say this to a true child of God—or would He?

All meet the bridegroom at the rapture, but only the wise enter the feast. Like the foolish virgins of the parable, some Christians will not be permitted entrance to the weeklong wedding celebration and the marriage supper at the end of the week (seven years later, according to the prophecy in Revelation).

Does this mean they will lose their salvation? We may see an answer in the original Greek. When Christ signified knowledge of Him as a saving relationship, He used the words *epiginosko* or *ginosko*. For example, in John 17:3, He used *ginosko*. *Ginosko* is “to know by observation and experience” and refers to an intimate experiential knowledge. It is used, for example, to describe sexual intercourse.

But when the virgins seek entrance at the feast, the Lord says, “I do not know [Gk. *oida*] you.” *Oida* is “to know by reflection” and is a mental process based on information. In fact, it sometimes means “respect,” “honor,” or “appreciate” (Mt 25:12).

But we request of you brethren, that you **appreciate** [or respect, *oida*], those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction (1 Thess 5:12).

When the Lord says He does not know them, He means He does not appreciate, respect, or honor them. The word does not mean to know in the sense of personal relationship or eternal life (i.e., *ginosko*). But He does not know them in the sense of honoring them as one of His co-heirs. He will not say to them, “Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world” (Mt 25:34).

Some scholars point out that the phrase, “I do not know you” may refer to a teacher’s order (*nezipha*), forbidding the student access to the rabbi for seven days. This meant something like “I will have nothing to do with you”—a temporary separation. In a similar way, the foolish virgins are not permanently excluded from access to the Bridegroom. They do not miss the kingdom, only the joy of the wedding celebration and the wedding supper—a privilege limited to those who overcome (Rev 2:26-27).

The parable of the ten virgins has nothing to do with Christians losing their salvation. It refers to the forfeiture of the honor only due to faithful servants when the Lord returns.

### **You Do Not Know the Day or the Hour (25:13)**

Even though there is a delay and His return seems so distant and far off, we should not be lulled into slothfulness. Be prepared each day! Every time we look into the azure blue sky and see each lovely cloud, we should ask ourselves, “Could that be the one?”

## **QUESTION 4**

Consider the virgins’ time of sleep before the arrival of the bridegroom. What parallels can you draw between their slumber and the state of the church today? Write your answer in your Life Notebook.

## QUESTION 5

A point of disagreement among scholars is the identity of the wise and foolish virgins. What is the viewpoint of the author of the article on “The Ten Virgins”? What evidence did he give to support his view? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? Record your answers in your Life Notebook.

## QUESTION 6

Based on your reading of the article “The Ten Virgins” (placed earlier in the lesson) and your own study, match the Scripture references on the left with the phrase on the right.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Word or Phrase</i>
2 Corinthians 5:10	Wedding supper
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	“I do not know you”
Revelation 19:9	Foolish virgins
Matthew 22:2	Wedding festivities
Matthew 22:12-14	The call of the bridegroom
1 Thessalonians 5:12	Oil

## QUESTION 7

The central message of the parable of the virgins is that we must be prepared because Christ may return at any moment. Write about some important decisions you may have postponed in your Life Notebook. What are some things you think you need to do now to be prepared when the Lord Jesus returns?

## Topic 3: The Parable of Talents

### Wednesday, April 1, AD 33

This parable concludes the third in the series of three parables that challenges believers to live with Christ’s imminent return in mind. These stories remind Jesus’ followers that when He comes, their lives will be evaluated before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10-11). These three parables tell us three things the Lord will consider as He assesses the final result of our lives.

**Parable of the Wicked Servant** - How we treated other believers, fellow servants of the King (Mt 24:42-51).

**Parable of the Ten Virgins** - How we prepared for His coming by not putting off things we know we should do (Mt 25:1-13).

**Parable of the Ten Talents** – How we have been faithful to use the spiritual and natural gifts He has given us for His glory (Mt 25:14-30).

The three key qualities seem to be:

- Brotherly love
- Preparedness
- Faithfulness

## **Faithfulness Will Be Rewarded**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 25:14-30.

The key principle in this topic is the challenge to live faithfully. One day, our Lord will return. He will evaluate our lives based on how we invested the spiritual gifts and natural abilities He gave us and how we used them for His glory. He will not judge us by our success or the quantity of our work; the criteria will be the quality of our work and our faithfulness in pursuing it.

The master entrusted these servants with a lot of money. One talent was equal to six thousand denarii, and each denarius was approximately one day's wages (Mt 20:2).

### **QUESTION 8**

According to the parable, what was the criterion the master used to distribute the gifts?

When the master departed, he distributed talents, metaphors for spiritual and natural abilities, according to his assessment of who should receive each gift, based on each servant's capacity for the task. Remember, it was God who gave them that capacity. He designed each of us in our mother's womb (Ps 139:13-16).

### **QUESTION 9**

What is the principal criterion Jesus will use when He assesses your life at the judgment seat?

- A. The amount of work you have achieved for Him
- B. Your skill and creativity in implementing your service
- C. The magnitude of global impact resulting from your efforts
- D. Your faithfulness

Investing the riches of Jesus Christ is the highest privilege of man. There is no enterprise nobler than investing the spiritual gifts and natural abilities each of us has been given in the service of our King. One day, He will return and ask, "Have you been faithful with the gifts I entrusted into your care?" It is comforting to know that He will not evaluate us on the basis of worldly standards of success or greatness. He only wants to know if we have been faithful to use what He has given us. We must not withhold our service, like the third servant did, because of fear of failure or with false excuses.

### **QUESTION 10**

Open your Life Notebook. Have you ever been envious of another person's gifts? If you have, write out a specific example. How does the principle of God's sovereign creation of capacity and distribution of gifts affect your attitudes?

## **Slothfulness Will Be Rebuked**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 25:24-30.
- Read the article "The Seed."

## The Seed

Seeds are commonly used as metaphors for many spiritual truths throughout the Bible. In Matthew 25:24, the wicked servant blames his lack of fruitfulness on his master, saying,

Sir, I knew that you were a hard man, harvesting where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed (Mt 25:24).

The servant asserts that his master did not sow any seed and yet expects a harvest. How can this be fair? Furthermore, his master only gave him one talent. A one-talent servant, he may have thought, cannot be expected to produce much harvest.

In the New Testament, a “seed” is sometimes a metaphor for the Word of God, the message of salvation. For example, Jesus describes Himself as a farmer sowing the seed of the gospel (Lk 8:11).

In other places the seed seems to represent growth. The growth of the mustard seed and the leaven appear to represent the growth of the influence of the kingdom through Christian involvement in the social, ethical, political, and personal concerns of mankind. God sows these seeds, opportunities for Christian influence, wherever Christianity penetrates the surrounding culture (Lk 13:18-20).

Thus Jesus asked, “What is the kingdom of God like? To what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the wild birds nested in its branches.”}i}

In other places seed is a figure of speech for faith (“faith as small as a mustard seed,” Mt 13:31; 17:20); for potential fruitfulness, and for discipleship (Jn 12:24-26).

In these instances the growth of a seed is a figure of speech for the growth process in the Christian life. The seed dies, takes root, sprouts and grows; read John 12:24-26.

In Mark 4:26-27, Jesus explains,

The kingdom of God is like someone who spreads seed on the ground. He goes to sleep and gets up, night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.

This passage explains the role of the Holy Spirit, in enabling growth of the seed.

The servant is wrong. God has sown seed and scattered it abundantly. The wicked servant himself is an example. Furthermore, the divine Vinedresser has nurtured and pruned the growing seed in efforts to promote its growth and a wonderful harvest.

The problem is that the seed did not produce fruit. However, that is the servant’s fault, not God’s. Essentially, the servant is saying that *the seed represents God’s enablement, nurture, and opportunities for service*. The fact that he did not produce fruit is because God never scattered opportunities for him to invest his talent and never enabled him to grow. As Adam said in the garden, “The woman whom you gave me, she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it” (Gen 3:12). In other words, “God, it’s your fault. You gave me the woman.”

Similarly, the unfaithful servant is saying, “How can you expect a harvest from one meager talent when you never sowed opportunities for service or provided me with enablement to achieve them? It was your responsibility to water, nurture, and grow the seed, and you did not, and yet you require a harvest from me. You are a hard man.”

The Vinedresser does make the seed grow (1 Cor 3:6). He nurtures and cares for it. But He does not force Himself. If the soil is resistant to Him, the fault is not in the Vinedresser but in the condition of the soil.

The reasons given in the NT for a lack of harvest are not related to a lack of sowing. Rather the problem is the condition of the soil (Heb 6:7-8).

- Sometimes it is rocky and has no depth and cannot withstand persecution (Mt 13:20-31)
- Sometimes it is choked out by the worries of this world and the cares of this age (Mt 13:22; Lk 8:14}}
- Sometimes it refuses to die. When a servant does not die to himself, he will be unfruitful (Jn 12:24-26)

Why did not the unfaithful servant invest his life in response to God's nurture and the many opportunities for service which God "sowed" in his path. He gives two reasons:

1. "I knew that you were a hard man" (Mt 25:24)
2. "I was afraid" (Mt 25:25)

The first excuse is clearly spurious. If he really regarded his lord as a hard man, and was really afraid of him, he would have simply given the money safely to the bankers. At least then he would have secured interest on the master's money.

Was he really afraid of the master? If there is any truth in his assertion, his only fear was a result of his lack of dependence upon God. Perhaps, he was afraid to take advantage of the opportunities which God set before him because he might fail. However, the real reason he did not take advantage of these opportunities is that he did not want to. Rather than lose his life so that he might find it by serving his master (Mt 16:25), he chose to seek the comfort and pleasure of this world. By merely hiding the seed in the ground, that is, by doing nothing, he hoped his master would be satisfied with receiving back His money. In this way, the servant thought he could have his life as he wanted it today, and at least enter heaven even if he received no reward there. "Who cares about reward?" he may have thought. "All that is important to me is that I go to heaven when I die."

This kind of passive, lukewarm Christianity is too common among Christians. One day, the parable teaches, they will be surprised and rebuked. They will be sent to "the outer darkness" and experience weeping and gnashing of teeth. This means they will be excluded from the celebratory feast which inaugurates the millennial kingdom and will experience profound regret for their wasted lives. Furthermore, their opportunity to reign with Christ will be taken from them (Mt 25:28).

Who is the third servant? Opinions vary. Some believe he must be an unsaved person. Others believe that he is saved but rebuked at the judgment seat of Christ.

### **QUESTION 11**

Which of the following items might suggest that the third servant was an unsaved man? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. He is sent to the "outer darkness," which must mean he was sent to hell.
- B. He is called a servant, not a believer.
- C. He is called "wicked and lazy," and no Christian could be described as a wicked servant.
- D. He experiences weeping and gnashing of teeth throughout eternity.

There is also some reason to believe that this man may be a true believer, but an unfaithful one. The "outer darkness" is not a place but a metaphor for exclusion from the joy of the messianic wedding banquet in the millennial kingdom. Weeping and gnashing of teeth is temporary (Rev 21:4) and is a metaphor for profound regret over a wasted life. It does not always signify that the regret is experienced in hell.



## QUESTION 12

Which of the following items might suggest that the third servant is a saved man? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. He is called a servant. How can a non-believer be called a servant of Christ?
- B. In Luke 19:24-26, the third servant is distinguished from the unbeliever.
- C. Christ would not entrust spiritual gifts to an unbeliever, enlisting him in His service.
- D. It seems ridiculous to assert that God would give gifts to unsaved people, ask them to invest their lives for Him, and expect them to give Him a return on their investment.

The third servant says, "I was afraid" (Mt 25:25). This is a spurious excuse. The servant is trying to blame his irresponsibility upon a false concept of his master.

## QUESTION 13

Read "The Seed." Have you ever excused your lack of involvement in kingdom work because you were afraid of failure? Have you adopted a passive, lukewarm Christianity, never considering the negative consequences at the judgment seat of Christ? Reflect on how you may at times blame your lack of faithfulness on a view of God you may know in your heart is really false. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

## QUESTION 14

After reading "The Seed" (placed earlier in the lesson), what do you think is wrong with the servant's statement, "I was afraid"?

## Application to Us

This parable applies to our lives in many important ways:

1. Everything we have is to be used for God's glory. Our gifts are given to us in trust, and we are to exercise supervision over gifts given to us.
2. Because God gives the gifts, we should not compare ourselves with others. Our concern is only faithfulness; if we are faithful, we receive the same reward, no matter how little or large the gift or opportunity.
3. We cannot escape by minimizing the gift or by saying we were not given much. For example, "But Lord, I was only given one talent."
4. According to 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, we will not be judged on the basis of gifts we do not have but on the basis of our faithfulness in the ones we do have.
5. To fail to use the gifts we have been given may result in a serious rebuke from the King at the judgment seat of Christ.

## QUESTION 15

Imagine yourself standing before the Lord Jesus at His judgment seat. With some of these applications in mind and other thoughts you have regarding the parable, record in your Life Notebook what you might experience if the Lord came right now, today.

## **Topic 4: The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats**

**Wednesday, April 1, AD 33**

The most important question for all mankind is, “Will I be held accountable for the life I live?” In this topic we will answer that question. Those who have believed on Christ and lived righteous lives will not only go away to eternal life, but will also inherit a kingdom. Those who have not believed and whose works reveal their sin are condemned.

Earlier in the Olivet Discourse, the Lord Jesus said that the beginning of His second coming was to occur seven years before the coming itself, like a thief in the night. No one would be able to know the day or the hour. In fact, the second coming would begin at a time like the days of Noah, when everyone was carrying on business as usual. Then suddenly, the Lord Jesus would come and “one would be taken and one would be left” (Mt 24:40-41).

In the preceding parables, Jesus challenged those who would be taken in the rapture with the fact that they would be held accountable at the judgment seat of Christ for how they invested their lives (2 Cor 5:10-11). But what of those left (Mt 24:40-41)? The scene described in the parable of the sheep and the goats occurs at the end of the tribulation, when all the nations of earth are gathered before the throne of the King to face a final judgment. Although the Lord’s second coming began seven years earlier, it is now manifested in His public descent with His saints to earth.

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will destroy by the breath of his mouth and wipe out by the manifestation of his arrival (2 Thess 2:8).

All mankind is divided into two categories: those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ (the sheep) and those who have not (the goats). This is the judgment on the unbelieving Gentiles who survive the tribulation. Obviously, the rapture could not have occurred at this time or there would be no sheep in mortal bodies left to populate the millennial kingdom. This correlates well with the point made above that those “taken” are taken in the rapture to be with the Lord before the day of the Lord and the great tribulation begins.

### **The Inheritance of the Sheep**

#### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 25:31-46.

#### **QUESTION 16**

Both sheep and goats are referred to as nations. Read the following verses Matthew 4:15; 6:32; 10:5; 10:18; 20:19. Based on these passages, what group do the sheep represent?

We are told that these sheep will inherit a kingdom prepared since the foundation of the world. This raises several questions. What does it mean to “inherit” a kingdom—and what does “kingdom” mean? Also, one might ask, “Does this passage teach that salvation is by works?” Many have thought so because works of charity are the basis given for obtaining this inheritance in Matthew 25:35-36.

In answer to the last question, we should note that these sheep are those who have been blessed by the Father and are called “righteous” (v. 46). God has blessed them with the free gift of eternal life through

faith alone and, as a result, the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to them. They will now receive something in addition to that blessing and that justification: an inheritance.

What is this inheritance?

### **QUESTION 17**

According to these passages, what is the basis upon which one receives the inheritance? Note the conditions required (Gal 3:9; 4:6-7; Eph 1:14; Tit 3:7)?

- A. By faith plus works
- B. By faith alone
- C. By works
- D. By repentance

### **QUESTION 18**

Read Matthew 5:5; 19:29; 25:34; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; 18:19-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:23-24; Hebrews 6:1; 12:17; 1 Peter 3:9; Revelation 21:7. According to these passages, what is the basis on which one receives the inheritance? Note the conditions required.

- A. By faith plus works
- B. By faith alone
- C. By works
- D. By repentance

### **QUESTION 19**

Since no one enters heaven on the basis of works (Rom 4:5; Eph 2:8-9; Tit 3:5), how can the answers to Questions 17 and 18 coincide? Consider Colossians 3:24, Revelation 2:26, and Matthew 19:28 in your answer. Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

For some thoughts on this issue, read the note about the inheritance.

#### **The Inheritance**

Apparently, two kinds of inheritance are mentioned in the New Testament. In some passages (see Question 17), the inheritance refers to personal salvation, justification, and entrance into heaven. It comes through faith alone apart from works. However, in other passages, the inheritance is something added to personal salvation. According to Colossians 3:24, it is a "reward." The Greek word means "payment for work done."

## **Inheriting a Kingship**

### **QUESTION 20**

In Matthew 25:34, Jesus invites the sheep to enter the kingdom. *True or False?*

### **QUESTION 21**

Can you think of an example in your own culture that illustrates the difference between "being in," or "entering," and "inheriting"? Write about it in your Life Notebook. Then view this example:

Suppose I was invited to live in the house of a wealthy man. I could live there all my life, but I would own nothing. Now suppose this same man said to me, “My child, I like your attitude and the way you behave toward me. I not only want you to live in this house, I want you to own it. I am going to make you my heir.” This would be a different way of living in the house. Now I could say that all the furniture, the paintings, the appliances, etc., are mine as well.

Notice that our Lord Jesus says “inherit the kingdom.” He does not say “inherit the kingdom of God” or “inherit the kingdom of heaven.” In the absence of these qualifiers, the basic meaning of the word “kingdom” (Greek *basileia*) should be stressed. Its basic meaning is “sphere of rule,” “a reign,” “the act of ruling,” or “kingship.” (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *Lexicon*, p. 168). Instead, this is a kingship prepared “for you”; we ourselves will become kings, sharing in the kingly authority of their Lord. We will inherit, or possess, we will rule over various kingships. Jesus spoke of this in Luke 21 when he said some will have five cities and some will have ten (Lk 19:17-26 and Mt 19:28). This is what Paul spoke of when he said, “If we endure, we will reign with Him” (2 Tim 2:12, compare Rev 2:26).

## What He Remembers

Jesus gives the sheep the privilege of ruling in His kingdom because (Mt 24:34) of the manner in which they treated “his brothers” (Mt 25:40).

### QUESTION 22

According to Matthew 12:48-50, who are Christ’s brothers?

Notice the surprise of the sheep. They cannot remember the good deeds they have done. How comforting it is that our Jesus will remember every cup of water given in His name.

This passage has much to say about our attitude toward ministry to the poor. Those who demonstrated generosity to the naked, the hungry, the thirsty, the sick and the imprisoned are those who inherit (Mt 25:35-36). Those who failed to treat the poor with justice and generosity are condemned. And surely, charity and justice toward the poor are not limited to these few deeds mentioned in this passage. The acts that are mentioned are just representations of all kindness. This is a figure of speech called *synecdoche*, in which the part stands for the whole. There is a strong emphasis in the Bible on ministry to those in need.

The one who oppresses the poor insults his Creator, but whoever shows favor to the needy honors him (Prov 14:31).

Does this mean that we are only responsible to minister to those who are truly born again or only to Jews under persecution? Of course not. Christ made this clear in the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-37; note in particular Lk 10:36-37). The apostle Paul said,

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith (Gal 6:10).

### QUESTION 23

List in your Life Notebook people you know who are in need. Pray about what God might have you do to minister to their needs, and write down any solutions He brings to mind.

## Final Destiny

This passage sets the final destiny of men in two dramatic contrasts, ruling with Christ in the fulfillment of human destiny (“inheriting a kingship”) vs. the extreme opposite, final condemnation to eternal punishment.

What are the final destinies of the sheep and the goats?

This frightening text says that all unbelievers, the goats, are banished to eternal punishment.

### QUESTION 24

There are places in the Bible where the word “eternal” does not necessarily mean “forever” (e.g., Ex 12:24; Deut 15:17; Josh 14:9). Sometimes it refers to a quality of life, not its duration. Some argue from this that hell does not last forever. Based upon Matthew 25, is this accurate?

This judgment is like a preliminary hearing. These “goats” are banished to prison to begin their punishment, but a thousand years later they are brought to stand before the King in the final trial. All of the books which record an individual’s life in its entirety are opened (Rev 20:11-15). Most non-believers think that if they have any claim on heaven it is because of some good thing they have done. However, when the Book of Life is opened and a judicious review conducted of every thought, deed and action, it will be shown that these goats have no claim at all. Because perfect obedience is necessary if one is to obtain heaven by works, none of them will qualify.

But what about the sheep? What is their destiny? We are told in Matthew 25:46 that the righteous will go to eternal life.

### QUESTION 25

Who are the “righteous”?

- A. They are ethically good people.
- B. They are those justified and declared righteous through Christ.
- C. They are only the sheep who have cared for the poor.
- D. They are sheep who have lived faithfully.

The “righteous” are fundamentally righteous by faith, but they are righteous on another level as well: they have ministered to others in need.

While it is clear that all the sheep go into eternal life, that is, heaven when they die, it might be asked, “Do all the sheep inherit?” Some suggest that the answer is yes. There are, they say, only two categories of people at the judgment: sheep and goats. These two categories embrace “all the nations” (Mt 25:32)—meaning everyone. There are no subcategories of “faithful” or “unfaithful” sheep. Rather, all the sheep inherit.

In response, we suggest that this is another example of *synecdoche*, in which a part (the faithful sheep) stands for the whole (all sheep, both faithful and unfaithful). The reason the faithful sheep are not specifically mentioned as a distinct category is that by *synecdoche*, these faithful sheep represent all the sheep (faithful and unfaithful).

## **Topic 5: Matching Events**

### **QUESTION 26**

To help you memorize these events, we have compiled a list of important events in the life of Christ. Take a moment and review events 11, 28, 30, 44, 47, 49, 51, and 53 in the Matching Events chart found in the appendix. Cover the event descriptions and see if you can identify the associated scriptures.

## Lesson 7 Self Check

### QUESTION 1

In Matthew 25:34, Jesus invites the sheep to enter the kingdom. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 2

The fact that in Luke 12:41-48, the word “unbeliever” is used in the place of the word “hypocrite” in Matthew 24:51 shows that the wicked servant in Matthew 24 was not a true Christian at all. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 3

Who are the “righteous” in Matthew 25:46?

- A. They are ethically good people.
- B. They are those justified by the righteousness of Christ.
- C. They are only the sheep who cared for the poor.
- D. They are sheep who lived faithfully.

### QUESTION 4

Based on the article on the parable of the ten virgins and the approach taken in the lesson, what was the call of the Bridegroom that the virgins answered?

- A. The return of Christ at the end of the tribulation
- B. The call to accept Jesus as Lord
- C. The pre-tribulational rapture of the church
- D. The call to be prepared at all times

### QUESTION 5

In the parable of the ten virgins, five of them were saved and five were not. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 6

When Jesus told the five foolish virgins, “I do not know you,” what did He mean?

- A. He had never met them.
- B. He did not recognize them.
- C. He viewed them as unsaved.
- D. He did not respect them.

### QUESTION 7

Based on the parable of the talents, what is the principal criterion Jesus will use when He assesses your life at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

- A. The amount of work you have achieved for Him
- B. The skill and creativity of your service
- C. The magnitude of global impact that results from your efforts
- D. Your faithfulness

**QUESTION 8**

When the third servant said “I was afraid,” what did he mean?

- A. Definitely lying
- B. Afraid of failure and lacking in trust
- C. Afraid of displeasing his master
- D. Afraid that he might not go to heaven

**QUESTION 9**

The lesson suggested that the unfaithful servant’s complaint that his master “reaped where he did not sow” means what?

- A. God expects returns when He does not provide service opportunities and enablement.
- B. God is unjust.
- C. God is a harsh and unfair Master.
- D. God expects unsaved people to dedicate their lives for Him and produce a harvest.

**QUESTION 10**

Because all people on earth stand before the throne at the judgment of the sheep and the goats, and because only two categories of people, sheep and goats, are mentioned, it is clear that all the sheep inherit the kingdom. *True or False?*



## Lesson 7 Answers to Questions

### QUESTION 1

- A. A public rebuke by the Lord at His return
- B. A public revealing of his sin

**QUESTION 2:** False [The term "unbeliever" in Luke 12:46 refers to a servant of Christ who did not get ready for his Master's return or do his Master's will. It is best translated "unfaithful," not "unbelieving." Therefore it is likely that the wicked servant in Matthew 25 is likewise a true Christian but an unfaithful one.]

**QUESTION 3:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 4:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 5:** *Your answer*

### QUESTION 6

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Word or Phrase</i>
2 Corinthians 5:10	Oil
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	The call of the bridegroom
Revelation 19:9	Wedding supper
Matthew 22:2	Wedding festivities
Matthew 22:12-14	Foolish virgins
1 Thessalonians 5:12	"I do not know you"

**QUESTION 7:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 8:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

He distributed the gifts according to each servant's ability.

### QUESTION 9

- D. Your faithfulness

**QUESTION 10:** *Your answer*

### QUESTION 11

- A. He is sent to the "outer darkness," which must mean he was sent to hell.
- C. He is called "wicked and lazy," and no Christian could be described as a wicked servant.
- D. He experiences weeping and gnashing of teeth throughout eternity.

### QUESTION 12

- A. He is called a servant. How can a non-believer be called a servant of Christ?
- C. Christ would not entrust spiritual gifts to an unbeliever, enlisting him in His service.
- D. It seems ridiculous to assert that God would give gifts to unsaved people, ask them to invest their lives for Him, and expect them to give Him a return on their investment.

**QUESTION 13:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 14:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

If our Christianity consists of avoiding risk and never doing anything wrong; believing that one day Christ will be satisfied anyway, we are avoiding the will of God.

**QUESTION 15:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 16:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Gentile (non-Jewish) believers. The Greek word for "nations" is translated "Gentiles" in every instance except one in Matthew.

### QUESTION 17

- B. By faith alone

### QUESTION 18

- C. By works [There is no mention of faith in any of these passages; rather, to receive this inheritance one must meet certain qualifications, living a certain way or avoiding certain behaviors.]

**QUESTION 19:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 20:** False [He invites them to “inherit” the kingdom. “Inheriting” the kingdom and “entering” the kingdom are two different things. “Inheriting” refers to reward, and “entering” refers to personal salvation. All Christians will enter, but only those who meet the conditions will inherit, that is, possess the kingdom and rule there.]

**QUESTION 21:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 22:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

In this group of sheep, goats, and brothers, the goats are not Christ’s brothers. His brothers are those who do the will of the Father in heaven; a term of spiritual kinship that refers to true believers. The setting of the sermon implies that in the last days, when the nation of Israel is experiencing the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer 30:7; Zech 12:6) or the great tribulation (Mt 24:21), it could possibly refer more specifically to Jewish Christians and non-Christians undergoing the persecutions of the antichrist. During this seven year period, anti-Semitism will skyrocket, and some Gentiles (both believers and nonbelievers) will minister to the Jewish people.

**QUESTION 23:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 24:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

No. In this context the same word for eternal life is used for eternal condemnation. If heaven lasts forever then so does eternal damnation.

**QUESTION 25**

- B. They are those justified and declared righteous through Christ. [The only righteousness that qualifies us to enter into eternal life is the righteousness of Christ, which is granted freely to those who believe. Why are the sheep called righteous? It cannot be because of their good deeds to the poor or needy—no one enters eternal life on the basis of what they have done.]

**QUESTION 23:** *See Matching Events chart*

## **Lesson 7 Self Check Answers**

**QUESTION 1:** False

**QUESTION 2:** False

**QUESTION 3**

B. They are those justified by the righteousness of Christ.

**QUESTION 4**

C. The pre-tribulational rapture of the church

**QUESTION 5:** False

**QUESTION 6**

D. He did not respect them.

**QUESTION 7**

D. Your faithfulness

**QUESTION 8**

B. Afraid of failure and lacking in trust

**QUESTION 9**

A. God expects returns when He does not provide service opportunities and enablement.

**QUESTION 10:** False

# Lesson 8: The Last Supper

---

Jesus turned to His disciples to issue this warning: “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified” (Mt 26:2). This greatly discouraged His disciples and filled them with doubt. It was also a warning that they too would experience persecution. With these thoughts heavily on His mind, Jesus pulled His men aside to celebrate His final earthly Passover and to encourage and instruct them for the critical days ahead.

In Topic 1, we watch our Lord's friend Judas plot to betray Him for a mere thirty pieces of silver, the price of a farm animal.

In Topic 2, we will discuss the Passover meal and how it prefigured the sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the sins of the world.

In Topic 3, the disciples are preoccupied with who will be the greatest in the coming kingdom. In one of His most symbolic acts, Jesus begins the Last Supper by washing their feet, modeling that the greatest will be the ones who are the servants of all.

Topic 4 discusses how we maintain constant fellowship with Christ, keeping our feet clean as they acquire dust and dirt from the walk through life.

In Topic 5, Jesus tells the traitor, Judas, shortly after the meal began, to go about his business—committing the most treacherous act in human history.

In Topic 6, we will discuss the historical significance and celebration of the Passover, as well as the importance of the seating arrangement at the Lord's table.

In Topic 7, we will view the prophetic significance of the Last Supper and how Christians are commanded to celebrate it.

In Topic 8, we will study what Jesus called the greatest commandment, and why He called it a “new” commandment.

Finally, in Topic 9, we will study four questions His disciples asked. These questions arose from Christ's statement to Peter, “Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later” (Jn 13:36).

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Judas the Betrayer

Topic 2: Preparation for the Passover

Topic 3: Foot Washing and Humility

Topic 4: Foot Washing and Fellowship

Topic 5: Betrayal

Topic 6: The Passover Meal

Topic 7: The New Covenant

Topic 8: The New Commandment

Topic 9: The Four Questions

Peter: “Lord, Where Are You Going?”

Thomas: “How Do We Know the Way?”

Philip: “Will You Show Us the Father?”

Jude: “Why Are You Going to Disclose Yourself to Us and Not to the World?”

Topic 10: Matching Events

## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Discuss the Old Testament predictions of Judas’s betrayal of Jesus
- Explain the history of the Jewish Passover and Jesus’ celebration of it
- Comprehend the necessity of humility for becoming great in God’s kingdom
- Explain the two kinds of relationships we have with Jesus Christ: the eternal one that never changes because it depends upon Him, and the temporal one called “fellowship,” which depends upon us
- Discuss the answers Jesus gave His disciples to the four main questions that arose when they finally grasped His forewarning of His death.

## Topic 1: Judas the Betrayer

Thursday, April 2, AD 33

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 26:1-5; 14-16; Mark 14:1-2,10-11; and Luke 22:2-6.

Immediately after Jesus spoke of the sheep and the goats in the Olivet Discourse, one of the goats, Judas, was introduced.

Read the notes on the thirty pieces of silver and the potter’s field.



### The Potter’s Field

The potter’s field was a burial ground outside Jerusalem where foreigners were usually buried. A “potter” obviously was a craftsman skilled in making artifacts out of clay such as pots, cups, plates and statues, etc. Before hanging himself, the repentant Judas threw down in the temple the thirty pieces of silver he had received for betraying Jesus. Since the silver was “blood money” (i.e., money paid for a man’s life), it could not be put into the temple treasury; hence the purchase of the field. Matthew’s reference to it as the “potter’s field” probably means it was bought from a potter, though scholars have suggested that this was where the potters got their clay or dumped their refuse.

Matthew’s reference to this event as the fulfillment of “the prophecy of Jeremiah” has provoked much discussion. Several OT allusions seem to be mixed here: Jeremiah’s visit to the potter’s house (Jer 18:1-5; cf. Jer 19:1-13), his purchase of a field from his cousin for seventeen silver pieces (Jer 32:9), and Zechariah’s contribution to the treasury of his wages—thirty shekels—according to God’s command (Zech 11:12).

According to Acts 1:18 (which refers to this field as *Akeldama*) Judas had bought the field with the money received for turning Jesus over to the chief priest. The association with blood (*Akeldama* is the Greek

transliteration of the Aramaic word that means “field of blood”) differs from that in Matthew 27:7; Judas fell into this field and “all his bowels gushed out” (Acts 1:18); hence the gruesome name.

The traditional site of this field since the fourth century has been the south slope at the east end of the Hinnom Valley. Foreigners and pilgrims were buried here at least until the seventeenth century. (See “Potter” in Bromiley, G. W., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984, 3:921).

### **Thirty Pieces of Silver**

One of the most infamous stories of the Bible is that of Judas Iscariot, the disciple who betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver. While it is difficult to determine exactly what thirty pieces of silver was worth, we know it was not a fortune.

The Roman denarius was the most common coin used during Jesus’ day. Struck from silver, this coin bore an imprint with the head of the emperor. Because of this, the Jewish people were not allowed to use these coins as offerings in religious services; they converted their coins to pieces of silver. Money changers converted the denarius or shekel to silver for a fee of 12 percent.

One denarius equaled a day’s wages of a common laborer at that time, so it had significant buying power. Even so, by this estimate we find that Judas betrayed Christ for a month’s salary—hardly a fortune.

The Book of Zechariah prophesied that such an amount would be paid for the Messiah (Zech 11:12). When Judas accepted thirty pieces of silver for the life of Christ, he fulfilled the prophecy (Mt 26:15). The amount was also the typical price of a slave or servant during that time. (Adapted from Packer, J. I., M. C. Tenney and W. White. *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson. 1997.)

## **QUESTION 1**

Open your Life Notebook, then read Zechariah 11:12-13. Compare these verses with Matthew 27:3-5; Luke 23:3-6; and Acts 1:15-20. Record your observations in your Life Notebook, and then check the results in the Lesson Notes section at the end of this Lesson.

## **Topic 2: Preparation for the Passover**

**Thursday, April 2, AD 33**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-17; and Luke 22:7-18.
  - Please read the article on the institution and first celebration of the Passover.



## The Passover

The Hebrew word for this feast is *pesach*, which literally means “pass over.” It commemorates the day the angel of death “passed over” the homes of the Hebrew people in Egypt.

When the angel saw the blood each household applied to each doorpost, he passed over, sparing the first born of that household. Thus this feast not only speaks of escape from judgment, it reminds all Jews of the birth of the Israelite nation.

The Passover, the first of the three great annual festivals of the Israelites, is celebrated in the month of Nisan (March–April) from the 14th to the 21st. (Strictly speaking, the Passover only applied to the *paschal supper*, and the feast of unleavened bread followed and was celebrated until the 21st.) The following are the principal passages in the Pentateuch relating to the Passover: Exodus 12:1-51; 13:3-10; 23:14-19; 34:18-26; Leviticus 23:4-14; Numbers 9:1-14; 28:16-25; Deuteronomy 16:1-6.

### First Celebration of the Passover

The first Passover was celebrated in Egypt in connection with the tenth plague God brought on that nation. On the tenth day of the month, God instructed the head of each Jewish family to select from the flock a male lamb or kid of the first year, without blemish. If his family was too small to eat the whole lamb, he was permitted to invite his nearest neighbor to join the party.

On the fourteenth day of the month, he was to kill his lamb while the sun was setting. He was then to take blood in a basin, and with a sprig of hyssop to sprinkle it on the two side-posts and the lintel of the door of the house. The lamb was then thoroughly roasted, whole. It was expressly forbidden that it should be boiled, or that a bone of it should be broken.

Unleavened bread and bitter herbs were to be eaten with the lamb. No male who was uncircumcised was to join the company. Everyone was to be dressed, to hold a staff in their hands, and to have shoes on their feet. They were to eat in haste, and it would seem that they were to stand during the meal. The number of the party was to be calculated as nearly as possible, so that all the flesh of the lamb might be eaten; but if any portion of it happened to remain, it was to be burned in the morning. No morsel of it was to be carried out of the house.

### Chronology

The Passover occurred on the fourteenth of Nisan. The first of Nisan was the beginning of the Jewish calendar year. According to the gospel records, the Passover on which Christ was crucified was a Friday. From astronomical records, we know that in AD 33 Nisan 14 was on a Friday because the next day was Saturday, the Sabbath. Hence, the “official” Passover began Thursday evening and continued to Friday evening.

The Sadducees (who were in charge of the temple and its services at that time) and the Judeans reckoned a day from sunset to sunset. So for them, Nisan 14 ran from Thursday evening to Friday evening. But for Jesus, His disciples, and the Pharisees, a day was reckoned from sunrise to sunrise. So for them, Nisan 14 ran from sunrise Thursday morning (April 2) to sunrise Friday morning (April 3). (See Jack Finnigan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964], pp. 7-15, 286-291).

This means that the Last Supper on Galilean reckoning was indeed the Passover meal as celebrated by the Galileans and the Pharisees and eaten on Thursday evening Nisan 14 (our April 2), as the Synoptic Gospels state.

Were there then two slaughtering of the lambs—one Thursday after noon and another official one of Friday afternoon? This is probable because as the population of Jerusalem swelled to 2.7 million during the Passover, it was impossible for all the necessary lambs to be sacrificed and offered on Friday even though that was the official day for the Sadducees and the Judeans. It was therefore permitted that those from other parts of the Palestine could have the lamb sacrificed in the temple on

Thursday, which was Nisan 14 according to their reckoning. There were two slaughterings of the lambs in the temple.

Thus for the Galileans, Jesus and the Pharisees, the day began at sunrise and the Passover lamb was sacrificed on Thursday afternoon and the unleavened bread (the Passover meal) was eaten on the same day, as Mark 14:12 states.

But on the official reckoning followed by the temple and the Sadducees, Nisan 14 did not begin until sunset on Thursday evening. Then, according to the Judean reckoning on the following afternoon, of official fourteenth day of Nisan, the Passover lamb was slain. According to Josephus, this occurred between 3 p.m. – 5 p.m Friday afternoon. According to Mark, Jesus was nailed to the cross on the third hour (9:00 a.m., Mk 15:25) and from the third to the ninth hour (noon to 3:00 p.m.) darkness fell on the earth. He died at ninth hour (Mt 27:45-46), 3 p.m., *the very time that the official sacrifice was being offered in the temple.*

## **Mode and Order of the Passover Meal**

### **The Blessing and the First Cup**

According to Jewish documents the prescribed procedure for this celebration was standardized at the time and it is likely that Jesus and His disciples followed it. First came the blessing.

John 13:2 should be translated “the evening meal was being served.” Jesus was the host, the *Pater Familias*, “the father of the family.” This is His Supper. As such, He would have taken the first of the four cups of wine in His hand and given thanks.

Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, who hast created the fruit of the vine! Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God King of the Universe, who hast chosen us from among all people, and exalted us from among all languages, and sanctified us with Thy commandments! And Thou hast given us, O Jehovah our God, in love, the solemn days for joy, and the festivals and appointed seasons for gladness; and this the day of the feast of unleavened bread, the season of our freedom, a holy convocation, the memorial of our departure from Egypt. For us hast Thou chosen; and us hast Thou sanctified from among all nations, and Thy holy festivals with joy and with gladness hast Thou caused us to inherit. Blessed art Thou, O Jehovah, who sanctifiest Israel and the appointed seasons! Blessed art Thou, Jehovah, King of the Universe, who hast preserved us alive and sustained us and brought us to this season! (The details of this ceremony described below are taken from Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple and its Ministry*, Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2003, p. 238)

### **The First Cup**

The first cup of wine was then drunk and all present washed their hands.

While washing their hands this prayer was repeated, “*Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments, and hast enjoined us concerning the washing of our hands.*”

It was probably at this time that the Lord Jesus proceeded to wash the disciples’ feet.

### **The Herbs**

At this point, the *Pater Familias*, the host, took some of the herbs and dipped them in salt water, ate them, and gave them to others. These herbs consisted of chicory, bitter cresses, hawkweeds, sow-thistles and wild lettuces, which grow abundantly in the peninsula of Sinai, in Palestine and in Egypt. They signified the fact that the Egyptians had made their lives bitter during the bondage in Egypt.

### **The Second Cup**

Immediately after the eating of these herbs, all dishes were cleared from the table, and the second cup of wine was filled. At this time the father would explain the significance of the feast. To



facilitate this, the youngest son (or the youngest person at the feast) would ask,

Why is this night distinguished from all other nights? For on all other nights we eat leavened or unleavened bread, but on this night only unleavened bread? On all other nights we eat any kind of herbs, but on this night only bitter herbs? On all other nights we eat meat roasted, stewed, or boiled, but on this night only roasted? On all other nights we dip (the herbs) only once, but on this night twice?

Then the father would recite the history of the nation beginning with Abraham and his father, Terah, through bondage in Egypt and to the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai.

### **The Dishes and the Singing of the Hallel and the Second Cup**

Then the dishes were brought out. First came the dish of the Passover lamb, then the bitter herbs, and then the unleavened bread and he explained the significance of each.

- **The lamb signified the blood** that was shed and applied to the doorposts of the Egyptian homes so that the angel of death passed over those homes, and no judgment fell upon any home covered by the blood.
- The bitter herbs signified the bitterness of the **bondage in Egypt**.
- The unleavened bread signified **haste**. The Israelites had to leave in haste to escape Pharaoh's troops. There was no time to leaven the bread and allow it to rise.

It is significant that the Lord uses the symbols of breaking of bread and wine to signify the broken sacrifice and the blood in His institution of the new memorial, the Lord's Supper. He is the Lamb, but He is yet to be offered.

Then the host led in the singing of the first two of the Hallel Psalms, Psalm 113 and Psalm 114.

The Hallel is a section of the Psalms from Psalm 113 to Psalm 118. The word "Hallel" (a contraction from *Hallelujah*) means "praise," and in these Psalms the Israelites sing praises to God for delivering them from Egypt and choosing them as a nation.

On completion of the Hallel, the second cup of wine was drunk

### **The Breaking of Bread**

In the normal procedure, the breaking of bread preceding the blessing mentioned above in association with Hallel. Yet, when our Lord institutes the Lord's supper, He changed the order and gave thanks and then broke the bread (Mt 26:26; Mk 24:22; Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24).

In the Jewish ceremony, the significance of breaking the bread was to remember the poor who have no whole pieces of bread but only broken pieces. The Lord of the Passover, changes the meaning and says that in the Lord's Supper the meaning of the broken bread in the future refers to His body which is broken for us.

The bread was broken and dipped in a mixture of dates, raisins, and vinegar called the *Charoseth*. This is referred to in the Gospels (Mt 26:21-23; Mk 14:18; Jn 13:25-26). It is then passed to each participant in the feast.

This passing of the sop was the beginning of the meal when the lamb was served. Judas, having taken the sop, now exits. The traitor having departed, the official eating of the lamb begins; The paschal lamb they ate was legally slain in the temple as required in Deuteronomy 16:2 and the blood and fat offered earlier in the afternoon.

## The Third Cup

After the meal had been eaten, the third cup of wine was drunk. There is no doubt that this is the cup the Lord connected with His death, “the cup of blessing” (1 Cor 10:16). A special blessing was associated with it.

The service concluded with the fourth cup, over which the second portion of the ‘Hallel’ was sung, consisting of Psalms 115;116;117; 118.

## The Passover as a Type

The Passover was not only commemorative but also typical. “The deliverance which it commemorated was a type of the great salvation it foretold.”

1. The paschal lamb must of course be regarded as the leading feature in the ceremonial of the festival. The lamb slain typified Christ the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world. Christ “our Passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor 5:7). According to the divine purpose, the true Lamb of God was slain at nearly the same time as “the Lord’s Passover,” at the same season of the year, and at the same time of the day, as the daily sacrifice at the temple, the crucifixion beginning at the hour of the morning sacrifice and ending at the hour of the evening sacrifice.
2. The unleavened bread ranks next in importance to the paschal lamb. For Paul, it meant purity, no yeast to ferment the dough (1 Cor 5:6-8). To the Jews, it signified haste; there was no time for the bread to rise, and they must hurry to get out of Egypt. But to our Lord, it spoke of His body which was broken for us.
3. The Passover is a type of deliverance from the slavery of sin. As Israel was passed over in judgment, so the person who believes on Christ for salvation is passed over in the judgment and given the gift of eternal life. It is the passing over of the doom we deserve for our sins, because the blood of Christ has been applied to us by faith (adapted from *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, s.v. “Passover”). Furthermore, if the nation responds to Jesus in faith, they will receive the national forgiveness of sins which was equivalent to return from exile and the removal of Gentile dominion.



Scene from *The Gospel of John*,

© The Visual Bible

## QUESTION 2

According to the article, why was the Passover originally celebrated? *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. To commemorate the birth of Israel as a nation
- B. To remember the night that the angel of death passed over the homes that had blood on the side posts and lintel of the doorposts
- C. To signify Jewish rebellion against Rome
- D. To anticipate the coming Messiah

It was a great festival for Israel. According to the ancient historian Josephus, during the Passover feast about 2.7 million people converged on Jerusalem, and 265,500 lambs were [sacrificed] (Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple and Its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Jesus*, [(Bellingham, WA: Logos], p. 214).

In Matthew 26:17 the disciples wanted to know where to go to prepare the Passover meal. Jesus told them to go into Jerusalem, where they would find a man carrying a jar of water (Lk 22:10). In those days, gathering water was a woman's job; for example, the woman at the well in John 4. This man's pitcher of water would set him apart in the crowd.

## QUESTION 3

Now think for a moment. In a city crowded with 2.7 million people, the disciples were supposed to go into town and find one certain man carrying water. Put yourself in their shoes and reflect on this situation and how God works. Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook. After you have written down your own thoughts, check the lesson note on this question to gain additional perspective.

## QUESTION 4

According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Passover meal was held Friday evening, yet John says that it was held on Thursday evening. Please read about the chronology (placed earlier in the lesson) of the Passover meal. What does the article suggest as a solution to this problem? What are the main objections and answers to this solution? Record your answer in your Life Notebook.

<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>Galilean Method Synoptic Gospels</b> Used by Jesus, His Disciples and the Pharisees	<b>Judean Method John's Gospel</b> Used by the Sadducees	Midnight
	<b>Nisan 14</b>		Sunrise
	3-5 PM: Passover Lamb Slain		
Last Supper Jesus Arrested		<b>Nisan 14</b>	Sunset
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>Nisan 15</b>		Midnight
			Sunrise
6 A.M. Jesus before Pilate 9 A.M. Crucifixion 12-3 P.M. Darkness 3 P.M. Jesus Died Jesus Buried		3-5 PM: Passover Lamb Slain	
		<b>Nisan 15</b>	Sunset
<b>SATURDAY</b>			Midnight

## Topic 3: Foot Washing and Humility

Thursday, April 2, AD 33

### Assignment

- Read John 13:1-20.



The first eleven chapters of the Gospel of John present seven miracles, signs that proved Jesus as the Christ. Then, in chapter twelve, John presents His rejection by Israel's leaders. Despite the signs that blatantly proclaimed Jesus was the Messiah, they did not believe.

Now the Lord Jesus began to prepare His disciples for their future ministry with lessons on humility and serving others. This training is often called "The Upper Room Discourse."

Relieved at reaching their destination after weeks of travel, Jesus and His friends entered the upper room, where they would spend the course of the evening. As was customary in the Middle East of their day, they removed their shoes from their tired, dusty feet before they headed toward the forty-five-centimeter-high table at the room's center. There, they reclined on their left sides on pillows, which left their right hands free for eating.

But there was one more item that a servant assigned to the room normally attended to: the washing of feet. In this case, however, there was no servant. After walking miles along dirty streets, the group's feet were uncomfortably caked with the grit and grime of travel; yet none of the disciples volunteered to perform this menial task. They ignored a customary necessity because none of them wanted to take the position of a servant, making himself the "least."

The disciples were distinctly preoccupied with the subject of greatness. On several occasions, they argued intensively about who would be the greatest in the kingdom (Mt 20:20–28; 23:11; Mk 10:35–45; Lk 9:46), making this a final dispute even at this Last Supper (Lk 22:24-27).

In Luke, this dispute apparently happens later on during the meal, but perhaps Luke's account is non-chronological, describing the events of the supper in no particular order. Some scholars have argued that this debate was probably sparked at the very beginning of the feast by the question, "Just who of us will have the positions of honor at this table? How does each of us rank?"

Jesus took this opportunity to exemplify the true definition of greatness in the form of His own servitude when He removed His own outer garments, tied a towel around His waist, and began to remove the dust of the day from the feet of His followers—those who were there to serve *Him*. His servitude shocked most of them into stunned submission as the Lord humbled Himself, making Himself an object lesson.

### QUESTION 5

Read John 13:1-4. Let us assume that the "which of us is greatest?" debate among the disciples did in fact take place as they entered the room. How would you contrast verses 1-3 with verse 4, and how do Jesus' actions relate to their discussion? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

## QUESTION 6

Please read John 13:3-5 and Philippians 2:5-11. Match the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper with His life as it is recorded in Philippians 2:5-11.

<i>Last Supper</i>	<i>Actions</i>
Came from God	Being in the nature of God
Laid aside His garments	Emptied Himself
Took up a towel	God highly exalted Him
Washed the disciples' feet	Took the form of a servant
Going back to God (John 13:3)	Humbled Himself

Think of it! The one who knew He was both from God and returning to God took off His tunic and washed their feet!

## Topic 4: Foot Washing and Fellowship

### Thursday, April 2, AD 33

If you have ever walked along the beaches of an ocean, meandering along the sandy shore and watching the waves create sand ripples beneath your toes, you have a firsthand example of this passage's lesson. When you leave the water, you trudge through the dry sand back to your cabin on the beach. But there you see a sign above a water spigot: "Please wash the sand off your feet before entering the house." You do not need a bath. If you actually swam in the ocean waves, perhaps you have already had one. Despite this fact, your feet are dirty.

Peter resisted Jesus' act of servitude. "Lord," he protested, "do you wash my feet? You will never wash my feet!" But Jesus replied, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me" (Jn 13:8).

## QUESTION 7

Is it possible for a true believer to have "no share" in Christ? What does that mean? Read the following passages and record your thoughts in your Life Notebook: Luke 10:42; 2 Corinthians 6:14-15; Hebrews 3:12-15; Matthew 5:19.

All believers are saved, and none of them will be lost (Jn 6:49), but not all believers are in communion or fellowship with Christ.

When Peter learned that he would have no communion with Christ unless his feet were washed, his response to Jesus' servitude swung to the other extreme. "Lord," he exclaimed fervently, "wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head!" (Jn 13:9).

There are two different Greek words for "to wash." The first, *nipto*, means to wash a part of the body. This is the word used for foot-washing in the preceding verses. The second word, the one Peter uses here, is *louo*, which means "to bathe" or "to wash all over."

But Jesus' response to Peter drew a different symbolic meaning from His actions. "The one who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean," He said. "And you disciples are clean, but not every one of you" (Jn 13:10).

## QUESTION 8

What point is Jesus making when He says that one who is bathed (*louo*) only needs to have his feet washed (*nipito*)?

- A. We must accept the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf.
- B. We can lose our salvation through sin, but can regain it if we get further cleansing.
- C. We can be restored to fellowship with Christ by confessing our sins.
- D. Unless we seek daily cleansing from sin, we will not share with Christ in the fruits of His redemptive acts.

## QUESTION 9

Based on what you have learned in this lesson, how does 1 John 1:9 coincide with Jesus' symbolic action?

## Topic 5: Betrayal

Thursday, April 2, AD 33

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 26:21-25; Mark 14:18-21; Luke 22:21-23; and John 13:21-33.

Not much is known of Judas or his motives. Why Jesus chose “the son of perdition” (Jn 6:64, 70, 71; 17:12) who would betray Him to be one of His followers is not clear, but it suggests He understood that it was part of the plan written in Scripture (Ps 41:9).



## QUESTION 10

Read Psalm 41:9. David obviously wrote it in reference to his experiences of betrayal—likely with his counselor Ahithophel in mind. Yet Jesus applied verse 9 to Judas. Read Psalm 55:12-14. Ahithophel was like Judas in which of the following ways? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. He hanged himself.
- B. He was a counselor.
- C. He ate at the king's table.
- D. He betrayed his king.

### **Ahithophel**

His name means “brother of impiety.” He was a man greatly renowned among the Jews for his wisdom among the Jews. At the time of Absalom’s revolt he deserted David (Ps 41:9; 55:12–14) and espoused the cause of Absalom (2 Sam 15:12). David sent his old friend Hushai back to Absalom, in order that he might counteract the counsel of Ahithophel (2 Sam 15:31–37). After his counsel was thwarted, Ahithophel saw he had no longer any influence, and accordingly he at once left the camp of Absalom and returned to Giloh, his native place. There, after arranging his worldly affairs, he hanged himself, and was buried in the sepulchre of his fathers (2 Sam 17:1–23). He was the type of Judas [was like Judas] (Ps 41:9).

Easton, M., *Easton's Bible dictionary*, Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996, s. v. “Ahithophel”

### **QUESTION 11**

Read Matthew 26:24. On one hand, what Judas did was foreordained in Scripture (Ps 41:9); but on the other hand, Judas was fully responsible for his own actions. How can these two truths be reconciled? Record your answer in your Life Notebook. Check your answer in the Lesson Notes section at the end of this lesson.

### **QUESTION 12**

When Jesus said, “One of you will betray me” (Mt 26:21-25), note how the disciples and Judas responded. What is the significance of this difference?

## **Topic 6: The Passover Meal**

### **Thursday, April 2, AD 33**

Paul tells us that Christ, our Passover Lamb, was sacrificed for us (1 Cor 5:7).

What was the Passover, and what is its relationship to the Lord’s Supper?

People in Jewish culture began each day with a light breakfast, which was followed by a very light lunch (bread and wine) at midday. Every night, families enjoyed their primary meal together. The Greek word for this meal was *deipnon*—the same word used for the Lord’s Supper.

The Lord’s Supper is a time when He, as the host, gathers His whole family to Him for a time of fellowship. However, the specifics of the Lord’s Supper, which we now celebrate as communion, were based on the feast at Passover.

The traditional Passover feast commemorated the miraculous last night of the Hebrews’ enslavement in Egypt, when the firstborn of Israel were delivered by the death of a lamb. The tenth plague the Lord used to afflict the Egyptians was delivered by the angel of death, who would slay every firstborn throughout the land. In preparation for this terrible plague, God instructed the Israelites to kill a lamb and smear

blood on the doorposts of each home. When the angel of death saw the blood, he would “pass over” that household, and death would not enter it (Ex 12:21-23).

However, God instituted the traditions and rituals of Passover not only as a reminder to the Israelites of His saving acts in their history, but also as a prophetic foretelling of the salvation that was to come through the blood of the Messiah. Each year, a lamb was sacrificed for the sins of the people. In a very similar way, the Messiah would be sacrificed as the ultimate sin offering.

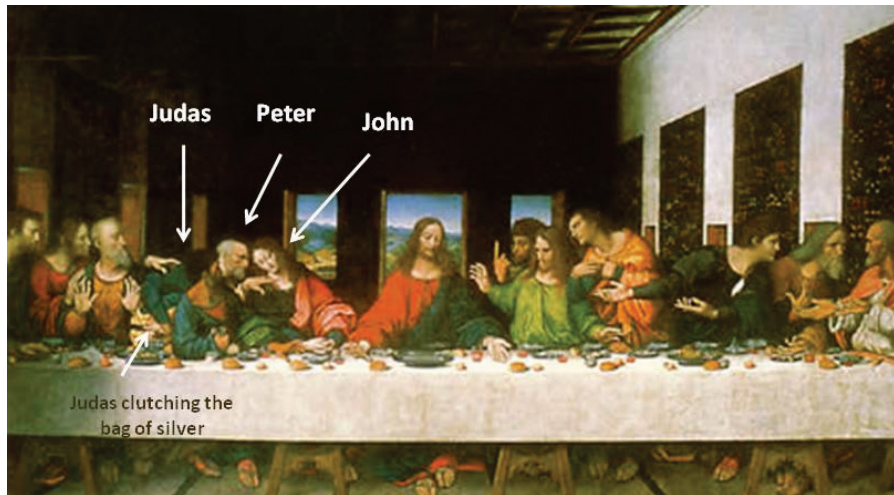
The Passover Jesus spent with His disciples was the last Passover authorized in the Word of God. The symbolism of this feast would be brought to fulfillment through Christ’s ultimate sacrifice; it was no longer needed. At this final Passover meal, Jesus gave the elements new meaning when He used them to symbolize His body and His blood.

The New Covenant promise of forgiveness of sin was announced that night. Christ Himself would be the final Passover Lamb, and His blood would be poured out once in order to cover the sins of many (Mt 26:28). In fact, His death would occur the following afternoon at the ninth hour, or 3:00 p.m., the same time that the lamb was sacrificed in the temple (Mt 27:46).

**QUESTION 13**

Review “The Mode and Order of the Passover Meal” (placed earlier in the lesson). Match the element of the meal with its significance.

<i>Element</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Lamb	Christ’s body
Unleavened bread (for Jesus)	Blood of the New Covenant
Unleavened bread (for Israel)	Christ sacrificed for us
Third cup	Hardship in Egypt
Bitter herbs	Haste



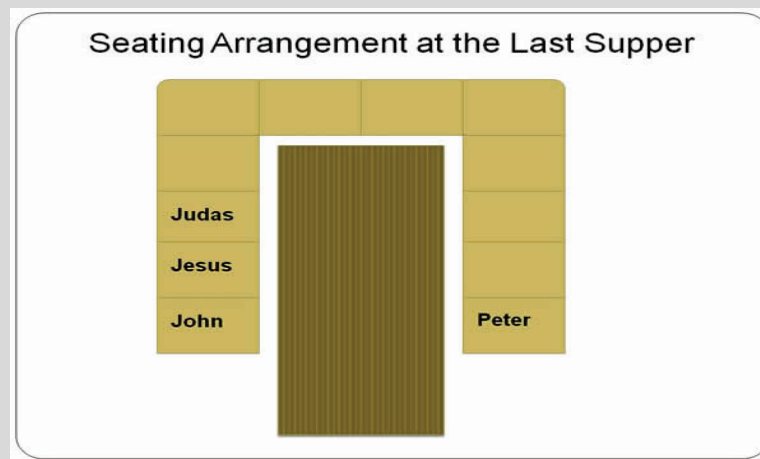
This famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci is located in the church of Santa Maria de la Gracia in Milan, Italy. It depicts Jesus sitting with His disciples at a long banquet table. The disciples are pictured in four groups of three. Beginning from the left, the first group contains Bartholomew, James the son of Alpheus, and Andrew. The next group begins with Judas, then Peter, and then, directly to Jesus’ right, is John the Beloved. To Christ’s left, the next three are Thomas, James the Greater, and Philip. Continuing on Jesus’ left, the final group of three contains Matthew, Jude Thaddeus, and finally Simon the Zealot.



Judas, wearing green and blue, drifts toward the shadows just behind Peter. Rather withdrawn, he seems nervous about Jesus' revelation of the plan of betrayal. The small bag he clutches likely represents either the silver he received to betray Jesus or his role as the accountant for the Twelve. He is the only person to have his elbow on the table.

Read John 13:23-26. Apparently, Jesus made His statement identifying the betrayer privately. Look at the painting by Leonardo da Vinci above. Leonardo had difficulty painting how Judas could have spoken privately to Jesus. So his Judas leans back behind Peter and John to converse with the Lord. How could it be that John would not have overheard this conversation? Please read "The Seating Arrangement at the Last Supper."

## Seating Arrangement at the Last Supper



Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p. 2:494

The typical table [in Jesus' day] was about eighteen inches high [forty-five centimeters]. Around such a low rectangular Eastern table were pillows, arranged in the form of an elongated horseshoe, leaving free one end of the table, where the servers would set the food. When eating, each guest reclined on his left side, with his head nearest the table, and his feet stretching back towards the ground. Naturally they rested on both elbows at times as well. According to Jewish documents the chief host, when there were more than two, sat in the middle. This is the Lord's supper, He is the host, and he sat in the middle. We are told in John 13:23 that the Apostle sat at Jesus' right, which would be at the end of the table in the place of honor.

But the chief place next to the Lord Jesus would be that to His left, or above Him. Remember the strife of the disciples regarding who would be the greatest? The spot to the left of Jesus would be a place of high honor which was probably occupied, by Judas. This explains several things.

- It explains how Judas, desirous of ascertaining whether his treachery was known, dared to ask whether it was he, and received the affirmative answer, no one at table knew the conversation which had passed between them. But this could not have been the case, unless Judas had occupied the place next to Christ; in this case, necessarily that at His left, or the post of chief honor. Apparently in the debate about who was the greatest, Judas won and took the place of honor.
- It explains how it could be that John leaned back against Jesus' breast (Jn 13:25).
- It explains how, when Christ whispered to John by what sign to recognize the traitor, none of the other disciples heard it (Jn 13:26).
- It explains how Simon Peter could gesture to John asking him to ask Jesus who the traitor was and no one else hear it (Jn 13:24). They were directly across the table from each other.

- It also explains, how Christ would first hand to Judas the sop, which formed part of the Paschal ritual, beginning with him as the chief guest at the table, without thereby exciting special notice (Jn 13:26).
- As regards Peter, we can quite understand how, when the Lord with such loving words rebuked their self-seeking and taught them of the greatness of Christian humility, he should, in his impetuosity of shame, have rushed to take the lowest place at the other end of the table (Mk 9:34-35, 46; Mt 23:11-12; 18:1-4; Lk 22:24-27).

The rest of the disciples would occupy such places as were most convenient, or suited their fellowship with one another.

#### **QUESTION 14**

How would the seating arrangement at the table in this article explain the above items? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook. Then check your answer in the Lesson Notes section at the end of this lesson.

## **Topic 7: The New Covenant**

**Thursday, April 2, AD 33**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; and Luke 22:19-20.
- Please review the article “The Passover as a Type” (placed earlier in the lesson).

Judas had left the room (Jn 13:28-29), so now the Lord’s Supper could begin.

Jesus endowed this Passover meal with special significance, using it as an opportunity to announce the inauguration of New Covenant prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-40. This included the promise of return from exile, which was known as the “forgiveness of sins” (Zech 9:9-11). It was sin that sent them into exile, and it would be the forgiveness of sins which brought them back (Rom 11:25-27). While forgiveness of sins certainly included the idea of personal forgiveness and restoration to God, national forgiveness was the primary interpretation of a Palestinian Jew of this time. This meant restoration from exile and the reestablishment of the Davidic kingdom under the reign of the Messiah.

Here, Jesus instituted the first Lord’s Supper, giving elements of the Passover ritual new meaning.

#### **QUESTION 15**

Please read the article below, “The Lord’s Supper.” According to the article, when Jesus said “this is my body” and “this is my blood,” what did He mean?

- The elements were literally His body and blood.
- His body and blood were present alongside the bread and wine.
- Christ was spiritually present in the bread and wine.
- These were symbols of His sacrifice on our behalf.

## Different Views of the Lord's Supper

### A. Transubstantiation

This view, called “transubstantiation,” is held primarily by the Roman Catholic Church. Their doctrine says that anyone who does not believe this is *anathema* (“under a curse”). In the seventeenth century, fifteen-year-old Jane Grey was crowned queen of England. Jane was a strong Reformed Protestant, and through her some leaders thought they could ensure England’s security from Roman Catholicism. However, Jane made a number of naïve decisions, and was condemned to death by beheading. Just before Jane’s execution, the head of the Church gave her a chance to renounce the Reformed faith. A main thrust of his questioning was, “Is the bread of the Eucharist actually the body of Christ?” Jane Seymour responded, “Is Jesus a door because He said, ‘I am the door?’” She was beheaded soon after.

### B. Consubstantiation

This theory of the Lord’s Supper is most closely associated with Lutheran tradition. Martin Luther taught that the body and blood of the Lord is present “in, with, and under” the actual bread and wine, and disputed the Roman Catholic belief called “transubstantiation,” which taught that the bread and wine were transformed into the actual body and blood of Jesus upon their consecration by the presiding priest. Luther believed that the literal presence of Christ permeated the elements like heat resides in metal.

### C. Spiritual Presence

This is the Reformed view, which teaches that Christ’s spiritual presence is in the bread and the wine. Grace is imparted to believers when they partake of the Supper.

### D. Memorial

This view says that the supper is a memorial only. It was the view of Ulrich Zwingli, a leader in the Swiss Reformation, and is held by most Protestants today. At the Lord’s Supper, Jesus said we are to do this “in remembrance” of Him (Lk 22:19).

The unleavened bread that initially symbolized the Israelites’ haste in leaving Egypt (there was no time for the bread to rise), Jesus converted into a symbol of His body, which was broken for us.



Four different glasses of wine were served during a typical Passover. When it was time for the third glass, the glass of blessing (see “The Passover” (placed earlier in the lesson)) Jesus identified it with His blood, which was shed for us. In Matthew 26:28, His “blood” refers to violent death, a sacrificial death under the curse of God. It was shed for the remission of sins (Num 35:33). Jesus is using sacrificial language. Through His blood, a new covenant is ratified “for many”—that is, to all who believe on Him for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus often spoke of the significance of His death. It was not merely a moral example of self-denial as many liberal preachers maintain. It was a ransom, a payment for sin. Jesus said that a good shepherd gives his life for his sheep (Jn 10:11), and that He had come to give His life as a “ransom for many” (Mt 20:28). His death satisfied the claims of God against us (Rom 3:25).



## QUESTION 16

The Lord's Supper is called different things in the New Testament. Match the Scripture with the corresponding description or name of the Lord's Supper.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Description or Name</i>
1 Corinthians 10:16	Table of the Lord
Acts 2:42	Communion, fellowship, sharing, participation
1 Corinthians 10:21	The Lord's Supper
1 Corinthians 11:20	Breaking of bread

Because of the references in the New Testament to the Lord Jesus giving thanks at the Last Supper in Luke 22:19, "after giving thanks" (Greek, *eucharisteo*, "to express thanks"), the early church began to call the Lord's Supper the "Eucharist."

## QUESTION 17

According to the New Testament, many things should characterize our participation in the Lord's Supper. Match the Scripture with the description of our experience with the bread and the wine.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Description</i>
1 Corinthians 10:16	A time to be regularly celebrated
Luke 22:16	A time of confession of sin
Luke 22:19	A time of anticipation of the second coming
1 Corinthians 11:27-32	A time of remembrance
1 Corinthians 11:26	A time of fellowship with the Lord

Jesus' most important, most memorable work was not the signs He performed, but His death on the cross. He is the true Passover Lamb under whose blood there is safety. The Israelites received safety by sprinkling the blood on the doorposts of their homes. We receive safety when we sprinkle the blood on the doorposts of our hearts, asking for atonement by faith.

The Lord's Supper is the only act of worship for which the Lord gave specific instructions. It pleases Him when we gather around the His table. But so often it becomes a mere ritual, void of real meaning in our lives. Please review the things that should characterize our experience in Question 17 above. We cannot change the traditions of our particular churches, but we can reflect inwardly and examine our hearts as we participate.

## QUESTION 18

In your Life Notebook, write out your own celebration of the Lord's Supper. We are supposed to use it as an opportunity to remember. Here are some sentences that may help you get started. Say to yourself, "I remember when the Lord Jesus..." and then write three or four things to remember. Say, "I look forward to \_\_\_\_\_ at my Lord's second coming." Acknowledge to the Lord, "I realize I have sinned in these ways," and confess your sins so that you can participate in a worthy manner at the Lord's Table. Pray, saying, "Lord, thank you for inviting me to your Table. I want to participate with you in intimate fellowship."

## Topic 8: The New Commandment

Thursday, April 2, AD 33

### Assignment

- Read Luke 22:24-27 and John 13:31-35.

Jesus demonstrated humility, established the Lord's Supper, and dismissed the traitor. Then He directed His attention to preparing the eleven apostles for their ministry after His departure.

Knowing that these words were to be the last He shared with His disciples, Jesus must have prepared these thoughts in advance. He wanted to emphasize the teachings that were most important; significantly, an item first mentioned was that they must love one another.

### QUESTION 19

Please read Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:39. Then read John 13:31-35. Why does Jesus say this is a "new" commandment?

- A. It was not taught in the Old Testament.
- B. It was not emphasized in the Old Testament.
- C. It was a fresh restatement of the biblical command to love.
- D. It was based on Christ's sacrifice and upon His example of love.

### QUESTION 20

Open your Life Notebook. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; and 1 John 2:7-10, 3:16-17. Often we read such passages of Scripture casually, without thinking about what they mean in our everyday relationships. Write out what the new commandment might mean specifically to your situation in your church, small group, or other gathering of believers.

## Topic 9: The Four Questions

Thursday, April 2, AD 33

Immediately after Peter's confession of his faith in Christ (Mt 16:15-17), Jesus had begun to tell His friends of His coming death and resurrection. But even though He repeated it several times, the disciples never fully grasped what He was saying. As the end drew near, they finally began to realize that something disastrous was going to happen soon and started pummeling Jesus with questions.

This discourse represents the contrast between Jesus' attempt to prepare them for His absence with some teaching and their nervous unrest and concern for impending danger.

### *The Four Questions*

1. Peter: "Lord, where are you going?" (Jn 13:36)
2. Thomas: "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" (Jn 14:5)
3. Philip: "Will you show us the Father?" (Jn 14:8)
4. Jude Thaddaeus: "Lord, what then has happened, that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?" (Jn 14:22)

## Peter: “Lord, where are you going?”

### Assignment

- Read Luke 22:28-34; John 13:36-38, and John 14:1-4.
- Read John 13:36-38 and Luke 22:28-34. Take note of Peter’s questions: “Lord, where are you going?” (Jn 13:36); and “Why can I not follow you right now?” (Jn 13:37).

First, let’s make sure we understand the four questions and their answers. Read each question and its surrounding context. The four questions are: (1) Peter: “Lord, where are you going?” (Jn 13:36-7); (2) Thomas: “Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” (Jn 14:5); (3) Philip: “Will you [implied] show us the Father?” (Jn 14:8); (4) Judas: “Lord, what then has happened that you are going to disclose yourself to us and not to the world?” (Jn 14:22).



### QUESTION 21

Write Peter’s first question here.

### QUESTION 22

Why might Jesus’ answer to Peter in John 13:36-38 seem ambiguous?

### QUESTION 23

Peter was aware that something disastrous was about to happen. He swore that he would die for Christ. In response to this Jesus told him that before the rooster crowed (sometime between midnight and morning), that Peter would deny Him three times. Open your Life Notebook and record your thoughts and questions about this event. Can true believers ever deny Christ? Would Peter have lost his salvation if he had not repented later?

These startling revelations, coupled with the announcement that even Peter would deny Christ, raised the disciples’ anxiety even further. Jesus attempted to comfort them with the fact that He was going to His Father’s house to prepare permanent dwelling places for them. Then, He said, He would come again and receive them to Himself, “that where I am, there you may be also” (Jn 14:3).

In Greek, the word “receive,” *paralambano*, is the same word translated “taken” in Matthew 24:40-41.

## Thomas: “How do we know the way?”

### Assignment

- Read John 14:5-7.

Jesus’ answer to Peter raised another question. If Jesus was going to go to the Father, Thomas wanted to know how he and the other disciples could get there, too. Christ’s answer asserted the exclusivity of Christianity: There is no way to get to heaven apart from Jesus and faith in Him.

## QUESTION 24

Read the following Scriptures: John 3:36; Acts 4:12; and Romans 1:18-32. Is Jesus the only way? Are sincere adherents of other religions simply seeking God in their own way? What are the questions this teaching raises in your mind? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

### Philip: “Will you show us the Father?”

#### Assignment

- Read John 14:7-21.

In His answer to Thomas, Jesus made an astounding statement. He said that anyone who knows Him knows the Father also.

Take a moment to review this material (also presented in *Life of Christ*, Volume 1), which explains Professor C. S. Lewis’s argument for the deity of Christ.

### Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?

C. S. Lewis, one of the greatest literary scholars of the twentieth century, was a Cambridge Don and held the chair of renaissance English literature there. Formerly an atheist, he was an associate of Bertrand Russell and was very skeptical of Christianity. He relates that there was something that bothered him greatly about the Christian faith which often confronted his skepticism: the claims that Christ made.

Reflecting on those claims led him to some unexpected conclusions and resulted, eventually, in his embracing Christ as God. He devoted the rest of his life to writing a number of books in which he set forth the intellectual basis for the validity of the Christian faith. In one of these books, *Mere Christianity*, he summarizes the line of thinking about Christ’s claims that led to his conversion.

What I am trying to do here is to prevent anyone from saying the very foolish thing they often say about Him, “I am ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.” That is the one thing we must not say. A man who is merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said, would not be a great moral teacher, he would either be a lunatic—on the level with a man who calls himself a poached egg—or else he would be the devil of hell. Either this man was and is the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, or can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left this option open to us. He did not intend to.

Jesus made astonishing claims, claims no man has ever made. He said He was the light of the world, “the resurrection and the life,” and claimed to have the authority to forgive sins. Most amazing were His direct claims to be God.

Now these claims are either true or false.

If they are true, then He is who He claimed to be, the Lord.

However, let us consider with C. S. Lewis the possibility that these claims are false. If they are false claims, then there are only two possibilities: He either knew or did not know they were false.

If He knew they were false, then we have a man who falsely claims to be God, and knows it is a false claim. He would be, in other words, a liar. But worse, He would be a demon because He asked men to

entrust their eternal destinies to a belief which He knows is a fraud. He said, “For unless you believe that I am the Christ, you will die in your sins” (Jn 8:24).

No one has seriously entertained the notion that Jesus was a liar.

But suppose He made a false claim and He really did not know it was false. He actually believed this delusion to be true. What would we then say about Him? We would normally conclude that such a man was mentally unstable, He would be a lunatic. But how can this be? Psychologist J. T. Fisher summarizes the problem well:

If you were to take the sum total of all the authoritative articles ever written by the most qualified psychologists and psychiatrists on the subject of mental hygiene – if you are to confine them and refine them and cleave out the excess verbiage – if you are to take the whole of the meat and none of the parsley, and if you are to have these unadulterated bits of pure scientific knowledge concisely expressed by the most capable of living poets, you would have an awkward and incomplete summation of the Sermon on the Mount. For nearly 2000 years the Christian world has been holding in its hand the complete answer to its restless and fruitless yearnings. Here rests the blueprint for successful human life with optimum mental health and contentment. (*A Few Buttons Missing*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1951.)

But as it has been pointedly observed, one cannot very well have it both ways. If Jesus’ teachings provide the blueprint for successful human life with optimum mental health, then the teacher cannot be a lunatic who totally misunderstands the nature of his own personality.

We are confronted then with the shocking alternatives: Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic, or He is the Lord of Glory.

Which of these three options, given all we know of Him, is the most probable?

Philip was still confused. He says, “Show us the Father” (Jn 14:8).

Now Jesus makes the incredible claim that whoever has seen Him has seen the Father.

### **QUESTION 25**

Please read Luke 10:20 and 1 John 2:4, 6. What can we infer from these passages? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. It is possible to be a true Christian but not really know Christ.
- B. Knowing Christ and abiding in Christ are sometimes the same thing.
- C. To “know” Christ always means “to be born again” and to have eternal life.
- D. Anyone who does not know Christ is assigned to eternal damnation.

### **QUESTION 26**

Please read John 14:12-14. How is it possible that a believer today could do greater works than the supernatural ones Jesus performed? How can it be that anything we ask in prayer will be answered (consider 1 Jn 5:14-15)? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

### **QUESTION 27**

There is much to discuss regarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the gospel of John. Please read the article “The Holy Spirit in the Upper Room Discourse.” Write three questions that come to your mind as you read this in your Life Notebook.

## **The Holy Spirit in the Upper Room Discourse**

In John 14:16 Jesus promised that in response to His disciples’ love as shown by their continued obedience, He would ask the Father, who would send “another Paraclete” (*allon paraklēton*). This



implies that a Paraclete had already been with the disciples. It seems best to understand the previous Paraclete as a reference to Jesus Himself, since “another Paraclete” was to come when He departed. Jesus is presented as a Paraclete in His role as Intercessor in heaven in 1 John 2:1. Here the implication is that Jesus had also been a Paraclete to the disciples during His earthly ministry. Much is often made of the word “other” (*allos*) here, that it should be understood to mean “another of the same kind.” Not all commentators agree on a sharp distinction between the two words *allos* and *heteros* (“another of a different kind”) in this context. But on the whole Jesus, although He did not speak of Himself in the fourth gospel as a Paraclete, nevertheless performed actions for His disciples that a Paraclete would perform.

It is important to note that John’s comparison of the Holy Spirit as Paraclete to Jesus’ own role as a Paraclete while with the disciples strongly implies that the Spirit must be as personal as Jesus Himself is. In addition, the range of functions the Holy Spirit performs for the disciples after Jesus’ departure (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:8–15) point to the Spirit’s personal nature.

The Greek word *paraklētos* (“paraclete”) itself is difficult to translate. The English translation “Comforter” is traditional. Perhaps the best suggestion is that the word meant a person called to someone else’s aid in court, a helper, intercessor, pleader, or character witness. “Defender” comes close to conveying this idea, but more than just a defense witness is in view. Jesus’ statements about the coming Paraclete teaching and reminding the disciples go beyond this meaning and call for a broader translation, such as “Helper” as a translation in the gospel of John and “One who will intercede for us”; 1 John 2:1. Clearly the referent in all the uses of *paraklētos* in the Gospel of John is the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14:26), while in 1 John 2:1 the referent is Jesus Himself.

In addition to the title “Paraclete,” the Holy Spirit is mentioned once directly in Jesus’ Farewell Discourse (John 14:26), and the title “Spirit of truth” occurs three times (14:17; 15:26; 16:13). Above all else the Holy Spirit in the Farewell Discourse is portrayed as the Spirit of witness or testimony. His chief function is to bear witness to Jesus (Jn 15:26; 16:13–15). This includes bringing glory to Jesus by bearing witness to Him (Jn 14:14). Alternatively the Spirit is said to bear witness to the truth, because Jesus Himself is truth (14:6). Therefore the Spirit may be called the Spirit of truth (Jn 16:13), that is, the Spirit who communicates truth to the disciples, and His function is to guide the disciples into all the truth (Jn 16:13). One may even go so far as to say that the Spirit is the truth (1 Jn 5:6; 5:7 just as Jesus is the truth (Jn 14:6).

For John, truth is not merely something to be known or believed, but something to be practiced (Jn 7:17). When the apostle wrote of the Spirit guiding the disciples into all the truth (Jn 16:13), he did not mean truth in the broad or exhaustive sense as it is used today (i.e., the truths of modern science, medicine, technology, etc.). He was speaking of the experience the disciples had undergone in their understanding of who Jesus was while He was with them compared to their understanding of who Jesus is after His death, resurrection, and glorification. This is what Jesus had promised the disciples: “He [the Spirit] will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you” (Jn 14:26). This is exactly what happened to the apostles. Only after Jesus’ resurrection did they come to understand the truth that Jesus had taught them and acted out before their eyes (Jn 2:22).

The world, on the other hand, cannot receive the Spirit or know anything about Him; it is only to the followers of Jesus that the testimony of the Spirit can come (Jn 14:17). This is parallel to the manifestation of Jesus Himself not to the world, but only to believers (v. 22). The Spirit’s testimony to the world comes through His joint witness with Jesus’ disciples (Jn 15:26–27). This appears to be the case even in the one passage about the Paraclete concerned with His conviction of the world (16:8–11).

The coming of the Holy Spirit to the followers of Jesus depended on His departure and return to the Father (Jn 16:7). Again this is consistent with the interpretive comment the Evangelist made in John 7:39: “Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.” On other occasions the Spirit is said to be a gift from the Father (Jn 14:16, 26) sent by the Son (Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:7). Whatever else is meant by the difficult statement that the Spirit “goes out from

the Father” (15:26), it implies that the Spirit shares the same essential nature as the Father. In fact, John was indicating here the parallelism between the mission of the Son, sent from God (Jn 3:17, 34; 5:36–38; 6:29, 57; 7:29; 8:42; 10:36; 11:42; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20:21), and the mission of the Son’s replacement, the Holy Spirit, who would be “another Paraclete” to the disciples and who would enable them to carry on Jesus’ mission after He returned to the Father. Thus although it is not explicitly stated, the passage has strong Trinitarian implications.

Finally, Jesus in His Farewell Discourse mentioned the Holy Spirit’s indwelling of believers: “he lives with you and will be in you” (Jn 14:17). In the previous verse Jesus promised His followers that the Spirit would be with them forever, suggesting the permanent nature of the Spirit’s indwelling of believers. This is consistent with Jesus’ own statements about the security of His followers (Jn 10:27–30).

From Roy Zuck, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1994.

## **Jude: “Why are You going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?”**

### **Assignment**

- Read John 14:22-31.

Jesus realized that in order for His disciples to grow in their faith and fulfill the mission He was entrusting to them, they must know the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. He had been discussing the coming of the Spirit and how they would know intimacy with Christ through the Spirit’s ministry to them (Jn 14:20). He told them that the Father and the Son would “disclose” themselves to the disciples.

### **QUESTION 28**

Why do you think Jude was confused?

### **QUESTION 29**

Please read the article “Christ Disclosing Himself to the Heart of the Believer.” Personalize this article by writing out a prayer in your Life Notebook, asking God to disclose Himself to you as He promised to do for the Twelve.

## **Christ Disclosing Himself to the Heart of the Believer (Jn 14:21-23)**

The ache for intimacy pervades the evangelical church. Is it possible for a believer today to experience the presence of God as it is described in the Bible? What is that presence? What does it feel like? In a central passage in the gospel of John, Jesus gives us some insight on what this intimacy is and how it can be experienced (Jn 14:21-23).

### **Condition: Love for Christ (21)**

Jesus promises that He will disclose Himself to us and that both He and His Father will make their dwelling with us. What is the condition for knowing this intimacy?

### **Having the Commandments**

Let us be guilty of an incorrect focus right at the beginning, it is important to emphasize that the

key issue is loving Christ. This will result in having and keeping the commandments, but having and keeping the commandments are not the conditions of the divine disclosure. Rather they are evidences of the kind of love that is the condition.

Two questions confront us here: What are the commandments, and what does it mean to “have” them?

What are these commandments? Considering all the imperatives and uses of the word “commandment” in the Upper Room Discourse reveals four commandments:

1. The commandment to trust Him (Jn 14:1; 16:33)
2. The commandment to remain in Him (Jn 15:4)
3. The commandment to ask in faith (Jn 15:7; 16:24)
4. The commandment to love one another as Christ has loved us (Jn 13:34; 15:12)

The person who “has” the commandments is one who has personally embraced them, who wants to do them, who has personalized the overall concept that the key to the Christian life is loving and delighting in God. It is not merely a grasping with the mind, but a motivation from the heart.

### **Keeping the Commandments**

This inner possession of the commandments in the heart should, naturally, lead to keeping them. The word for “keep” is *tereo*.

The basic meaning of the word is “keep watch over, guard.” Thus, “to keep” means more than just obey; it signifies that there is to be watchful and attentive observation. As a prisoner might escape from a guard, we are not to allow any opportunity for obedience to “get away” from us.

To love Him means to have His command to love others implanted in our hearts and to strive to obey that command. What then does He promise to do?

### **Consequence: The Promise of Disclosure**

Having met the required condition, a loving relationship with Christ, we are promised three things.

#### **The Father Will Love Him**

And he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him. (Jn 14:21)

In other words, an enriched experience of life with the Father is offered.

Why does it say, we “shall be loved” by the Father?” This is in the future tense. Does this imply He does not already love us? It probably means that love becomes revealed and experienced in a new depth by one who loves Jesus.

What is in focus here is not whether or not God loves us in the sense that He has saved us and forever incorporated us into His family. Rather, the focus is on whether or not we *experience* that love.

#### **Christ Will Love Him**

A second benefit flowing from the keeping of His commandment to love Him is that Christ will love us. If the Father loves us as a son, Christ loves us as a friend. He says, “*You are My friends, if you do what I command you*” (Jn 15:14). When we think of the Father’s love for us as a son, one of our thoughts is of His compassion. When we think of Christ’s love for us as a “friend,” we think of Him as a savior, a partner and a companion.

Notice the “if.” It is repeated again, “*If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just*

as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love" (Jn 15:10). There is something conditional in the believer's friendship with Christ.

The New Testament knows of two relationships with Christ. We are all children of God by faith in Him and are forever secure in His family. Salvation can never be lost (Jn 6:39-40). He has set His love upon us forever.

But there is another relationship with Christ we sustain that can be termed "*fellowship*." This involves relationship within the family. Jesus spoke of this earlier when He told Peter. "*He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you*" (Jn 13:10). Peter was clean in the sense of being justified and part of God's family, but there was the danger of his feet picking up dust along the way, sin, and as a result, his temporary fellowship would be lost. In that situation, he needs cleansing for forgiveness within the family. This helps us understand why this enriched experience of the love of Christ for us is conditional and why it is in the future tense. Fellowship within the family is dependent on our faith and love toward Him and others (see 1 Jn 1:3-10).

### **Christ will disclose himself**

The third result of trusting Him and loving others leads us to the central promise: the glorious promise of disclosure. "*and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him*" (Jn 14:21). [Click here to enter text.](#) We are now at the heart of Christianity. These men will be responsible for taking their Master's message to the entire world and we are in their train. If Christ does not manifest himself in our lives, our faith is vain. The purpose of a Christian leader is not to lead and prepare relevant, well-illustrated bible studies; it is to lead people into an experience of Christ. If those disciples did not have that personal experience they could not be Christian leaders. Neither can we.

Well then, what is this disclosure? What does it feel like? Various commentators describe it differently. Some call it an internal perception of Christ. Others say that it is a fuller revelation of Christ that will be made through the Spirit's illumination."

### **Confusion: The Question of Judas (v.22)**

*Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?" (Jn 14:22).*

At this point, Judas (not Iscariot [also called Jude]) interrupts. He heard the word *emphanizo*, "disclose." This is what he has been waiting for. Because the word has a double meaning (a striking external appearance in resurrection; or an internal disclosure to the inner man), and because Jesus has been speaking of a visible manifestation of Himself in resurrection in the preceding verses, Judas had been thinking in terms of a miraculous external manifestation. But when Jesus says that the disclosure is not public, but private and only to disciples who trust and love Him, Judas is confused. What has happened? he wonders. "We were expecting the sign of the Son of Man in heaven," he thought (Mt 24:29-31). Jesus is using a secondary sense of the word here, that of an invisible disclosure to the inner man and not of a public manifestation to the world.

### **Clarification: Explanation of Disclosure (v. 23)**

#### **The Condition**

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word (Jn 14:23).

Keeping Christ's commandments is a result of loving Him. The order is "If you love, then you will obey." Loving God always involves delighting in Him. Keeping commandments emerges out of a delight in loving God. However, since it is not in our power to create the delight in loving God, we must appeal to God to create this delight in our hearts.

#### **The Promise**

And My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode

with him (Jn 14:23).

In John 14:16-17, Jesus had told them that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to be not just “with” them but now to be “in” them. In John 14:23, He repeats this idea but with significant differences. In v. 16 the promise was to the disciples, but this is to “anyone” (“If anyone loves Me”). Furthermore, in v. 17 it was the Holy Spirit who would be “in” them, yet in this verse the Father and the Son “make a home” in them.

When Jesus says, “We will make our home with him,” the central idea is explained. Judas had asked why this disclosure was going to be a private instead of a public one. Christ did not answer directly, saying, “Judas, this is what happened.” Rather He picked up on Judas’s misunderstanding of the word “disclose.” Christ was using it in the sense of a secret disclosure to the soul, and not of a public disclosure to the world. He then explained what the secret disclosure is. Christ and the Father will both make their home with the disciple who truly loves. What is this home?

Elsewhere in the New Testament, Paul spoke of Jesus and the Father dwelling in the believer (Col 1:27; Eph 3:17).

The Greek word for “remain” is *monē*. The same word is used in v. 2, “In my Father’s house are many mansions” (KJV). The Greek word simply indicates the place where one dwells, a room, dwelling place—a home in heaven, composed of many rooms. The apostle John expands more fully upon the nature of this heavenly home when he describes the details of the glorious city, the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:9-21).

But unlike v. 2, where the dwelling is our future home in heaven, in v. 23 it is the Father and Son’s home that they will make with us. The notion of God dwelling with His people is solidly grounded in the Old Testament. “And let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them” (Ex 25:8, cf. Lev 26:11).

What then are the building materials from which the Father and Son build their dwelling? To develop further the metaphor the Lord Himself used, we must supply the necessary building materials out of which He and the Father can fashion their dwelling. As the believer keeps Christ’s word, the command to remain and to love, which results in attentive care to obey (“to guard” the commandments), He provides all the materials necessary for Christ to make a home with his soul. Think of each act of love as a piece of lumber, each choice to trust Him as a nail, each act of obedience as a stroke of the paintbrush. Pushing the analogy further, Christ cannot live in the house until it is built. This takes time. There must be the cultivation of intimacy through prayer, meditation, love, obedience, and worship. The obedience of love that emerges from such spiritual exercises provides building materials worthy of so great a King.

What does it feel like to have Christ making His home with us? Some describe it as being enveloped with a sense of His presence. Others speak of irresistible joy and a profound sense of peace that He not only loves us deeply but also is completely in control of all that happens to us and around us. We are precious to Him. Christ being at home with us is more of an ongoing awareness. His disclosure is more irregular and dependent upon the need and the situation.

## Conclusion

This passage may leave us encouraged, hopeful, expectant and, in some cases perplexed. “Why,” we might ask, “does God not disclose Himself to me like this?” While there is only one condition specified, love for Christ, this love works it out in four ways. These manifestations of love for Him must be present if we are to know the disclosure of God: love for one another (Jn 14:21; 13:34-35), confident trust (Jn 14:1; 16:33), believing prayer (Jn 15:7); and abiding in Christ (Jn 15:4).

First, let’s consider more carefully what it means to love one another. To love is to set aside our rights, to choose the other person’s best, to count others better than ourselves (e.g. 1 Cor 13; Phil 2:1-4). When Jesus modeled love in the Upper Room Discourse, He took off His robes and washed the disciples’ feet (Jn 13:4-5), an act of extreme humility. To be humble, is to believe in our hearts,

that “apart from Me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). Throughout Scripture, God declares that He dwells with the humble. The humble are those with whom He has intimacy, but the proud He knows “from afar” (Ps 138:6). Intimacy with Him is reserved for the humble.

A second evidence of loving Him and hence of receiving this disclosure is faith. As the writer to the Hebrews tells us, “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb 11:6). As they face perplexity and trouble, they are to remember to trust Him. He has gone to prepare a place for them, and He will come again to take them to Himself.

The third evidence is believing prayer (Jn 15:7). Without personal resources, He wants us to come to Him dependently and believingly to secure from Him what is needed to carry us through the perplexities and trials of life.

The fourth evidence is called remaining. We are to adopt an attitude of continual openness to Him, attentiveness to Him, closeness to Him, and practice of His presence. We do this by turning our attention to Him all day long. The man who does this is, according to Jesus, His “friend.” “No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you” Click here to enter text. (Jn 15:15). We disclose ourselves to our friends, and we are always there for our friends. In order to know this disclosure, we must be with Him at all times. This means that we are always attempting to be tuned into His presence and ready to do whatever He wants in every situation, even if it is inconvenient to us.

Where does this leave us? If love is the root and the four commandments are the fruit, how then do we cultivate love for Christ? In closing, here are three suggestions.

- First, develop regular habit of personal worship using meditation, praise, hymns, and praying the Scriptures. “O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel” (Ps 22:3). God’s presence dwells in the praises of His people.
- Secondly, guard the four commandments. Do not allow an opportunity for believing prayer, practicing His presence, trusting Him, or loving others to escape. Yes, it is true that these things are results of love, but, paradoxically, there is a synergy between doing them and our experiencing deeper love for Him. They are, in the final analysis, both a result and a cause of growing love for Him. As we do these things, He discloses Himself and dwells with us, and as He discloses himself and we know His presence, we love Him more. As we love Him more, we do these things ... and the circle continues.
- Finally, pray. The creation of the love for Christ in the heart is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. It is His desire that we love Him like this, and He has promised that “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you” (Jn 15:7).

## Topic 10: Matching Events

### QUESTION 30

To help you memorize these events, we have compiled a list of important events in the life of Christ. Take a moment and review events 30, 36, 37, 38, 43, 47, 48, and 52 in the Matching Events chart found in the appendix. Cover the event descriptions and see if you can identify the associated Scriptures.

## Lesson 8 Lesson Notes

### Answer to Question 1

Judas' betrayal and subsequent death fulfilled some specific prophetic details very literally. Israel's Messiah was of no more value to her than the amount of money that usually purchased or sold a common slave. The betrayal money was thrown in the "house of the Lord," the temple in Jerusalem (Mt 27:5) and it ended up in the hands of a potter (Mt 27:7).

### Thoughts on Question 3

In this incident, we see God's sovereignty at work. This man got his pitcher, filled it with water, and at just the right time, he showed up where Peter and John were! God, as always, was in ultimate control of this event's orchestration.

### Thoughts on Question 11

From our human perspective, they cannot be reconciled. This passage provides a classic illustration of a paradox that is carried all through Scripture. Whatever happens because of God's declared will is still a result of human responsibility and free will; neither invalidates the other. Can you think of other passages of Scripture that illustrate this point (e.g., Acts 2:23)?

### Answer to Question 14

John (the disciple whom Jesus loved) was leaning on Jesus' chest on the Lord's right as Jesus leaned on His left side. A very private conversation ensued. Furthermore, since Peter was directly across the table from John, he could pose his question to John without others hearing it.

## Lesson 8 Self Check

### QUESTION 1

The disclosure Christ mentions in John 14:23 is of His coming public manifestation when He rises from the dead. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 2

It is probable that Jesus and the disciples celebrated the Passover according to the Galilean, not the Judean, time. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 3

What was a central teaching Jesus was attempting to communicate by washing the disciples' feet?

- A. Foot washing was to be a new ordinance with the Lord's Supper and baptism.
- B. In order to be born again, it is critical that our daily sins be washed away.
- C. There are two kinds of relationship to Christ: an eternal one that is secure, and one called fellowship, which varies with our obedience.
- D. All who are truly born again will have lifestyles based on His example.

### QUESTION 4

What point is Jesus making when He says that one who is bathed (*louo*) only needs to have his feet washed (*nipto*)?

- A. We can be restored to fellowship with Christ by confessing our sins.
- B. We must accept the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf.
- C. Unless we seek daily cleansing from sin, we will not share with Christ in the fruits of His redemptive acts.
- D. We can lose our salvation through sin, but can regain it if we get further cleansing.

### QUESTION 5

Although we cannot be certain about the seating arrangements at the Lord's table, what do the Gospels indicate?

- A. Peter had taken the position of the lowest rank.
- B. John had taken the position of the highest rank.
- C. Judas communicated with Christ by leaning behind Peter and John, as portrayed in Leonardo da Vinci's painting.
- D. Jesus was seated in the middle, as da Vinci suggested.

### QUESTION 6

In the discussion of the Passover meal in this lesson, it was suggested that for Jesus the unleavened bread was a type of what?

- A. The inauguration of the New Covenant
- B. Jesus' body, broken for us
- C. Christ's penal substitution for our sin punishment
- D. Christ's sinlessness



### **QUESTION 7**

According to the New Testament, the Lord's Table was intended as a time of anticipation of Christ's return; a time of confession of sin; a time of fellowship with the Lord; a time of remembrance; and a time regularly celebrated. *True or False?*

### **QUESTION 8**

Why does Jesus say this is a new commandment?

- A. It was not taught in the Old Testament.
- B. It was not emphasized in the Old Testament.
- C. It was a fresh restatement of the biblical command to love.
- D. It was based on Christ's sacrifice for us and His example of love to us.

### **QUESTION 9**

According to Jesus' answer to Philip's question, it is not possible that a true believer can be said to "not know Christ" in some sense. *True or False?*

### **QUESTION 10**

What are the building materials Christ uses to prepare a place in our hearts that He and the Father can make a home there?

- A. Keeping Christ's word, loving others, and guarding the commandments
- B. Believing on Christ for eternal life and abiding in Him
- C. Regularly observing the Lord's Supper and confessing our sins
- D. Persistent praying

## Lesson 8 Answers to Questions

**QUESTION 1:** *See Lesson Notes*

**QUESTION 2**

- A. To commemorate the birth of Israel as a nation
- B. To remember the night that the angel of death passed over the homes that had blood on the side posts and lintel of the doorposts

**QUESTION 3:** *See Lesson Notes*

**QUESTION 4:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 5:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 6**

<i>Last Supper</i>	<i>Actions</i>
Came from God	Being in the nature of God
Laid aside His garments	Emptied Himself
Took up a towel	Took the form of a servant
Washed the disciples' feet	Humbled Himself
Going back to God (John 13:3)	God highly exalted Him

**QUESTION 7:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 8**

- C. We can be restored to fellowship with Christ by confessing our sins. [This view best fits the teaching of the New Testament. Those who have believed in Christ are bathed all over; thus, born again. However, as we walk through the world, we get our feet dirty, and we need daily confession to cleanse us from sin (1 Jn 1:9).]

**QUESTION 9:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Salvation cannot be lost, but our communion with Christ can be. First John 1:9 tells us that if we confess our sins, He will forgive us and restore us to fellowship with Him.

**QUESTION 10**

- B. He was a counselor
- D. He betrayed his king

**QUESTION 11:** *See Lesson Notes*

**QUESTION 12:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

The other eleven disciples answered "Surely not I, Lord?" Yet Judas answered, "Surely not I, Rabbi." Jesus was not his Lord. The word "rabbi" means "teacher," and was usually only used of Jesus by those outside His intimate circle.

**QUESTION 13**

<i>Element</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Lamb	Christ sacrificed for us
Unleavened bread (for Jesus)	Christ's body
Unleavened bread (for Israel)	Haste
Third cup	Blood of the New Covenant
Bitter herbs	Hardship in Egypt

**QUESTION 14:** *See Lesson Notes*

**QUESTION 15**

- D. These were symbols of His sacrifice on our behalf.

**QUESTION 16**

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Description or Name</i>
1 Corinthians 10:16	Communion, fellowship, sharing, participation
Acts 2:42	Breaking of bread
1 Corinthians 10:21	Table of the Lord
1 Corinthians 11:20	The Lord's Supper

**QUESTION 17**

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Description</i>
1 Corinthians 10:16	A time of fellowship with the Lord
Luke 22:16	A time of anticipation of the second coming
Luke 22:19	A time of remembrance
1 Corinthians 11:27-32	A time of confession of sin
1 Corinthians 11:26	A time to be regularly celebrated

**QUESTION 18:** *Your answer***QUESTION 19**

D. It was based on Christ's sacrifice and upon His example of love.

**QUESTION 20:** *Your answer***QUESTION 21:** *Your answer***QUESTION 22:** *Your answer***QUESTION 23:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Perhaps this ambiguity was intentional, and Jesus intended a double meaning—He may have intended it symbolically, as He often did in His teachings, or perhaps He was protecting His disciples in their current frame of mind. His first meaning was that He was going to His death. Yet, perhaps because the disciples were already alarmed and anxious, He did not disclose all of the details of the coming trial. For example, Peter would ultimately follow Jesus in death by crucifixion (traditionally, Peter was crucified upside down in Rome). This would have been too much knowledge for Peter to bear in his agitated state. However, beyond this immediate sense and interpretation of the answer, Jesus' second meaning was apparently that He was going to His Father and would return to take His friends to Himself at the rapture of the church.

**QUESTION 24:** *Your answer***QUESTION 25:** *Your answer***QUESTION 26**

A. It is possible to be a true Christian but not really know Christ.

B. Knowing Christ and abiding in Christ are sometimes the same thing.

["To know Christ," according to these passages, does not always mean "to be saved." Philip was saved. His name was recorded in heaven, but he did not "know" Christ in some sense. In 1 John, we can see from the parallelism between 2:4 and 2:6 that "knowing Christ" can sometimes mean to "abide in Him." This means "to remain in fellowship with Him."]

**QUESTION 27:** *Your answer***QUESTION 28:** *Your answer***QUESTION 29:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

No doubt Judas and the other disciples had been expecting a public manifestation of Christ. They anticipated the time when He would ascend to David's throne and restore the crumbled Davidic theocracy and banish the Romans (Acts 1:6). But Jesus now speaks of a private disclosure to them, not a kingdom on earth.

**QUESTION 30:** *Your answer***QUESTION 31:** *See Matching Events chart*

## Lesson 8 Self Check Answers

**QUESTION 1:** False

**QUESTION 2:** True

**QUESTION 3**

- C. There are two kinds of relationship to Christ: an eternal one that is secure, and one called fellowship, which varies with our obedience.

**QUESTION 4**

- A. We can be restored to fellowship with Christ by confessing our sins.

**QUESTION 5**

- A. Peter had taken the position of the lowest rank.

**QUESTION 6**

- B. Jesus' body, broken for us

**QUESTION 7:** True

**QUESTION 8**

- D. It was based on Christ's sacrifice for us and His example of love to us.

**QUESTION 9:** False

**QUESTION 10**

- A. Keeping Christ's word, loving others, and guarding the commandments



# Lesson 9: The Upper Room Discourse

---

At the close of the celebratory supper, Jesus and the eleven remaining disciples departed from the upper room, crossed the Kidron Valley, and proceeded up the slopes of the Mount of Olives (Jn 14:31). Their destination that evening was the Garden of Gethsemane, where the tendrils of grapevines spiraled and twined with clusters of fruit. As the men walked, these vines probably inspired Jesus' introduction of the parable of the vine and the branches. As He spoke, His words encouraged the Eleven with promises of the Spirit's ministry and answers to prayer, preparing them for the hardship to come.

In Topic 1, we will study the parable of the vine and the branches, which teaches how Christians can be fruitful and walk in the presence of Christ and raises questions about the doctrine of eternal life.

In Topic 2, we will discuss the unique hardships that confronted Jesus' disciples as well as the ones each of us face. How are disciples to respond to persecution, and what are two of its causes?

Topic 3 introduces the most profound instruction regarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Jesus promises the Spirit will encourage us to persevere through trials.

In Topic 4, we will consider the reassurance of knowing that Christ rose from the dead: we, too, will rise again. Also, how can we have confidence that our prayers will be answered, and how can we know what we should pray for?

In Topic 5, we will consider how knowledge of Christ's omniscience and overcoming power sustained the Eleven. What is God's attitude toward the failure of our human faith?

In Topic 6, we are invited to listen to the Son of God speaking intimately with His heavenly Father. We will study why He prayed, what He prayed for, and a model of prayer we can and should duplicate.

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: The Vine and the Branches

Topic 2: Preparation for Hardship

Topic 3: The Ministry of the Spirit

Topic 4: Their Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

Topic 5: Christ Has Overcome the World

Topic 6: The Lord's Prayer

    Jesus' Requests for Himself (Jn 17:1-5)

    Jesus' Intercession for His Apostles (Jn 17:6-19)

    Jesus' Requests for Future Believers (Jn 17:20-26)

## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Value maintaining close fellowship with Christ and enjoy fruitful Christian lives
- Consider the two reasons for persecution and receive encouragement to persevere through the hardships we all face as believers in Christ

- Examine the advantage to us of Christ returning to be with the Father, and examine the Holy Spirit’s ministry to the disciples who wrote the New Testament
- Study God’s response to our human faith-failures by considering the Eleven and how their knowledge of Christ’s omniscience and victory sustained them
- Exemplify how the Son of God spoke intimately with His Father: what He prayed for, why He prayed, and how we can duplicate it

## Topic 1: The Vine and the Branches

**Thursday, April 2, AD 33**

Throughout the centuries, the parable of the vine and the branches has encouraged and instructed millions of Christians about abiding in Christ and fruit bearing.

Jesus knew so much better than His disciples what lay ahead. He knew the feelings of loss and discouragement they would experience, so He devoted the final hours before His betrayal to encouraging them and praying to His Father.

### Assignment

- Read John 15:1-11.

In order to understand from these verses how we can bear much fruit, there are a few terms we should study.

Bible scholars have different opinions about the meaning of the phrase “in me.” Some believe that “in me” in the gospel of John means the same as “in Christ” in Paul’s epistles, that is, it refers to personal salvation. Others believe that the phrase in John refers to ongoing fellowship with Christ after becoming a Christian.



### QUESTION 1

Please examine how the phrase “in me” is used in each of the following verses: John 6:56; 10:38; 14:10-11; 14:20; 15:2-7; 16:33; 17:21; 17:23. Do you think this phrase primarily refers to salvation or to fellowship and fruit bearing? Why or why not? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Another critical phrase is “takes away.” Some believe that this refers to removal from salvation or to a removal from a false profession of salvation. Others believe that the phrase in the context of John 15 refers to being lifted up and encouraged.

### QUESTION 2

Please look up John 5:8; 5:11; 5:12; 8:59; 10:18 While it is certainly possible that the Greek word can be translated “takes away” or “removes,” what is another possibility for these verses? How would the other translation fit into the context of John 15? Which version do you think is the better translation, and why? Record your response in your Life Notebook.

### QUESTION 3

Jesus says that He prunes the fruitful branches in Him so that they will bear more fruit. Read John 13:7-10 and John 15:1-3. What are some possible parallels between these passages, and how might they affect your interpretation of John 15? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Read John 15:6. There are three major interpretations of this verse. Some believe that being cast out and burned in the fire is a reference to loss of one's salvation. Others believe that it refers to those who have professed faith in Christ but revealed by their lack of fruitfulness that they never truly believed in the first place. The third view is that it refers to a true Christian who has become carnal and faces divine discipline in time and loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

Please read the following verses: Isaiah 26:11, Amos 1:4; 1:7; 1:10; 1:12; 1:14; 2:2; 2:5, Jeremiah 21:12-14; 22:6-7; Ezekiel 15:1-8; Isaiah 9:10, Jeremiah 48:45, Hosea 8:14, Nahum 1:6, Zephaniah 1:18, Psalm 80:16.

#### **QUESTION 4**

How might the passages you just read affect your understanding of John 15:6?

#### **QUESTION 5**

What is the one kind of fire that will come upon believers at the judgment (1 Cor 3:15)?

#### **QUESTION 6**

Now that you have studied this passage yourself, please read the article "The Vine and the Branches." Do you agree with the author's conclusions? Why or why not? Record your conclusions in your Life Notebook.

### **The Vine and the Branches**

Few passages have been quoted incorrectly as often as John 15. The beautiful and profound analogy of the vine and the branches has been a source of wonderful encouragement to believers throughout the centuries, but it has also become, unfortunately, a controversial passage regarding the eternal security of the saints.

Verse 1 - *I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.*

Verse 2 - *Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away, and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. (NASB)*

There is general agreement that the branches that bear fruit and are pruned represent true Christians. What about the "branch in Me that does not bear fruit"? There are three different opinions.

1. Some believe that because these branches did not bear fruit, this means that they were never Christians to begin with; all Christians must bear fruit until the end of their lives.
2. Others believe that these branches are Christians who fell into sin and as a result lost their salvation.
3. The final view represented in this course is that they are Christians who have become carnal, and as a result face divine discipline in time and a negative assessment of their lives at the judgment seat of Christ.



## The Meaning of "In Me"

To whom does the branch "in Me" refer? The phrase "in Me" is used sixteen times in John's gospel (Jn 6:56; 10:38; 14:10-11, 20, 30; 15:2, 4-7; 16:33; 17:21, 23). In each case it refers to true fellowship with Christ, a unity of purpose rather than organic connection. Therefore it is very unlikely that the unfruitful branches refer to people who have only professed faith in Christ but are not really born again.

It is true the Paul often spoke of being "in Christ" in terms of a true saving relationship (e.g., 1 Cor 12:13), but John never does. For him, to be "in Christ" is to be in communion with Him, not necessarily organically connected in union with Him.

This is borne out in John 14:30 where the Lord insists that the ruler of this world has nothing "in Me," that is, he has no relationship or part with Christ, no unity of purpose. He is not teaching that the ruler of this world has no part of Christ's essence, but that they are not like-minded. "In Me" does not refer to common essence or organic connection here either.

That "in Me" means oneness of purpose and not organic connection is further brought out in John 17:21. Here Christ prays for the same kind of oneness among the disciples that He enjoys with the Father, a oneness of love and fellowship. The "in Me and I in you" relationship Christ enjoys with the Father is explicitly taught to be the same as the experience of oneness, unity, and fellowship for which Christ prays for all His followers.

...That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent Me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as We are one: I in them and You in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (Jn 17:21-23)

Again, it is not a saving relationship that is portrayed by "in Me," but a life of communion. It is oneness of purpose and not of organic union which is taught. He wants them to have an experience of unity because that observable unity will prove to the world that they are His disciples, models of Christian love (Jn 17:23). If being "in Him" referred only to an organic connection, it would prove nothing. But if it refers to an experiential unity of purpose and fellowship, this would have great testimonial impact. It is a unity they do not yet have but must be "brought to." For John, to be "in Me" is simply to have "complete unity" with Him, not organic connection or commonality of essence.

If the "in Me" relationship referred to organic connection, He would not pray that organic connection be achieved; it already has been! The Father is in Him, and He is in the Father

In conclusion, then, the use of the phrase "in Me" in John does not require the sense of organic connection often found in Paul. To be "in Me" is simply to be in fellowship with Christ, living obediently. Therefore, according to John, it is possible for true Christians not to be "in Me": This only means they are not walking in fellowship and are not bearing fruit. To use John's term, they are not "abiding" in Christ.

This leads us to a discussion of one of John's favorite terms, "abide" (Gk. *meno*).

## The Meaning of "Abide"

The lexicons seem to be unanimous in saying the verb *meno* simply means "to remain." It is used often in John, and in every instance it simply means "to remain, to stay, to continue," or "to endure." Christ commands His disciples to remain in fellowship with Him. But, what does it mean to "remain"?

There are a number of things John says are characteristic of those who remain in Him. First of all,

they eat His flesh and drink His blood (Jn 6:56). When the Lord says, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me," His meaning is simply that "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood continues in close relationship to Me." The verbs are all present tense and refer, metaphorically, to the need for the believer to continually feast on Christ in believing dependence if he is to find true, rich life of discipleship (Jn 6:57).

Yet Jesus knew that there was danger. Not all believers will remain in close fellowship with Him and as result will not bear fruit (Jn 15:4). Jesus lists nine things that His disciples must pay attention to in order to remain in a dependent, obedient relationship with Him:

1. We must love our brothers (1 Jn 2:10).
2. We must walk as He walked (1 Jn 2:6).
3. We must be strong in the faith (1 Jn 2:14).
4. We must do the will of God (1 Jn 2:17).
5. We must hold to the truth we learned when we first became Christians (1 Jn 2:24).
6. We must not hate our brother (1 Jn 3:15).
7. We must keep His commandments (1 Jn 3:24; Jn 15:10).
8. We must love one another (1 Jn 4:12).
9. We must publicly confess Christ (1 Jn 4:15).

The rewards for meeting all of these conditions are great. First, we will truly be His disciples (Jn 8:31). But most of all, such a life will enable us to stand before Him with confidence when He returns (1 Jn 2:28) and receive our full reward (2 Jn 8).

We become Christians by faith alone, but God remains in fellowship with us only if we love one another (1 Jn. 4:12). It is through the experience of the Holy Spirit that we enjoy the fellowship of the Father and He with us (1 Jn 4:13).

## **The Unfruitful Branch**

If believers who remain in Christ, drawing life from Him by obedience and trust, produce much fruit in life, what happens to the unfruitful branches?

According to John, the branches that are "in Me" (walking in fellowship with Him, but not yet bearing fruit) will be lifted up and encouraged.

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. (Jn 15:2, NASB)

Does the word "take away" mean He takes them away from organic connection with Christ, and thus removing their salvation?

Probably not. Remember, to "abide in Me" does not mean to be "in Christ" in the sense of personal salvation, but rather to be in communion or fellowship with Christ. Because of this fact, and given the context, it is doubtful that Jesus means a loss of salvation. Instead, a loss of fellowship and fruit-bearing is the more likely meaning.

It is also possible that the word "take away" is best translated "lift up," as it is five times in John's gospel (Jn 5:8, 11-12; 8:59; 10:18). This is the meaning of the word listed first in the standard lexicons. In classical Greek, it was commonly used to mean "to lift for the purpose of carrying." When the vinedresser did this, the vines were lifted up to keep them from contact with soil,

providing them more air which enabled them to dry more quickly. Anyone who has watched a vine grower can attest to the fact that it is a common practice to lift fallen vines with meticulous care and allow them to heal. When branches mature enough to bear fruit, they are raised above the ground on supports (Ezek 17:6).

To be “lifted up” in verse 2 is a divine promise: Every Christian who is not yet bearing fruit and yet is “in Me”—that is, walking in fellowship—will receive divine encouragement. This fits extremely well with the whole context of this last night of Christ with those He loved. It was a time of encouragement, not a time of threatening them with damnation or loss of salvation if they failed to prove to be true believers! He wanted them to know that even as they lay fruitless on the ground, the Vinedresser would tenderly care for them and lift them into the light, where they can bear fruit.

Vinedressers knew and cared for each vine individually, much like a shepherd for his sheep.

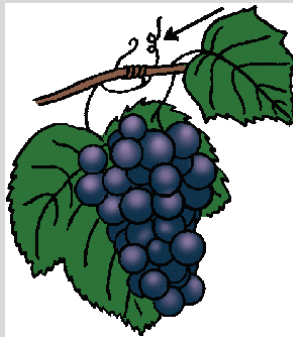
The vinedresser’s grape vines remain with him for decades. He comes to know each one in a personal way, much like a shepherd with his sheep. He knows how the vine is faring from year to year and which ones are more productive or vigorous than others. He knows what they respond to and what special care certain one’s need. Every vine has its own personality. And the vinedresser comes to know it over the years. The vinedresser cares for each vine and nurtures it, pruning it the appropriate amount at the appropriate times, fertilizing it, lifting its branches from the ground and propping them or tying them to the trellis, and taking measures to protect them from insects and disease. So, when Jesus calls His Father the Vinedresser, He is describing Him in terms of His relationship and attitude as well as His actions in the lives of the disciples. We cannot stress enough how important it is to recall the attributes and actions of the Father from the previous context. To call Him a vinedresser is to tell them He cares for them personally and is wise to know exactly what to do to make them fruitful. With such a Vinedresser, the branches can experience complete confidence and security. (Gary Derickson and Earl Radmacher, *The Disciplemaker*. (Salem, OR: Charis Press, 2001), s.v. “John 15:2.”)

### **The Fruitful Branch (John 15:3)**

What does the Vinedresser do to the fruitful branch which is “in Me”? His word to the fruitful branch walking in communion with Him is:

...And every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. (Jn 15:2-3, NASB)

The fruit-bearing branch is “pruned so that it may bear more fruit.” The word “prune” is the Greek word which means “to cleanse” (Gk. *kathaireo*). It was used in agriculture for removing small tendrils. These were small growths that coiled around the branches and could hinder their growth and fruitfulness.



What does it mean to be “clean because of the word”?

These verses reflect the Lord’s words earlier to Peter:

Jesus answered and said to him, “What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.” Peter said to Him, “Never shall You wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.” Jesus said to him, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” (Jn 13:7–10, NASB)

Peter was already clean all over, or saved, but he needed to have his feet washed. Similarly the vines already clean through the Word need to be regularly cleansed and purified. The danger to Peter was that he would not have a “part,” an inheritance or reward in the kingdom (“no part with me”). This corresponds to being unfruitful in John 15:2-3 and possibly being “cast out” in verse 6.

The pruning in verse 2 is sanctification truth. This is 1 John 1:9 forgiveness and confession. Again, this interpretation fits the context best since fruit bearing is in view and not salvation.

### **Cast into the Fire (John 15:6)**

But does it not say in v. 6 that this same branch is “cast into the fire and is burned” (Jn 15:6).

These verses have been understood by some to mean that the person who is unfruitful is:

1. A Christian who has become carnal and has lost his salvation
2. A professing Christian who was never born again to begin with and revealed that fact by not bearing fruit
3. A true Christian who has become carnal and faces divine discipline in time and loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ

The first two interpretations are based upon the misunderstanding that verses 2 and 6 are parallel and refer to the same person, and that being “cast out” is a reference to final damnation in hell.

However, it is doubtful that the two verses are parallel because the branch in John 15:2 is a branch in fellowship with Christ (“in Me”) that is *not yet* bearing fruit and is lifted up (Gk. *aireo*), not “cast out” (Gk. *ekballo*). This branch is therefore different from the one in v. 6 which is said not to be “in Me” (i.e., is not in fellowship with Christ) and is “cast out.”

But what does it mean to be “cast out”? Some feel, as mentioned above, that these “cast out” branches lose their salvation. But note that the figure of the vine and the branches signifies fellowship, not regeneration; not salvation, but sanctification; not justification, but fruit-bearing. Thus, the removal here would simply refer to the removal of the disobedient Christian from fellowship. Furthermore, Jesus makes clear earlier in the Gospel of John that no one who comes to Him will ever be cast out (Jn 6:37-39; 10:27-30).

The final possibility is that the destiny of these unfruitful branches is divine discipline in time, possible physical death, and loss of rewards at the judgment seat of Christ. The consequences of the failure of a true Christian to abide in Christ are now explicitly set forth (Jn 15:6):

If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dried up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

The Lord is saying that, if a true Christian does not remain in fellowship with Him, he will be thrown away. As argued above, the point of the figure of the vine and the branches is not to portray organic connection but enablement and fellowship. This casting out, then, is not from salvation but

from fellowship. The result is that these branches, the carnal Christians, are cast into the fire.

To what does the fire refer? Fire is a common symbol in the Bible for earthly judgment on God's people (Isa 9:10; 26:11; Amos 1:4, 7, 10, 12, 14; 2:2, 5. See also Jer 21:12-14; 22:6-7; 48:45; Ezek 15:1-8; Hos 8:14; Nah 1:6; Zeph 1:18). In fact, the only metaphor in the Old Testament parallel to a vine being cut and burned refers to a temporal judgment on the people of God for their disobedience (Ps 80:16).

It is likely that John has an additional thought in mind, that all God's buildings (i.e., believers, 1 Cor 3:9) will be submitted to fire at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor 3:15).

	<b>John 13:10</b>	<b>John 15:2,3,6</b>
<b>Salvation</b>	<i>He who has bathed ... is completely clean. V. 10</i>	<i>You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. V. 3</i>
<b>Sanctification</b>	<i>He who has bathed, needs only to wash his feet. V. 10</i>	<i>Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. " (vv. 2-3)</i>
<b>Eternal Reward</b>	<i>If I do not wash you, you have no part with me. V. 8</i>	<i>If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. V. 6</i>

## QUESTION 7

What did Christ mean when He challenged His disciples to remain in Him? Match the Scripture with the corresponding characteristic of one who remains in Christ.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Characteristic</i>
1 John 2:10	We must not have bitterness toward anyone.
1 John 2:6	We must keep His commandments.
1 John 3:15	We must persevere in our faith.
1 John 2:14	We must be strong in faith.
1 John 2:24	We must love our brothers.
John 15:10	We must walk as He walked.

## QUESTION 8

What will happen to each of the three types of branches? Match each type of branch with its fate.

<i>Branch</i>	<i>Fate</i>
Unfruitful branch in Christ	Pruned to bear more fruit.
Fruitful branch in Christ	Lifted up and encouraged to bear fruit
Branch not remaining in Christ	Discipline in this life and loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

## QUESTION 9

Reflect on the passages in Question 7 and on John 15. What changes would you need to make in your life if you were going to remain in Christ? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

## Topic 2: Preparation for Hardship

### Thursday evening, April 2, AD 33

With following Christ come the possibility and likelihood of hardship and persecution.

Jesus had explained the resources His disciples would have if they continued to abide in Him. He next described the hardships they would face.

### Assignment

- Read John 15:18-27; 16:1-4 and 1 Peter 2:18-25.

## QUESTION 10

Most Christians will suffer some kind of persecution because of their identification with Christ. In your Life Notebook identify the two causes of persecution revealed in the above passages. Reflect on your own situation in society, at work, in your family, or among your friends. What kinds of persecution do you face? Then, from 1 Peter 2:21-25, identify how we can follow in Christ's steps. What would following in His steps mean in your situation?

## Topic 3: The Ministry of the Spirit

### Thursday evening, April 2, AD 33

In John 16:5-15, the apostle records the some of the greatest teachings in the New Testament regarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

### Assignment

- Read John 16:5-15.

## QUESTION 11

Using John 14:25-26; 16:7-15 list the five advantages Jesus said would come to the disciples if He departed from them.

## QUESTION 12

Has the Holy Spirit reminded you of the things Christ said to the disciples, led you into “all truth,” and told you about future things? If not, what do you think these verses mean? Please read Hebrews 1:1-2. What does “has spoken” imply in verse 2? Also read Revelation 22:18-19. How might these verses relate to what Christ said to His apostles in John 16? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

## Topic 4: Their Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

Thursday evening, April 2, AD 33

### Assignment

- Read John 16:16-24.

## QUESTION 13

What did Jesus mean when He said that their sorrow would be turned to joy?

## QUESTION 14

In John 15:7 and John 16:23-24, Jesus makes some startling promises. Read those passages and then read Psalm 34:8-10; 2 Timothy 4:20; and 1 John 5:14-15. How might these verses help us understand what Jesus meant? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

After answering the question above, read a possible answer.

### Answered Prayer

These passages seem to limit the general promise which Jesus made. First, according to Psalm 34, God will grant us every good thing. God, of course, determines what is good for us. Second, John, who wrote both the Gospel of John and 1 John, says that only prayers “according to His will” are answered. One must understand Jesus to say that He will grant every good thing that is consistent with God’s will.

## QUESTION 15

In John 16:24, Jesus speaks of asking the Father “in my name.” Read Hebrews 10:19-22. This verse means we should close all prayer with the words “in Jesus’ name.” *True or False?*

So far, we have discussed that God answers only prayers that are according to His will. The question is, how do we know what God’s will is?

Recently a man from Colorado was buried in the rubble of a major hotel in Haiti when it collapsed in an earthquake. For several weeks no one knew whether he was dead or alive. The church leaders felt that it was God’s will that the man be saved from the rubble. So they told the church to pray this way, because if we pray according to God’s will, He will answer. But weeks later it was discovered that the man had been crushed to death. This illustrates the importance of praying according to God’s will, instead of according to what a person thinks is God’s will.

Even though there are some passages of Scripture that indicate that God speaks to the heart via inward impressions telling us what His will is (Neh 2:12), these kinds of inward feelings rarely give us certainty that we pray according to God's will. Many Christians obtain much of their guidance from these inner impressions, but there is actually very little evidence in Scripture that this is God's primary way of communicating His will to us. What then is His primary method?

Please read 2 Timothy 3:16; 2:7; Hebrews 4:12-13; Luke 24:27; Psalms 19:7-11; 119:9-16, 17-20, 24, 33-36, 97-100, 105, 129-131; Isaiah 8:19-20, and Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 20:18; 24:6; 27:9. Also note Philippians 2:12-13 and Romans 12:1-2.

### **QUESTION 16**

After reading the passages, record the four ways God indicates He reveals His will in your Life Notebook. Reflect on how you have seen this at work in your own life and how it has affected the way you pray.

## **Topic 5: Christ Has Overcome the World**

**Thursday evening, April 2, AD 33**

### **Assignment**

- Read John 16:25-33.

Jesus told His disciples that up until this point, He had been speaking in figures of speech, or parables, intentionally making His words a bit mysterious (Jn 16:25). The sense of the Greek word translated as "parables" communicates that the meaning of Jesus' sayings does not lie on the surface, but must be searched for and thought about.

In John 16:30, the disciples no longer felt a need to question Christ about where He was going because they had confidence that He knew all things. But Jesus immediately warned them that they would be scattered. However, He told them not to fear because the Father will be with Him, and He has overcome the world.

### **QUESTION 17**

Have you ever been certain of your faith only to find that when trials came, you too fled? In your Life Notebook and record an experience from your life that illustrates this. What do you know about the Father's attitude toward you when that happens? See John 16:27-28.

Because Jesus knew their faith was limited and would sometimes fail, He turned to the Father in John 17 and prayed for them.

## **Topic 6: The Lord's Prayer**

**Thursday, April 2, AD 33**

With John 16:33, Jesus completed His teaching in the upper room, and then turned His attention to His Father as He prayed for His disciples (Jn 17). The disciples must have been awestruck as they heard their Master





pray those intimate words for them and for those who would believe on Him in the centuries to come.

In John 17, the veil is drawn aside and we can follow our Great High Priest into the “Holy of Holies.” We draw near to Him as He offers the most sublime prayer in Holy Scripture, full of elevated thought, completeness in meaning, and a power of expression that has impacted the hearts and minds of millions in the past two thousand years.

This prayer is the longest one recorded of our Lord Jesus, properly called His “High Priestly Prayer.” A prophet represents God before men, and Jesus knew He had completed His prophetic ministry. He now functioned as a priest, representing men before God.

Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer

Jesus’ Requests for Himself (Jn 17:1-5)

Jesus’ Intercession for His Apostles (Jn 17:6-19)

Jesus’ Intercession for Future Believers (Jn 17:20-26)

(Image from *The Gospel of John*, © The Visual Bible International, Inc.)

## Jesus’ Requests for Himself (John 17:1-5)

### Assignment

- Read John 17:1-5.

### QUESTION 18

Why did Jesus view His coming death as His glorification?



Image from *The Gospel of John*,  
© The Visual Bible International, Inc.

Jesus said that the hour had come and that He had accomplished the work the Father had given Him to do (Jn 17:1, 4). This is an incredible thing to be able to say. Read Acts 20:17-38 and 2 Timothy 4:6-8; 16-18.

### QUESTION 19

What are some similarities between Jesus and Paul? Reflect on your life mission and ask yourself whether, if you knew you would die one year from now, you would be able to say, “I have accomplished what God gave me to do.” Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

### QUESTION 20

Christ said, “And now, Father, glorify me at your side with the glory I had with you before the world was created” (Jn 17:5). In your Life Notebook, record your thoughts on what this passage says about the deity of Christ and the Trinity.

After you write down your thoughts, read what John Calvin says on “The Glorification of the Son.”

### **The Glorification of the Son**

“[Jesus] now declares that he desires nothing that does not strictly belong to him, but only that he may appear in the flesh, such as he was before the creation of the world; or, to speak more plainly, that the Divine majesty, which he had always possessed, may now be illustriously displayed in the person of the Mediator, and in the human flesh with which he was clothed. This is a remarkable passage, which teaches us that Christ is not a God who has been newly contrived, or who has existed only for a time; for if his glory was eternal, himself also has always been. Besides, a manifest distinction between the person of Christ and the person of the Father is here expressed; from which we infer, that he is not only the eternal God, but also that he is the eternal Word of God, begotten by the Father before all ages” (Calvin, John. *Commentary on John, Vol. 2*. Public domain).

### **QUESTION 21**

Please read the brief article “Eternal Life.” Summarize your understanding of the phrase “this is eternal life” based on what you learned from the Upper Room Discourse in your Life Notebook. Please list four things you could do to enhance your experience of eternal life.

### **Eternal Life**

We need to be reminded again of the breadth of the Johannine concept of “eternal life.” For him the term is far more than regeneration truth (initial salvation). It is a comprehensive concept involving both this life and the life to come. Jesus came to enable men to enjoy their present salvation, through sanctification, in anticipation of their future salvation, even glorification. Though there are times when the term is used in the sense of future eternal life, it most often includes the experience of God’s life in this life as an integral facet of its meaning. Eternal life is something Jesus offers to people to experience now as well as later. Thus His purpose of offering “abundant life” in John 10:10 relates to experiencing a quality of life in this life, with more to come in the future. Jesus’ declaration in John 11:25, “I am the resurrection and the life,” can be seen as purely future. But other places such as with the woman at the well and His offer of living water at the Feast of Booths (Jn 7:37-38) clearly promise an experience of a quality of life in this life, especially in light of John’s interpretation of Jesus’ words in John 7:39. Granted, in each case the experience of eternal life involves the first step of saving faith for entrance into that experience. But the use of the term “life” or “eternal life” carries with it a broader connotation. “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (Jn 10:10). It is something the individual begins experiencing from the moment of faith and its abundance is to be expressed in this life, as well as after resurrection. Therefore, the idea behind the statement that Jesus “gives eternal life to those who believe in Him” refers to “far more than future unending existence with God. It describes the believer’s present experience of life. This is evident especially in John 10:10, where the life Jesus speaks of us to be experientially enjoyed rather than anticipated.” (Radmacher, Earl, and Gary Derikson, *The Disciplemaker: What Matters Most to Jesus*. Charis Press: 2001. 304.)

## Jesus' Intercession for His Apostles (John 17:6-19)

### Assignment

- Read John 17:6-19.

### QUESTION 22

List the four things Jesus prayed for His apostles in John 17:6-19.



Image from *The Gospel of John*,  
© The Visual Bible International, Inc.

### QUESTION 23

Please reflect upon John 17. Open your Life Notebook and record your thoughts on how Jesus prayed. What can you learn about prayer and incorporate into your own prayer life based upon what you studied?

## Jesus' Requests for Future Believers (Jn 17:20-26)

### Assignment

- Read John 17:20-26.

Jesus now turned His attention to His church. He began to pray for those who would come to Him through the ministry of His apostles and other Christians throughout the centuries.



Image from *The Gospel of John*,  
© The Visual Bible International, Inc.

### QUESTION 24

What kind of unity did Jesus pray that future disciples might enjoy? Has His prayer been answered? Why or why not? What can you do to ensure that His prayer is answered in situations you know about? What is the result of this unity (Jn 17:23)? Record your answers in your Life Notebook.

## Lesson 9 Self Check

### QUESTION 1

When Jesus spoke of a branch “in me” in John 15, He referred to a true believer. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 2

What is the branch “in me” that is not bearing fruit?

- A. A professing believer who may or may not be a true believer
- B. A believer who is not yet bearing fruit but is not carnal
- C. A believer who is cast forth and burned
- D. A non-believer

### QUESTION 3

What is the branch that is removed?

- A. A professing believer who is not truly born again
- B. The same as the branch which is cast into the fire
- C. Lifted up and encouraged to bear fruit
- D. A true believer who is being cleansed

### QUESTION 4

What does the branch that is cast into the fire represent?

- A. A true believer who faces discipline in time and loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ
- B. A professing believer who has revealed by his lack of fruitfulness that he was never saved to begin with
- C. A false believer who performed good works, but not done in dependence on Christ
- D. None of the above

### QUESTION 5

In the Upper Room Discourse, the apostles were warned regarding persecution that might come upon them because of their own disobedience. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 6

When Jesus promised the Eleven that the Holy Spirit would guide them into “all truth,” He probably meant what?

- A. The Holy Spirit would give them daily guidance through inner impressions.
- B. The Holy Spirit would instruct them in the meaning of the Scriptures.
- C. The Holy Spirit would guide them in the writing of the New Testament.
- D. The Holy Spirit would take the place of the written Word as the primary means of hearing from God.

### QUESTION 7

When Jesus says that God will answer whatever prayer they offer in Christ’s name, this assumes that the prayer is for anything. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 8**

Based on the Scriptures you studied, it is clear that God's primary way of communicating His will to us is through a multitude of counselors. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 9**

When Jesus prayed in John 17, what did He prayed for?

- A. Many to come to Christ, for the apostles, for future believers
- B. Future believers, for weak Christians, for Himself
- C. For the apostles, for Himself, for future Christians
- D. For Himself, for false Christians, for the apostles

**QUESTION 10**

The unity among believers for which Jesus prayed was not doctrinal, but relational. *True or False?*

## Unit 3 Exam: Life of Christ, Volume 2

### QUESTION 1

The fact that the word “unbeliever” in the parallel passage in Luke 12:41-48 is used for “hypocrite” in Matthew 24:51 shows that the wicked servant in Matthew 25 was not a true Christian at all. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 2

The central message of the parable of the virgins is that we must be prepared because Christ may return at any moment. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 3

In the parable of the talents, what was the criterion the master used to distribute the gifts?

- A. According to each servant’s rank in the household
- B. According to the money each servant already possessed
- C. According to each servant’s willingness to take responsibility
- D. According to each servant’s ability

### QUESTION 4

Based on the parable, what is the principal criterion Jesus will use when He assesses your life at the judgment seat?

- A. The amount of work you have achieved for Him
- B. Your skill and creativity in implementing your service
- C. The magnitude of global impact resulting from your efforts
- D. Your faithfulness

### QUESTION 5

Which of the following items would not suggest that the third servant was an unsaved man?

- A. He is sent to the “outer darkness,” which must mean he was sent to hell.
- B. He is called a servant, not a believer.
- C. He is called “wicked and lazy,” and no Christian could be described as a wicked servant.
- D. He experiences weeping and gnashing of teeth throughout eternity.

### QUESTION 6

What are the conditions for salvation?

- A. By faith plus works
- B. By faith alone
- C. By works
- D. By repentance

### QUESTION 7

Who are the “righteous”?

- A. They are ethically good people.
- B. They are those justified and declared righteous through Christ.
- C. They are only the sheep who have cared for the poor.
- D. They are sheep who have lived faithfully.

### QUESTION 8

Based on the parable of the ten virgins and the approach taken in the lesson, what was the call of the Bridegroom that the virgins answered?

- A. The pre-tribulational rapture of the church
- B. The return of Christ at the end of the tribulation
- C. The call to accept Jesus as Lord
- D. The call to be prepared at all times

### QUESTION 9

When Jesus told the five foolish virgins, “I do not know you,” what was He stating?

- A. He had never met them.
- B. He did not respect them.
- C. He did not recognize them.
- D. He viewed them as unsaved.

### QUESTION 10

Which of the following was *not* a reason the Passover originally was celebrated?

- A. To signify Jewish rebellion against Rome
- B. To commemorate the birth of Israel as a nation
- C. To remember the night that the angel of death passed over the homes that had blood on the side posts and lintel of the doorposts
- D. To remember the suffering the Hebrews endured as slaves in Egypt

### QUESTION 11

What point is Jesus making when He says that one who is bathed (*louo*) only needs to have his feet washed (*nipto*)?

- A. We must accept the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf.
- B. We can lose our salvation through sin, but can regain it if we get further cleansing.
- C. Unless we seek daily cleansing from sin, we will not share with Christ in the fruits of His redemptive acts.
- D. We can be restored to fellowship with Christ by confessing our sins.

### QUESTION 12

In the original Passover ceremony, the unleavened bread represented the bodies of all of the Israelites who died in Egyptian slavery. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 13

In the original Passover ceremony, what did the bitter herbs represent?

- A. The bitter food the Egyptians forced the people to eat during their slavery
- B. The straw the Israelites had to collect to make bricks
- C. The hardships they experienced in bondage
- D. The haste with which they had to eat the first Passover meal

### QUESTION 14

What does the unleavened bread of the Passover meal represent for Christians today?

- A. Past and future restoration from exile
- B. Christ's body, without sin
- C. Escape from judgment
- D. The beginning of the New Covenant

### QUESTION 15

When Jesus said "this is my body" and "this is my blood," what did He mean?

- A. The elements were literally His body and blood.
- B. His body and blood were present alongside the bread and wine.
- C. Christ was spiritually present in the bread and wine.
- D. These were symbols of His sacrifice on our behalf.

### QUESTION 16

According to the New Testament, the Lord's Table was intended as a time of anticipation of Christ's return; a time of confession of sin; a time of fellowship with the Lord; a time of remembrance; and a time regularly celebrated. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 17

When Jesus spoke of a branch "in me," He referred to a true believer. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 18

What is the branch "in me" that is not bearing fruit?

- A. A professing believer who may or may not be a true believer
- B. A believer who is not yet bearing fruit but is not carnal
- C. A believer who is cast forth and burned
- D. A non-believer

### QUESTION 19

Why do you think Jesus viewed His coming death as His glorification?

- A. Because after He died, He would get His heavenly body back
- B. Because His death would cause His disciples to see Him in a more spiritual form
- C. Because His death atoned for our sins, reconciled the world to God, and vanquished Satan
- D. Because He knew that His ascension to heaven would follow His death and resurrection



**QUESTION 20**

What does the branch that is cast into the fire represent?

- A. A true believer who faces discipline in time and loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ
- B. A professing believer who has revealed by his lack of fruitfulness that he was never saved to begin with
- C. A false believer who performed good works, but not done in dependence on Christ
- D. None of the above

**QUESTION 21**

When Jesus promised the Eleven that the Holy Spirit would guide them into “all truth,” what did He mean?

- A. The Holy Spirit would instruct them in the meaning of the Scriptures.
- B. The Holy Spirit would guide them in the writing of the New Testament.
- C. The Holy Spirit would give them daily guidance through inner impressions.
- D. The Holy Spirit would take the place of the written Word as the primary means of hearing from God.

**QUESTION 22**

In the Upper Room Discourse, the apostles were warned regarding persecution that might come on them because of their own disobedience. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 23**

When Jesus says that God will answer whatever prayer they offer in Christ’s name, this assumes that the prayer is for anything. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 24**

When Jesus prayed in John 17, what did He pray for?

- A. Many to come to Christ, for the apostles, for future believers
- B. Future believers, for weak Christians, for Himself
- C. For the apostles, for Himself, for future Christians
- D. For Himself, for false Christians, for the apostles

**QUESTION 25**

The unity among believers for which Jesus prayed was both doctrinal and relational. *True or False?*

## Lesson 9 Answers to Questions

**QUESTION 1:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 2:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 3:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 4:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

These passages show that fire is not necessarily a reference to hell. Instead, each of them speaks of a non-eternal judgment.

**QUESTION 5:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

In this passage, we learn of the fire that will envelop believers' works at the judgment seat of Christ. The purpose is not to condemn, but to reveal what kind of works they are: temporal in value like wood, hay, and stubble, or enduring in value like gold, silver, and precious stones.

**QUESTION 6:** *Your answer*

### QUESTION 7

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Characteristic</i>
1 John 2:10	We must love our brothers.
1 John 2:6	We must walk as He walked.
1 John 3:15	We must not have bitterness toward anyone.
1 John 2:14	We must be strong in faith.
1 John 2:24	We must persevere in our faith.
John 15:10	We must keep His commandments.

### QUESTION 8

<i>Branch</i>	<i>Fate</i>
Unfruitful branch in Christ	Lifted up and encouraged to bear fruit
Fruitful branch in Christ	Pruned to bear more fruit.
Branch not remaining in Christ	Discipline in this life and loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

**QUESTION 9:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 10:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 11:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

(1) He would send the Holy Spirit to bring conviction to the world. (2) The Spirit would guide them into all truth. (3) The Spirit would glorify Christ. (4) The Spirit would reveal to them "things to come." (5) The Spirit would remind them of all that Christ had spoken to them.

**QUESTION 12:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 13:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

His resurrection and the Spirit's work of interpretation would enable them to know that He had to die so that they could have forgiveness of sins. Later the church would rejoice in His death.

**QUESTION 14:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 15:** False [To pray in Jesus' name means to pray in a way that is consistent with His teachings and character as revealed in Scripture, according to His will, and with the realization that we can pray to the Father because Jesus died for our sins.]

**QUESTION 16:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 17:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 18:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Based on reading John 17:1-5—Jesus knew that His death was part of God's will for the salvation of His people and for the restoration of their fellowship with Him.

**QUESTION 19:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 20:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 21:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 22:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

(1) Keep them in My name, verse 11; (2) that they may have full joy, verse 13; (3) keep them from the evil one, verse 15; (4) sanctify them in the truth, verse 17

**QUESTION 23:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 24:** *Your answer*

## Lesson 9 Self Check Answers

**QUESTION 1:** True

**QUESTION 2**

B. A believer who is not yet bearing fruit but is not carnal

**QUESTION 3**

C. Lifted up and encouraged to bear fruit

**QUESTION 4**

A. A true believer who faces discipline in time and loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ

**QUESTION 5:** False

**QUESTION 6**

A. The Holy Spirit would give them daily guidance through inner impressions.

**QUESTION 7:** False

**QUESTION 8:** False

**QUESTION 9**

C. For the apostles, for Himself, for future Christians

**QUESTION 10:** True

## Unit 3 Exam Answers

**QUESTION 1:** False

**QUESTION 2:** True

**QUESTION 3**

D. According to each servant's ability

**QUESTION 4**

D. Your faithfulness

**QUESTION 5**

B. He is called a servant, not a believer.

**QUESTION 6**

B. By faith alone

**QUESTION 7**

B. They are those justified and declared righteous through Christ.

**QUESTION 8**

A. The pre-tribulational rapture of the church

**QUESTION 9**

B. He did not respect them.

**QUESTION 10**

A. To signify Jewish rebellion against Rome

**QUESTION 11**

D. We can be restored to fellowship with Christ by confessing our sins.

**QUESTION 12:** False

**QUESTION 13**

C. The hardships they experienced in bondage

**QUESTION 14**

B. Christ's body, without sin

**QUESTION 15**

D. These were symbols of His sacrifice on our behalf.

**QUESTION 16:** True

**QUESTION 17:** True

**QUESTION 18**

B. A believer who is not yet bearing fruit but is not carnal

**QUESTION 19**

C. Because His death atoned for our sins, reconciled the world to God, and vanquished Satan

**QUESTION 20**

A. A true believer who faces discipline in time and loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ

**QUESTION 21**

C. The Holy Spirit would give them daily guidance through inner impressions.

**QUESTION 22:** False

**QUESTION 23:** False

**QUESTION 24**

C. For the apostles, for Himself, for future Christians

**QUESTION 25:** False

# Unit 4: The Consummation

---

About a year after June, AD 32, Jesus began His journey to glory with an outreach to the Samaritans (Lk 9:52-56). The journey would end with His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, where He presented Himself as Israel's long-awaited Messiah—only to endure seven trials and death by crucifixion. But the story did not end there. Jesus came out of the tomb in resurrection power. In this unit, we will study the final days of the greatest life ever lived.

In Lesson 10, our focus will be the seven trials Jesus underwent as the Pharisees attempted to find a charge punishable by death.

When, during the last trial, Jesus claimed to be God, the high priest rent his robes, shouted “Blasphemy!” and arranged to have Jesus brought before Pilate. This cowardly Roman governor yielded to the mob's cries of “Crucify Him!” and sent Him to Golgotha. While on the cross, Jesus spoke seven times. Most of Lesson 11 will be focused on the significance of the final words of the Son of God.

Finally, in Lesson 12, we will examine historical evidence for the resurrection of Christ and its practical meaning for our lives. After many appearances and forty days of teaching, Jesus ascended to heaven, and the angels promised that He would come again.

## Unit 4 Outline

Lesson 10: His Trials

Lesson 11: His Crucifixion

Lesson 12: His Resurrection and Ascension

# Lesson 10: His Trials

---

Jesus was much in need of the companionship of His men as He steeled His will for the horrors that lay ahead. He was about to engage all the powers of hell. In this lesson, we will review the six trials of Christ, each one a mockery of jurisprudence, which ultimately led to His death.

In Topic 1, we find ourselves on holy ground. But while Jesus prays, the traitor Judas is at work: Jesus is arrested, and the trials begin. Why was the prayer of the Son of God not answered?

In Topic 2, Jesus is led away for His first, brief trial before the high priest, Annas, where His claims to be the Son of God bring accusations of blasphemy. During the trial, Peter denies Christ, possibly a total of six times. Could he possibly have lost his salvation?

In Topic 3, Jesus condemns Himself in front of the entire Sanhedrin by claiming to be the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel. Suddenly realizing what he's done, Judas desperately tries to make restitution for his betrayal.

Beginning with Topic 4, the Gospel writers direct our attention to the three civil trials of Jesus. The Sanhedrin's verdict needs Roman backing to stand, so they invent charges and bring Him before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea.

In Topic 5, Pilate sends Jesus to His fifth trial, held before evil Herod, the Roman-assigned Jewish king over Galilee. Herod is thrilled to see Jesus because he hopes to see some sensational miracles.

In Topic 6, we will begin our study of the sixth and final trial of Christ, His second appearance before Pilate. It is here that Pilate caves in to the violent demands of the mob and commits Jesus to the cross.

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: The Battle in the Garden

The Agony of Gethsemane

The Betrayal of the Son of Man

Topic 2: The First Trial—Before Annas

“Why Question Me?”

Peter Denies Him

Topic 3: The Second Trial—Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin

“Are You the Son of God?”

Peter Accused

Topic 4: The Third Trial—Before the Sanhedrin

The Verdict Confirmed

The Traitor's End

Topic 5: The Fourth Trial—First Before Pilate

Topic 6: The Fifth Trial—Before Herod

Topic 7: Matching Events

## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Explore the question of unanswered prayer by examining how, even though Jesus was a perfect man praying a righteous prayer, the Father did not respond
- Study Peter's denial of Christ and how this incident affects our understanding of the important doctrine of eternal life
- Consider elements of Pharisaical Christianity that may manifest themselves in our own lives
- Challenge yourself with King Herod's bad example by considering if a tendency toward over-fascination with the spiritual, sensational, and supernatural exists in your own heart

## Topic 1: The Battle in the Garden

Thursday, April 2, AD 33

At that time of year the air was crisp and cool. We do not know the disciples' feelings, but probably it was with a sense of foreboding that they followed Him to a garden enclosure called Olive Press, known to us as Gethsemane, located approximately 0.8 kilometers from city walls. Here the owner's servants crushed olives in a rough stone trough to extract the oil from them.

### The Agony of Gethsemane

#### Assignment

- Read Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:31-42; Luke 22:40-46; and John 18:1.
- Read "Sympathetic High Priest."



The Kidron Valley is between the temple area (on the right) and the Mount of Olives (on the left).

## We Have a Sympathetic High Priest

Read Heb 3:17-18 and Heb 4:14-15.

There is a much-debated issue we should touch on here: If Jesus was sinless, how can His temptations have any meaning for us?

The question is, "Was He able to sin, or was He not able to sin?"

If He was able to sin, then we might doubt His full deity. How can a perfectly holy God be able to sin?



On the other hand, if we say He was **not** able to sin, then how can His temptations be relevant to ours? How can He really sympathize with our difficulties? We are able to sin and do so all the time.

Consider this statement:

He who yields, does so before the last strain

*Jesus, being fully God was not able to sin.* This means that when He was tempted, He always experienced the full impact of the temptation. You and I yield before temptation has reached its fullest intensity. Not being able to sin, Jesus always felt the fullest intensity of every temptation, and thus is able to sympathize even more than if He was able to sin.

If Jesus' first coming began with the triumphal entry, after which He delivered His sermons and then went to the cross, would He be a sympathetic high priest who had been tempted as we are? We as mankind find great encouragement in the fact that there is a God who knows our struggles well in heaven today.

Therefore we are to draw near to the throne of grace with confidence. The one sitting on it is one of us—One who has walked where we have walked. He is sympathetic; He has been here.



Jesus knew that His final hour had come. All the brutality and humiliation men could bestow on Him was ahead. All the suffering that the human frame can tolerate was soon to be heaped on His shrinking body. Every insult that men could hurl would weigh with crushing weight on His innocent soul. He who was without sin was about to face the utmost power of evil spending itself on His pure soul.

One thing more was needed. Before the ordeal was to begin, He had to brace His body, nerve His soul, and calm His spirit by prayer, solitude, and time alone with His heavenly Father.

We cannot comprehend fully what transpired during this sacred moment. Like the disciples who witnessed it from a stone's-throw distance, we can only view the depths of these events with dim eyes.

They saw the strong One who had fearlessly cast out demons fall prostrate on His face.

The voice that had commanded the sea to calm down and the dead to rise was contorted in wailing murmurs of broken agony.

Again and again the Son of God cast Himself on the Father's bosom, and again and again there was no answer. Louder and louder were His cries, and yet the lofty One was silent—heaven seemed barred as with a thousand bolts. As He prayed, His anguish was so great that He began to sweat drops of blood.

### **QUESTION 1**

In your own words, summarize in your Life Notebook at least four reasons for Christ's agony, an agony so great that the rare phenomena of bloodstained sweat poured from the forehead of His prostrated body. Consider these Scriptures as you answer: Psalm 22:1-2; Isaiah 53:4-5; John 14:30; Luke 22:53; Romans 5:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 8:9; Galatians 3:12; 1 Peter 2:21-25.

## QUESTION 2

We all have trials and difficulties we wish were not in our lives. Reflect on how Jesus handled this situation. Record at least three things that characterized Jesus' response to His trial in your Life Notebook. Then, apply your observations to a trial you face.

## QUESTION 3

Please read the article on the problem of unanswered prayer. Record an instance in your life where God answered one of your prayers a different time and in a different way than you anticipated in your Life Notebook.

### **The Answer to the Problem of Unanswered Prayer**

Through a coup, Napoleon Bonaparte had declared himself Emperor of France, and he sought to make his nation the most powerful in the world by conquering surrounding nations—Great Britain among them. In 1815 the British sent renowned general Arthur Wesley, the Duke of Wellington, to meet Napoleon at Waterloo in a battle that would decide the fate of Great Britain. If Wellington was defeated, the armies of Napoleonic France would sweep England, enslaving the country.

The British had set up an elaborate system of visual signals to communicate the outcome of the battle. Messengers on the mainland, where the battle was fought, were to signal with fire. Others, watching from across the Channel on the White Cliffs of Dover, would receive the flashing signals and relay them to another point not far away, and thus relay the news all over England.

The people waited in suspense. And at the end of the battle, this devastating message flashed over the English Channel through a heavy fog that was rolling in:

*Wellington defeated*

As the message was relayed all over the country, great despair swept England.

But then the fog cleared, and the message shone through again. And wait! There was more.

*Wellington defeated Napoleon*

The Duke of Wellington had defeated Napoleon at Waterloo—England was saved!

England's despair was not necessary! Yet because they were on this side of the Channel, separated from the truth by the fog, they were unable to see what had really happened.

We often stand on that side of the channel, a fog obscuring the spiritual warfare that occurs beyond our sight. Sometimes God seems unresponsive, but He is always working out answers in ways we would not consider, ways that are much wiser than ours.

We see Jesus in this situation in Mark 14:36.

He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Though this perfect man, Jesus Christ, knocked on the heavenly doors, praying to His Father with holy intensity, God was silent. Through the garden came the guards, and the betrayer with his kiss; Jesus, undeserving and innocent, was led away to unspeakable torture and humiliating death. Wasn't God listening? Did He not answer the prayers of His own Son?

But on closer inspection, we see that Christ's prayer, that He might be delivered from the cup He was about to face, was answered. But instead of answering it on Friday afternoon, God answered it on Sunday morning—by resurrection.

Jesus understood that God's will must be accomplished; that God's view is of the overarching story He is telling through the history of earth. Our God's timing is perfect. Had Jesus' prayer been answered on Friday, the salvation of the world would never have been achieved. Because it was answered Sunday morning, you and I are saved today.

We need not despair. God does answer our prayers, but sometimes He may answer them like He did that of Christ: in a different time, and in a different way. The answers may be hidden by a fog at first, and they may not remove us from immediate danger or suffering. God's purposes are the ones that will ultimately be fulfilled. But eventually, on our Sunday morning, the fog will lift, and we will be overwhelmed to see the many prayers God answered in His own perfect timing and way.

## **The Betrayal of the Son of Man Assignment**

- Read Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; and John 18:2-11.
- Please read the article "Betrayal."

### **The Betrayal**

#### **The Trials Were Illegal**

From the time of Jesus' arrest to the crucifixion, almost every principle of justice and all the requirements of criminal and Jewish ecclesiastical law were violated. As a result, even though there was a pretense of legality, the death of Jesus Christ was murder.

After the death of Lazarus, the chief priests and the Pharisees met to plot how they could kill Jesus (Jn 11:47-53). Now, early Friday morning, April 3, 33 AD, their treacherous plans were coming to fruition. Fearing the people, they met secretly at night (Mt 26:3-5).

This was the first violation of Jewish legal proceedings. The Sanhedrin was only to meet at their specified place of meeting. Instead they met at Caiaphas' house. Furthermore, the law required them to meet openly, but they met in private. In addition, they had already made their judgment even before they met. Jesus was to be killed.

As they were seeking a way in which they could kill him, Satan entered into Judas Iscariot (Lk 22:3-6), and he came to them, offering to betray his Master. This gave them an immediately opportunity to act because they did not know where Jesus was, but Judas did.

While Jesus and the Eleven celebrated the Passover together, Judas and the chief priests made arrangements for the capture. When they were fully prepared, Judas led a company of hundreds. To prevent any insurrection, at least one legion, six thousand soldiers, was posted in Jerusalem by the Romans during the Passover. John tells us Judas led a "band," which would have been a tenth of a legion, or six hundred men.

In addition to the Roman soldiers, officers of the chief priests and Pharisees, known as the "temple guard," were present. Including the Roman soldiers made any resistance a crime against Rome.

Why such a large number of people? There were probably three reasons.

- First, the Pharisees needed to convince the Romans that they were dealing with a dangerous conspirator and rebel.
- Second, they did not know whether Christ's disciples would fight. But if they did, they would be outnumbered one hundred to one.
- Third, the Sanhedrin were all aware of the miracles of Christ (Jn 3:2; 11:47) and this produced some fear and extra caution. What would He do?

## Judas and Jesus

Judas was in the lead because he was the one who knew what Jesus looked like and knew the place where He could be found. His treachery was predicted in the Old Testament (Ps 41:9; Isa 55:12-14; Zech 11:12-13).

But why did he do it? Satan possessing him was only the end of a long process. We can assume that when he was first invited to join the Twelve, Jesus must have seen a man of passionate ideals who sincerely wanted to follow. But something happened. Perhaps it started when Jesus refused to accept the crowd's demands to make Him king (Jn 6:15) and then many of his followers deserted Him (Jn 6:60-71). At that time, Jesus proclaimed that one of the Twelve was a devil, a warning which Judas must have understood to be him. By that time Judas had changed. It was clear the Messiah Judas was following was not going to do what Judas wanted. As a result, he would not be one of Jesus' co-rulers in the coming kingdom. Full of disappointment, he decided to abandon the leader who was doing nothing to fulfill his personal ambitions. He was already engaged in dishonest money practices (Jn 12:6), so it was not a grand-scale deviation when he decided to betray his Master in order to obtain some compensation for that sacrifices he had made following Jesus around Galilee.

### The Arrest

As the mob approached, Jesus stood calmly, completely composed. Instead of staying in the midst of His disciples, He walked forward, saying, "Whom do you seek?" (Jn 18:4). This focused the attention on Him alone, thus protecting the disciples. When they said, "Jesus of Nazareth," the Lord responded, "I am."

The word "he" is not in the original Greek (Jn 18:5). By saying "I AM," Jesus was claiming to be Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament who explained to Moses that His name is "I AM" (Ex 3:13-15). Immediately many within the mob fell back on the ground. This may have been a supernatural force, or it may have been the shock of Jesus' self-disclosure on a mountainside in the middle of the night. They were staggered and afraid, and it took them a few moments to recover.

Yet they did not believe Him and fall back from their mission of darkness. He had submitted Himself to them, and nothing prevented them from illegally arresting the One who had just testified His true identity.



It was likely between 2:00 and 2:30 Friday morning when Jesus returned to His sleeping disciples after the agony in Gethsemane. Between this time and 6:30 in the morning, He would be arrested and endure six trials, each of which was a mockery of the honor of the judicial system.

While the disciples, weary with agony, were sleeping, the traitor, Judas, was wide awake and active. Satan had entered into Judas during the Lord's Supper (Jn 13:27). He had gone to the high priest and the Pharisees and persuaded them to enlist a Roman garrison to secure Jesus' arrest.

Even though they were arresting an unarmed man, they came with swords; and the mob that came along had sticks.

In the distance, Jesus heard the noises of the crowd coming to arrest Him. He knew all that awaited Him. The torches and lamps flared red from afar, revealing that Judas had betrayed the secret place where Jesus and His disciples had gone.

#### QUESTION 4

Based on the article, what were the possible motivations for Judas's betrayal of his Master? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. He was disappointed that he was not going to be reigning in the kingdom
- B. He planned betrayal from the beginning of his association with Jesus.
- C. He was a thief and wanted monetary compensation for the sacrifices he had made.
- D. Because Jesus seemed uncertain about His role, Judas wanted to force him to establish His kingdom.

What did Judas bring to the table? Why did the Pharisees need him at all? It has been commonly assumed that they were afraid of the multitude, but the evidence suggests that they had a greater fear, the fear of Christ Himself.

Three things suggest that there must have been an arrangement between Pilate and the Jews before this arrest took place.

1. He would never have agreed to an early morning trial without prior agreement.
2. It would have required his direct permission to assign a large group of soldiers to the arrest of Christ.
3. He agreed to come out to meet them in the Court of the Stranger on that day since the Jews had not had time for purification before entering the house of Pilate, a Gentile (Morrison, Frank. *Who Moved the Stone?* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987.] 40).

#### QUESTION 5

Which of the following was the most plausible of the possible reasons the temple guards fell to the ground?

- A. They fell down to worship Jesus.
- B. A supernatural force emanated from Jesus, knocking them over.
- C. They were slain in the Spirit.
- D. They were staggered by His self-disclosure as Yahweh.

#### QUESTION 6

This is not the first time in human history that the leader of a movement has been betrayed by a friend. Nor is it the first time that such a betrayal was motivated by the apparent failure of the leader to do what the betrayer thought ought to be done. Reflect for a moment on your own life and then on some possible illustrations where you have observed of this same pattern. Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook and explain what should have been done in the situations the Lord brought to your mind.

## Topic 2: The First Trial—Trial Before Annas

### Friday morning, April 3, AD 33

Never in the history of mankind has there been a greater miscarriage of justice than in the six trials of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything that happened was illegal, from His arrest to His final conviction.

Three of Christ's trials were religious, or ecclesiastical, trials; and three were political, or civil, trials. As far as we can tell, all six occurred within a five-hour period.

## The Six Trials of Jesus the Christ

The Religious Trials	
Before Annas	John 18:12-14; 19-24
Before Caiaphas	Matthew 26:57-68
Before Sanhedrin	Matthew 27:1-2
The Civil Trials	
Before Pilate	John 18:28-38
Before Herod	Luke 23:6-12
Before Pilate	John 18:39-19:6

The first trial was before the high priest, Annas. It probably occurred sometime between 2:30 and 3:30 on Friday morning, April 3, 33 AD.

The most detailed summary of this trial is in John 18:12-23. There were two high priests at the time, Annas (who was in his eighties) and his son-in-law, Caiaphas, who was the legally appointed high priest. However, it was the corrupt Annas who still held the power behind Caiaphas. This is why Jesus was first brought before Annas (Jn 18:12-13).

### Annas

Annas was one of the most notorious figures in Jewish history. Twenty years prior to Jesus' trial, he served as high priest for five years. He and his family were immensely unpopular with the people and greatly feared.

Ambitious, arrogant, and powerful, his family promoted themselves into many important offices. Annas was the first high priest of his family, followed by five sons, one son-in-law, and one grandson, who each filled the office during Annas's lifetime. The Law made the high priesthood a lifetime position, but the Romans believed this invested too much authority in one man for too long and forced Annas to step down. Therefore, there were two high priests during the time of Christ: Annas, who was the true high priest as far as the Law was concerned, and Caiaphas, who was the high priest as far as the Romans were concerned.

Annas and his sons developed a very profitable and corrupt business. According to the Law, the people could not come to temple empty-handed but must give an offering to the Lord. Since the common Roman currency, Roman coins, was "heathen money" and could not be offered, the worshippers' money had to be changed into temple coins. Annas's family was responsible for placing the moneychangers' booths, known as "Annas bazaars" in the temple courts, and both they and the moneychangers made a tremendous profit from the exchanges.

Annas was the head of the corrupt money-changing racket that went on in the temple. When Jesus entered the temple, overturned the tables and threw the money-changers out (Mt 21:12-14; Mk 11:15-17), He provoked Annas and the other priests, who had a lucrative business going on. As a result, they sought to destroy Him (Mk 11:18). In this first trial, their plan was finally coming to fruition.

Annas actually controlled the operation of the Sanhedrin, which in turn controlled Israel. This is why they led Jesus first to Annas.

## “Why Question Me?”

### Assignment

- Read Mark 14:53; Luke 22:54; and John 18:12-14.

### QUESTION 7

It is clear from Mark 14:53; Luke 22:54; and John 18:12-14 that Annas was not trying to get Jesus to testify against Himself. *True or False?*



Image from *The Gospel of John*,  
©Visual Bible International.

## Peter Denies Him

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54-55; and John 18:15-18.

John and Peter followed the mob to the high priest’s house. John went inside because he was known by the servants and the priests, but Peter waited outside. Seeing he was not there, John went back out to get him and brought him in. It seems John then may have gone to observe the trial, but Peter stayed outside by the fire. The maid who let Peter in questioned him, asking, “Aren’t you one of this man’s disciples?” Peter vehemently denied it. “I am not!”

### QUESTION 8

Please read these Scriptures as you consider your answer to the question: John 6:39, 40; 10:28, 29. Because Peter denied his Lord, it is legitimate to conclude that for a time at least, he temporarily lost his salvation. *True or False?*

Please read and compare Peter’s assertions of fidelity: Matthew 26:33-35; Mark 14:29-31; Luke 22:31-34; and John 13:37-38 with his actual behavior: Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-61; John 18:17; 25-27).

### QUESTION 9

Most of us have denied Christ in some way by our disobedience, but few have outwardly repudiated allegiance to Him. Think critically about this situation for a moment. Do you think that Peter lost his salvation when he made this denial? Why or why not? Record an instance of failure in your life. Have you asked forgiveness for this? Do you think that your failure could be used in a way to minister to others? How? Record your answer in your Life Notebook.

## Topic 3: The Second Trial—Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin

**Friday morning, April 3, AD 33**

The first trial's purpose was to see if some accusation could be found in order to give Caiaphas, the Roman-appointed high priest, a legal basis to proceed. However, the Lord would not testify against Himself. So Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin gathered illegally in the early morning hours.

This was the main religious trial.

### "Are You the Son of God?"

#### Assignment

- Read Matthew 26:56-66; Mark 14:53-65; and John 18:24

The mockery of justice now continues before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin in a second attempt to find some legal basis for executing the Son of God.

Apparently, the entire Sanhedrin had been gathered (Mk 14:53), and they were waiting for Jesus to be brought in. The case was so urgent that it could not await daybreak as Jewish law demanded. It was still night, perhaps around 3:30 or 4:00 a.m.

Jesus was brought into the high priest's house (Lk 22:54) and Peter followed a long way behind (Mt 26:58).

The trial then began. Legally, the Sanhedrin was not allowed to bring charges; it could only investigate charges which were brought before it. Caiaphas' problem was that there were no charges. He had to find some false witnesses to make them up.

#### QUESTION 10

Please read Matthew 26:60-61; Mark 14:59; and John 2:19. Which of the following is true?

- Both claimed they heard Jesus say He was the Son of God.
- Both of the witnesses agreed in their testimony.
- Both said He claimed He would rebuild Herod's temple as it was.
- Jesus claimed that the temple He would rebuild was His body.

Their case was falling apart. The false witnesses could not agree. Frustrated, Caiaphas said, "Have you no answer to make?" But Jesus remained silent (Mk 14:61). Why should He say anything? The witnesses were destroying their own testimony, and Jesus had done nothing wrong.

#### QUESTION 11

Finally Caiaphas broke another rule of the Jewish court, placing Jesus under oath in order to force Him to condemn Himself. *True or False?*

When Caiaphas placed Jesus under oath, asking, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus could not say "no." Aside from being a lie, that statement would also contradict His earlier claims (Jn 5:17-18). But if He said "yes," He knew they would charge Him with blasphemy.

In Mark's account, Jesus answers directly, "I am" (Mk 14:62).

As a result, Caiaphas now had what he needed: a legal charge against the prisoner according to Jewish law. "Blasphemy!" he cried.



## QUESTION 12

Match the Scripture with the corresponding event.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Event</i>
Matthew 26:67	They beat Him
Leviticus 21:10	They spit in His face
Psalms 110:1	Caiaphas broke the Law of Moses
Matthew 26:67	They mocked Him
Matthew 26:67-68	Christ claimed to be Messiah (Mt 26:64)
Mark 14:61	Jesus made no answer Isa 53:7

## QUESTION 13

By telling the truth, Christ incriminated Himself. Knowing, as He did, what lay before Him, this took enormous courage and strong commitment to do God's will, no matter the cost. Throughout history, many martyrs have faced similar situations. What about you? In your Life Notebook record a situation where telling the truth resulted in, or could have resulted in, serious negative consequences for you. What did you do? Do any situations like this face you now?

## Peter Accused

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:56-62; and John 18:26-27.

While this horrible scene was going on inside the high priest's house, Peter was outside, warming himself by the fire again, just as he had during the first trial.

### Peter's Denials

1. John 18:18 – "I am not" – during trial before Annas
2. John 18:25 - during trial before Caiaphas
3. John 18:27 – during trial before Caiaphas

## QUESTION 14

Please read Mark 14:29-31, 37-40. What do these verses tell us about possible weaknesses in Peter's character? Record your observations in your Life Notebook, and then relate them to a specific situation in your own life or in the life of someone you know.

After his final denial of his Savior, Peter was heartbroken and began to weep. Just after Peter's final denial, the Lord Jesus passed by and their eyes met. No words were spoken, yet a volume was communicated. In Peter's eyes were tears, guilt and conviction. But in Jesus' eyes were compassion, love, and acceptance. No matter how far we fall, there is always forgiveness.

## QUESTION 15

Please read Psalm 103:13-14; Hebrews 4:14-16; and 1 John 1:9-21. In your Life Notebook summarize how we are to think about God the Father and the Lord Jesus when we know we have failed. What is necessary to remedy the situation?

The Lord loved Peter even though Peter denied Him. He was on the way to the cross to die for him, and that love was what broke Peter's heart. He saw more clearly what kind of Master he had denied. It is not only our sins which can break our hearts, but it is also sight of the kind of Savior we have sinned against.

## Topic 4: The Third Trial—Before the Sanhedrin

Friday morning, April 3, AD 33

Having concluded their illegal nighttime proceedings, the Sanhedrin now met in a formal session “when day came” (Mt 27:1-2; Lk 22:66). In this trial, their intent was to legalize their enacted mockery. Earlier they met in the home of Caiaphas; now they meet in the official meeting hall of the Sanhedrin to confirm the verdict. This is the official ecclesiastical trial.

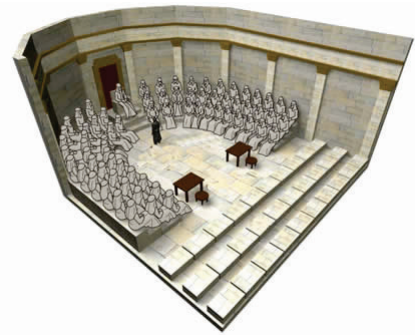
### The Verdict Confirmed

#### Assignment

- Read Matthew 27:1-2; Mark 15:1; and Luke 22:66; 23:1.

Normally the Sanhedrin did not assemble until after the morning sacrifice, which took place at 9:00 a.m. However, this morning was not normal and they likely convened around 5:00 a.m. At 9:00 a.m. today, Jesus' ultimate sacrifice would take place.

Jesus was led to their council (Lk 22:66) in their official chamber.



The Official Council Chamber of the Sanhedrin

#### QUESTION 16

What was the purpose of the meeting before the Sanhedrin?

- A. To discern whether or not Jesus had in fact committed blasphemy
- B. To kill Him
- C. To investigate His claims to be the “Son of Man”
- D. To provide a forum where witnesses could be called

#### QUESTION 17

Please read Daniel 7:13-14 and Luke 22:66-71. The first demand of the Sanhedrin was “If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly” (Lk 22:67). What did Jesus say in response? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. “You would not believe me if I told you.”
- B. “I am the King of Israel.”
- C. “I am the Son of Man.”
- D. “I am the Son of God.”

When they finally asked, “Are you the Son of God?” Christ once again answered truthfully at risk of His own death. He says, “You say that I am.” This is a Greek idiom for “Yes, I am.” Christ combined all three titles, Son of Man, Messiah, and Son of God. In the minds of the Sanhedrin, the last claim was blasphemy: He had claimed to be God.

They had all the witnesses they need: the seventy members of the Sanhedrin. But their work was not over. The Sanhedrin had no authority to execute anyone, so the death sentence had to come from Rome. They bound Jesus (Mk 15:1), and the whole assembly of the Sanhedrin rose to take Him to Pilate.

Jesus had earlier said,

Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the experts in the law. They will condemn him to death, and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged severely and crucified. Yet on the third day, he will be raised. (Mt 20:18–19)

The Jews had played their part, and the Gentiles would now play theirs.

## **The Traitor’s End**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 27:3-10 and Acts 1:16-19.

What was Judas doing while all this was going on? The Holy Spirit now gives us a final look at his life before continuing the account of the trials of Jesus.

The details are sketchy, but it appears that as the Sanhedrin was exiting the temple area (where the council chamber was located), with Jesus bound in their midst and on their way to see Pilate, Judas approached them.

### **QUESTION 18**

Please read Matthew 27:3-6. List four things that Judas did. Based on those things, do you think that Judas was saved? Why or why not? Keep the following Scriptures in mind and explain how one can repent but not be saved: Luke 22:22; Matthew 26:14; Acts 1:25; and John 17:12.

For a suggested answer to this question read the lesson note about Judas.

#### **Judas**

We are told that Judas “changed his mind” (repented). He made restitution, giving back the thirty pieces of silver; confessed that he was guilty; and then when the Pharisees would do nothing, he threw the coins into the temple.

So if Judas repented and confessed, was he therefore saved? No. Jesus specifically said that “woe” would come upon him (Lk 22:22) and that it would be better for him if he had never been born (Mt 26:14). Acts 1:25 says he went down “to his own place,” and Jesus called him the “son of perdition,” saying he was “lost” (Jn 17:12).

Judas’s fate illustrates that a person comes to salvation by faith alone in Christ alone, not by mere repentance. Judas felt bad about what he had done, but he never believed in Christ as the Messiah. When he admitted his guilt, he did it to the priests, not to Jesus. He never believed on Christ as God and redeemer of the world, or he would not have done what he did.

## **Topic 5: The Fourth Trial—First Trial Before Pilate**

### **Friday morning, April 3, AD 33**

Having convicted Christ in their own tribunal, the accusers proceeded early the next morning to the residence of Pilate to see if He could be convicted and executed before the Sabbath began at 6:00 that evening (Morrison, 48).

## Assignment

- Read Matthew 27:1-14; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-6; John 18:28-38; and 1 Timothy 6:13.
- Please read “Trial Before Pilate” before you answer the questions below.

### The Trial Before Pilate

The religious trials had ended with the charge of blasphemy, so we now turn to the three civil trials.

1. First trial before Pilate
2. Trial before Herod
3. Second trial before Pilate

Both religion and government rejected the One who established them.

#### Who Was Pilate?

Pilate was the governor of Judea from AD 26 to 36. He lived in the coastal town of Caesarea to the east, but on feast days he would go up to Jerusalem with a large band of soldiers to keep order.

At the time that Pilate was investigating Jesus, Caesar was investigating Pilate. Rumors of Jewish revolts and Pilate’s unusual cruelty had reached Rome. Whatever the verdict on Pilate’s leadership and character, however, he was a meditative man who said several memorable and prophetic things.

- “What is truth?”
- “Behold the man”
- “Behold your king”
- “What shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?”
- “This is Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.” (The superscription on the cross.)

Jesus would not even speak to Herod and had only a brief comment for Caiaphas; but with Pilate, He spent time in interaction.

Born in Seville, Spain, Pilate hated the Jews and was in turn hated by them. Although the details of his life are somewhat obscure, he seems to have been an adventurous, spirited man who spent his early years fighting on the frontier. He married Claudia Procula, the daughter of Julia and Tiberius and granddaughter of Augustus. She was a devout and reverent woman, and during Jesus’ trial sent a message to Pilate telling him to have nothing to do with this righteous man.

We know from Luke 13 that Pilate mingled the blood of certain Galileans with their sacrifices. He had a reputation for his corruption, robberies, executions, and his endless intolerable cruelties.

Pilate was a typical politician. His principles might sway him to make a certain decision, but he was as likely to follow his personal interests in another direction. He did not pursue what was right or his responsibility; instead, he asked what was in his interest and to his best benefit. Thus he sought to ride the fence. Eventually Caligula banished Pilate to Gaul (France). While there, Pilate committed suicide.

During his tenure, he revealed obtuse political sensitivities and pigheaded obstinacy. There is no evidence of the statesmanship or diplomacy demonstrated when Julius Caesar dealt with conquered peoples in the far reaches of the empire. Rather, Pilate was aggressive and brutal and ran roughshod over local sensitivities. Incidents of his rule reveal a ruthless autocrat. When Pilate decided soon after his appointment to bring Roman banners into the temple area in Jerusalem at night, he triggered protest he was completely incapable of smoothing over. He had no interest in negotiation

or listening to the sympathies of the Jews. When morning came and the Jews saw these standards in their holy place, they bitterly resented it. By the thousands they journeyed to Caesarea (his main residence) to protest.

Pilate became so weary with their objections that he ordered his men to surround the Jews and threaten them with instant death. But Pilate did not anticipate that the Jews would rather die than abandon their principles: Thousands of the rabbis lay down in the temple square and bared their necks. Unwilling to escalate to mass slaughter, Pilate relented and removed the standards.

On another occasion, when he needed money to build a waterway in Jerusalem, he raided the temple treasury. This fund was devoted only to religious purposes, and this total insensitivity and brutish dominance toward the Jews revealed Pilate's true character.

Yet at the trial of Christ, we see a completely different Pilate. Instead of the arrogant and overbearing tyrant, we see a man who seemed conciliatory. The Pilate of this trial did not want to touch this thing; his objective seemed to be to get Christ acquitted at all costs. He tried to shift the trial to Herod, he washed his hands three times and offered an alternative prisoner, Barabbas, to the murderous crowd. This behavior is completely unlike the Pilate of history, whom we know to have been quite indifferent to the feelings of the Jews.

(Adapted from Frank Morrison, *Who Moved the Stone?*, p. 48).

## **The Hypocrisy of the Jewish Leaders**

The Hall of Judgment was apparently the palace where the Roman governor or procurator of a province resided. In Jerusalem, the Roman procurators seem to have occupied the magnificent palace Herod the Great had built for himself when they came from Caesarea to Jerusalem to transact public business.

When the chief priests and Sanhedrin led Jesus to the hall that morning, probably between 6:00 and 7:00 a.m., they refused to enter because they would be ceremonially defiled and therefore unable to eat the Passover Meal (Jn 18:28). Notice how scrupulous these Jewish leaders were about the details of the Mosaic Law. The Gentiles were ceremonially unclean, and therefore the Jews reasoned their house was unclean. Therefore, they would not be defiled by entering the Hall of the Judgment where Pilate resided.

Why was a Gentile home considered unclean? One of the reasons for this was the manner in which the Romans disposed of dead bodies. According to the Old Testament, touching a corpse would render a person unclean for a period of time. But the Old Testament said nothing about the residence of the person being unclean. The Jews were anxious to avoid defilement because it was the feast of the Passover, and all the while they were plotting the murder of the Lord Jesus Christ. Recall what Jesus said of them:

Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You give a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, yet you neglect what is more important in the law – justice, mercy, and faithfulness! You should have done these things without neglecting the others. Blind guides! You strain out a gnat yet swallow a camel! (Mt 23:23–24).

A man in the Ancient Near East would pour wine through a cloth in order to catch any possible tiny gnats and not swallow them. Imagine the Pharisees scrupulously filtering out a gnat, yet in the process gulping down a camel! While pretending to worship God in their attention to detail, they proudly spit in His face.

Note the irony here. They wanted to avoid defilement in order that they might eat the Passover meal. But Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5:7 that Jesus Christ is our Passover Lamb! In the very act of supreme desecration in slaying the Passover Lamb, they did not want to enter the Hall of Judgment

lest they be defiled. They saw the outward significance of the Mosaic Law, but the inner reality was totally lost upon them.

## **The Interaction with Pilate**

When the priests brought Christ to the governor's residence early that morning, Pilate was already awake. After the preliminary showing of credentials, the prisoner was led into Pilate's quarters by a military escort. After a brief interval, during which some unrecorded dialogue must have occurred between Christ and Pilate, Pilate stepped out into the Court of the Stranger and asked the Jews, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" (Jn 18:29).

Now the chief priests had a problem. They could not say that Jesus deserved death because of blasphemy; they knew that Pilate would brush them off. This question riled the Jews because they already had an agreement, and Pilate was apparently attempting to retry the case. With insolence they responded, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you" (Jn 18:30).

In effect, they were saying, "Can't you be satisfied with the finding of our own courts, as we agreed last night? There is no need to reopen this case since we have already found that He is guilty."

But Pilate was not dumb. He mocked them, saying, "Take Him yourselves and pass judgment on him according to your own law!"

In a brief aside, John tells us that this happened to fulfill the word Jesus spoke indicating what kind of death He was going to die. Earlier Jesus had said, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (Jn 3:14). Jesus had prophesied that He would die by being lifted up. If the Jews had put Him to death they would have stoned Him, and He would not have been lifted. John saw prophetic fulfillment here.

Why were the Jews so set upon crucifying Jesus? The answer lies in the nature of crucifixion itself. From the Roman standpoint, it was a political and military punishment designed to promote the utmost humiliation. It was a public, prominent, naked display on high ground.

The Jews knew that if a man hung on a tree, He was accursed (Deut 21:23); he who was hanged was cursed by God. In the Roman Empire, death by crucifixion was reserved for dangerous criminals and the lowest classes.

From a divine standpoint, we see the incredible truth that God identified with the extremes of human wretchedness. His death on the cross was a scandal.

They wanted to humiliate Christ and the absurdity of His claims. How could He be the Messiah, cursed by God on a tree? How was it possible for the Son of God to die the most humiliating death? The Romans would feel the same way.

However, the Gospel writers saw something else. Yes, He was cursed, but He was cursed for our transgression, not His.

But he lifted up our illnesses, he carried our pain; even though we thought he was being punished, attacked by God, and afflicted for something he had done. He was wounded because of our rebellious deeds, crushed because of our sins; he endured punishment that made us well; because of his wounds we have been healed. (Isa 53:4-5)

By insisting on crucifixion, these hypocritical leaders were actually carrying out divine intent. So old Caiaphas the High Priest, who thought he sought to do his own will, was actually accomplishing the will of God.

It is interesting that in John 3:14, the word “lifted up” is the common word “exaltation.” Unknowingly, both the Jews and the Romans exalted Christ when they displayed His humiliation on that cross.

## **Attempts to Involve Rome in His Death**

The Jews now realized that they had a hopeless situation. Pilate and the Romans could not care less about Christ’s claim to be God, which the Jews considered blasphemy. Unless they could bring against Jesus charges punishable by Roman law, the hypocrites knew that Jesus would be set free. So they fabricated a lie with some allusions to partial truth: Jesus did say He was a king, but the falsehood was that He forbade paying taxes to Caesar.

Then the whole group of them rose up and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man subverting our nation, forbidding us to pay the tribute tax to Caesar and claiming that he himself is Christ, a king.” (Luke 23:1–2)

They made three charges:

1. He was subverting the nation.
2. He forbade paying taxes to Caesar.
3. He claimed to be a king.

The first two were blatant lies, but the third gave Pilate something to deal with. Treason against Rome was a different matter entirely. Now he had to act. Pilate went into the Hall to have conversation with Jesus. “Are you the king of the Jews?” he asked (Jn 18:33).

“Jesus replied, ‘Are you saying this on your own initiative, or have others told you about me?’” (Jn 18:34).

It must have hurt Jesus deeply to have Pilate reply that it was the Jews, His own people, and their religious leaders who had accused Him. In his prologue, John had sounded this sad theme: “He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him” (Jn 1:11).

Jesus explained to Pilate that His kingdom is not of this world, and therefore Rome had no need to fear a political insurrection (Jn 18:36).

He was not a zealot or a revolutionary guerrilla leader. His kingdom is not like that. It is not of this world; it is from another place, that is, heaven. Therefore it comes not by rebellion but by submission to God. Its source was not from men’s acts of violence but from a new birth from heaven which transferred a person out of Satan’s kingdom into God’s kingdom (cf. Col 1:13; Jn 3:3). (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983, p. 337).

Upon hearing Jesus’ reply, Pilate asked, “So you are a king?” (Jn 18:37).

Jesus responded, appealing directly to Pilate’s conscience (Jn 18:37). No doubt the Savior of men was fishing for Pilate, hoping to raise interest within his heart. “Pilate, if you really love the truth then you must respond to Me.” The tables were being turned. Our Lord, under the scrutiny of a judge, was judging the judge.

But Pilate rejected this appeal. “What is truth?” he asked. We can’t be sure of Pilate’s intent in asking this question. Was it a desire for something that no one could tell him? Was it an expression of cynicism toward the Greeks’ failed quest for truth? Was it an expression of early postmodernism, saying that there is no truth? Was it only an indifference to anything related to abstract thought? One thing is certain—he was not interested in the answer (Jn 18:18).

He went back to the Jews. “I find no guilt in Him.”

The trial was over. To the charge of treason against Rome, the verdict was “Not guilty.” This incited the Jews all the more (Lk 23:5). Mark tells us that the chief priests accused Him of many things (Mk 15:3); yet from this point on, Jesus remained silent. He did not even answer the charges. Frustrated, Pilate asked Him, “Don’t you know I have the power to crucify you?” Again Jesus said nothing (Mk 15:4-5).

Pilate would hear no more truth from the One who is Truth. He had had his chance.

But Pilate was now on the horns of a dilemma. Because of the charge of treason, he feared Rome if he ignored the situation; but because Jesus was innocent, Pilate did not want to be the agent of His crucifixion. Additionally, his wife had sent him a message warning him to have nothing to do with this righteous man. He needed a way out.

When he heard that Jesus was a Galilean, he saw his chance (Lk 23:5–7). Galilee was Herod’s jurisdiction. He would send Jesus to Herod.

Note: John does not mention the trial before Herod. He presents both trials before Pilate as a seamless narrative. However, it is clear from Luke’s account (Lk 23:1-25) that the interview with Herod took place between John 18:38 and John 18:39.

Now the gospel writers direct our attention to the three civil trials of Christ. First, Pilate tried Him and pronounced Him innocent. Pilate then sent Him to Herod, who made a mockery of the process, once again signifying Christ’s innocence. Finally, Herod sent Him back to Pilate for the third civil trial. It was there that the fateful decision to crucify the Son of God was finally made.

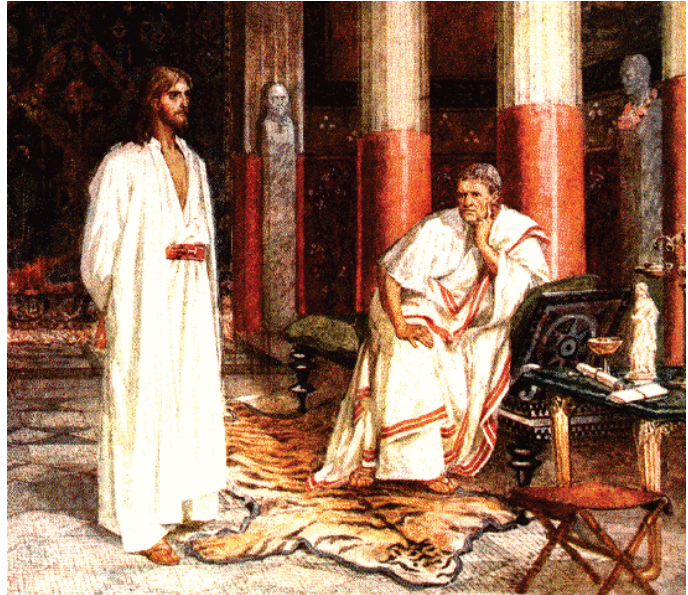
When did this take place? The only time indicator given in the Gospels is Pilate’s statement, “Behold your king,” which John says occurred “about the sixth hour” (Jn 19:14). Since Roman time was reckoned from midnight, this places the trial sometime after 6:00 a.m.



## QUESTION 19

Why did the Sanhedrin take Jesus to Pilate instead of just executing Him themselves? *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. They feared a public uprising.
- B. If the Jews executed Him it would be by stoning, which they did not prefer.
- C. It was illegal for them to execute Him.
- D. They wanted Him to die the most humiliating death possible: crucifixion.



## QUESTION 20

As explained in “The Trial Before Pilate” (placed earlier in this lesson), the Pharisees correctly understood that Jesus was cursed by God; and the sign of it was that He was hung on a tree. *True or False?*

## QUESTION 21

Can you think of any illustrations in your own life or church experience where either you or someone else strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel? What was the gnat and what was the camel?

## QUESTION 22

Please read Matthew 19:28 and Acts 1:6. According to “The Trial Before Pilate” (placed earlier in the lesson), when Jesus claimed that His kingdom was not of this world, what did He mean? *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men.
- B. His kingdom has no political implications.
- C. His kingdom source and authority does not come from men.
- D. His kingdom will not be established by military or political means.

## Topic 6: The Fifth Trial—Before Herod

**Friday Morning, April 3, AD 33**

### Assignment

- Read Luke 22:4-12 and John 18:38.

Jesus called Herod Antipas “that fox.” He was the seventh and youngest son of Herod the Great, who rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem. After Herod the Great’s death in 4 BC, Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea for 43 years (4 BC – AD 39).

He was a brutal tyrant, murdering three thousand Jews at the beginning of his reign. Herodias, his brother's wife, divorced her husband in order to marry Antipas. When John the Baptist protested, Antipas had him imprisoned and ultimately beheaded (Mt 14:1-12; Mk 6:14-29; Lk 9:7-9).

Herod was thrilled to see Jesus. He had heard much of Him and hoped that Christ would demonstrate His powers as entertainment. He questioned Jesus at some length, but there was no response (Lk 23:9). Jesus' silence was another fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7-8 and demonstrated His total self-control and lack of fear.

In bored frustration, Herod finally gave up, even after the Jews present began heaping accusations on Jesus. Herod mocked Jesus, clothed him with a royal robe of some sort, and returned Him to Pilate.

### **QUESTION 23**

There are a number of important lessons for us in these few verses. Reflect on Herod's fascination with the sensational and also on Jesus' inner disposition and response as He faced false accusers, a mocking king, and the certainty of eventual death. Please read 1 Peter 2:18-25. We all face both of these situations. Record your thoughts about this in your Life Notebook.

## **Topic 7: Matching Events**

### **QUESTION 24**

To help you memorize these events, we have compiled a list of important events in the life of Christ. Take a moment and review events 37, 39, 45, 53, 54, 55, and 56 in the Matching Events chart found in the appendix. Cover the event descriptions and see if you can identify the associated Scriptures.

## Lesson 10 Self Check

### QUESTION 1

A major reason that the Lord Jesus sweated drops of blood was that He needed to shed His blood for our sins. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 2

Jesus was completely sinless. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 3

Which of the following describes Jesus' prayer in the garden?

- A. Heard and answered at a different time and in a different way
- B. Not heard by God
- C. Ignored by God
- D. Answered immediately by God

### QUESTION 4

According to "The Betrayal," which one of the following is one of the possible reasons the temple guards fell back on the ground?

- A. They fell down to worship Him.
- B. A supernatural force emanated from Jesus, knocking them over.
- C. They were "slain in the Spirit."
- D. They were staggered by His self-disclosure as Yahweh.

### QUESTION 5

### QUESTION 6 *TRUE OR FALSE?*

What was the true purpose of the trial before the Sanhedrin?

- A. To discern whether or not Jesus had in fact committed blasphemy
- B. To kill Him
- C. To investigate His claims to be the "Son of Man"
- D. To call witnesses in the traditional forum

### QUESTION 7

Which one of the following is not a reason we can tell that Judas was not saved, even though he repented of his betrayal?

- A. Jesus said that he was forgiven.
- B. Jesus said that woe would come on him.
- C. Jesus said that he was the son of perdition.
- D. Jesus said that it was better if he had never been born.

### **QUESTION 8**

What was the main reason that the Sanhedrin took Jesus to Pilate instead of just executing Him themselves?

- A. They feared a public uprising.
- B. If the Jews executed him it would be by hanging.
- C. Although it was legal for them execute him, they preferred the Romans do it.
- D. They wanted him to die the most humiliating death possible, crucifixion.

### **QUESTION 9**

The Pharisees correctly understood that Jesus was cursed by God, and which of the following happened as a result?

- A. He was put on trial before the authorities.
- B. He was hung on a tree.
- C. He was rejected by the people.
- D. He was betrayed by a friend.

### **QUESTION 10**

According to the article on you read on the trial before Pilate, when Jesus claimed that His kingdom was not of this world, what did He mean? *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. His kingdom is a spiritual one in the hearts of men.
- B. His kingdom has no political implications.
- C. His kingdom source and authority do not come from men.
- D. His kingdom will not be established by military or political means.

## Lesson 10 Answers to Questions

**QUESTION 1:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 2:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 3:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 4**

- A. He was disappointed that he was not going to be reigning in the kingdom
- C. He was a thief and wanted monetary compensation for the sacrifices he had made.

**QUESTION 5**

- D. They were staggered by His self-disclosure as Yahweh.

**QUESTION 6:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 7:** False [That is why he asked, (1) “How many disciples do you have?” and (2) “What is your teaching?” He hoped that Jesus would commit Himself to saying something that would give Annas a legal basis to convict Him.]

**QUESTION 8:** False

**QUESTION 9:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 10**

- D. Jesus claimed that the temple He would rebuild was His body.

**QUESTION 11:** True [Christ was now forced to give an answer He knew would lead to His death.]

**QUESTION 12**

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Event</i>
Matthew 26:67	They spit in His face
Leviticus 21:10	Caiaphas broke the Law of Moses
Psalms 110:1	Christ claimed to be Messiah (Mt 26:64)
Matthew 26:67	They beat Him
Matthew 26:67-68	They mocked Him
Mark 14:61	Jesus made no answer Isa 53:7

**QUESTION 13:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 14:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 15:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 16**

- B. To kill Him

**QUESTION 17**

- A. “You would not believe me if I told you.”
- C. “I am the Son of Man.”
- D. “I am the Son of God.”

**QUESTION 18:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 19**

- B. If the Jews executed Him it would be by stoning, which they did not prefer.
- C. It was illegal for them to execute Him.
- D. They wanted Him to die the most humiliating death possible: crucifixion.  
[Jesus had said that “if the Son of Man is lifted up, he will draw all men unto himself” (Jn 12:32). John tells us Jesus was predicting how He would die, that He would be “lifted up.” Had the Jews executed Him, the prescribed penalty would have been stoning, and He would not have been “lifted up.” They did not have the legal authority to crucify anyone, and that is how they wanted Him to die. It was the most humiliating death, and would prove He could not be the Son of God. How is it possible, they reasoned, that the King of Israel, the Son of God, the true Messiah, could ever be crucified on a cross?]

**QUESTION 20:** True. [Jesus was cursed by God, but not for His own sin. Instead, He was cursed for us (Gal 3:13; Isa 53:4-5).]

**QUESTION 21:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 22**

C. His kingdom source and authority does not come from men.

D. His kingdom will not be established by military or political means.

[Because Jesus elsewhere claimed that one day He would set up an earthly Messianic kingdom (Mt 19:28; Acts 1:6), His meaning cannot be that His kingdom is heavenly in location. Instead He means that it is heavenly in its nature and source of authority.]

**QUESTION 23:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 24:** *Your answer*

## Lesson 10 Self Check Answers

**QUESTION 1:** False

**QUESTION 2:** True

**QUESTION 3**

A. Heard and answered at a different time and in a different way

**QUESTION 4**

D. They were staggered by His self-disclosure as Yahweh.

**QUESTION 5:** False

**QUESTION 6 TRUE OR FALSE?**

B. To kill Him

**QUESTION 7**

A. Jesus said that he was forgiven.

**QUESTION 8**

D. They wanted him to die the most humiliating death possible, crucifixion.

**QUESTION 9**

B. He was hung on a tree.

**QUESTION 10**

C. His kingdom source and authority do not come from men.

D. His kingdom will not be established by military or political means.

# Lesson 11: The Crucifixion and Burial

---

In the previous lesson, we studied the first five of the six illegal, unjust trials the Lord Jesus experienced. We now turn to the seventh and final trial, in which He appeared before Pilate a second time. Finally our Lord is convicted and sentenced to crucifixion.

Even though Pilate had already acquitted Christ four times, our Lord appeared before him once again. As the mob screamed “Crucify Him!” the cowardly Pilate washed his hands of the whole affair.

In Topic 1, we will see Christ finally sentenced to die. The crowd could have Jesus released, but they choose to kill Him and release the murderer Barabbas instead. As a result, the soul of their nation dies.

In Topic 2, we will follow the exhausted steps of our Lord to Calvary. On the way, a man named Simon from Cyrene is requisitioned by the Roman soldiers to carry the cross of Christ. In the midst of His own pain and suffering, Jesus’ last words still center on His ultimate goals and on the needs of others.

In Topic 3, God testifies the dawn of a new era through three supernatural wonders at Christ’s death: darkness over Jerusalem, the ripping of the veil in the temple, and the resuscitation of a number of Old Testament saints right after Christ’s resurrection.

Finally, in Topic 4 we will study the death and burial of Christ, including the historical evidence that easily refutes the false claims that neither of these actually happened.

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: The Sixth Trial

Crucify Him!

Sentenced to Die

Topic 2: Golgotha

The Place Called Golgotha

On the Cross

It is Finished

Topic 3: Awesome Wonders

Topic 4: Burial

The Tomb

The Tomb is Sealed

Topic 5: Matching Events

## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Examine Christ’s second trial before Pilate and how it led to His crucifixion
- Consider in detail Jesus’ final seven words from the cross and apply the meaning of these words to our own lives



- Study the three cosmic wonders God gave at the time of his Son’s death to indicate that something of cosmic and eternal significance had occurred
- Refute the claims that Jesus neither died nor was buried

## Topic 1: The Sixth Trial

### Friday, April 3, AD 33

The last trial of Christ before Pilate had ended in an acquittal. In this topic we will consider the second and final time that He appeared before the Roman governor of Judea.

All four gospels join their perspectives on this final trial before Pilate, but only Luke gives us the true sequence of the two trials before Pilate with the trial before Herod in between.

Early Friday morning, the city was awakening. Every year at Passover, Pilate released one prisoner at the people’s request, and already the crowd was gathering to see who it would be.

The entire Sanhedrin was also now gathered with one goal in mind: securing for Jesus the death penalty.

Pilate obviously hoped that Herod would find Jesus innocent and save him the trouble of dealing with the crowd. Jesus had been tried and acquitted; legally, He should be released at once. However, Herod dismissed the charges and sent Jesus back to Pilate. Now Pilate had a problem once again: The gathering mob before him was demanding the death of a man he believed was innocent.

## Crucify Him!

### Assignment

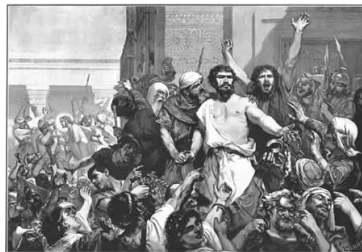
- Read Matthew 27:15-23; Mark 15:6; Luke 23:13-33; and John 18:39-19:16.

We read in Mark 15:6-8 that at the feast of the Passover, it was Pilate’s custom to release one prisoner by popular demand. This year’s choices: Jesus, or an insurrectionist named Barabbas, who was sentenced to crucifixion like Christ.

#### Barabbas

“Barabbas” means “Son of Abba.” His full name was apparently Jesus Barabbas, “Jesus the son of a father.” How ironic that Jesus the Son of God took the place of Jesus “the son of a father.” Barabbas was a notorious rebel against Rome; not only a revolutionary (Jn 18:40), but an insurrectionist and a murderer (Lk 23:19). The penalty for these crimes was crucifixion. At the time of Jesus’ trial, a cross was being prepared for this man and two other criminals. Being the principal well-known criminal, Barabbas was intended for the center cross (Mt 27:16).

It was not an accident that at the trial of Christ, Barabbas was set free. He was a picture of the sinner released because another, who was innocent, was taking his punishment and death on the cross in his place.



“Give us Barabbas!”

## QUESTION 1

Reflect for a moment on Barabbas as an illustration of all men's relationship to the atonement of Christ. Match the statement about Barabbas with the relevant Scripture.

<i>Barabbas</i>	<i>Scripture</i>
He was under the condemnation of the Law.	Revelation 21:6; Ephesians 2:8-9
He knew Jesus was a substitute.	John 1:12-13
He knew he had done nothing to merit release.	Romans 5:6-8
All he had to do was accept the pardon	Galatians 2:20

## QUESTION 2

Please read Matthew 27:23; Luke 23:14-15; John 18:38; 19:4. How many times did Pilate say Jesus was innocent?

## Sentenced to Die

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 27:23-31; Mark 15:15-20; Luke 23:23-25; and John 19:1-16.

The crowds shouted “Crucify Him!” Since Pilate had already concluded that Jesus was innocent by Roman law, he should have released Jesus immediately. But cowardly Pilate hoped to appease the bloodthirsty, riotous crowd by having Jesus scourged and mocked instead.

#### Mocked

In a total breach of military discipline, the soldiers gathered to have a little sport with Jesus (Mk 15:16). They saluted Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and spitting on Him as they fell to their knees in mock worship. They performed a mock royal coronation, pressing a crown of thorns down upon His head and causing blood to drip down His face. They found an old military cloak of purple for a robe. They then gave Him a mock scepter, likely one of the bamboo-like reeds that grow abundantly along the Jordan, often twenty feet high. They then hit Jesus on the head, forcing the thorny spikes downward and piercing Him further.

#### Scourged

The scourging of Christ took place within Pilate's palace and was not seen by the people. The scourge itself was several leather thongs affixed to a handle, weighted on one end with jagged pieces of bone or metal. This would tear the flesh, making each blow even more painful.

The victim was stripped and his hands tied to a post, rendering him defenseless as the scourging began. Normally, the blows were administered only to the back, but Christ's entire body was beaten. According to Jewish law, a man could receive no more than forty lashes (Deut 25:3). But the Romans had no such limitations. The fact that later on Jesus was unable to carry His cross suggests His flogging was particularly severe. Pilate likely hoped this would satisfy the Sanhedrin's thirst for blood so he could then let Jesus go.

### **QUESTION 3**

In your Life Notebook summarize your reading about all the suffering inflicted upon Jesus and what it reveals about the hearts of men (Jer 17:9). Then write out a prayer of thankfulness to Jesus for His love for you and His willingness to suffer on your behalf.

### **QUESTION 4**

Please read Matthew 26:62-62; 27:12-14; Luke 23:9; and John 19:9. What was the characteristic response of Christ to the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, and before Pilate at the second trial? Why did He respond this way? Open your Life Notebook and record your thoughts. Then read 1 Peter 2:22-25. From these verses, list the four steps we are to follow when abused. Think of specific situations in your marriage, in your job, with friends, or with your children.

After answering this question, check the Lesson Notes section at the end of this lesson for possible answer suggestions.

### **QUESTION 5**

Which prophecies were fulfilled in Christ's final trial before Pilate?

- A. Psalm 22:14
- B. Isaiah 52:13-15
- C. Zechariah 11:12-14
- D. Isaiah 53:7

As Pilate continued to say, "I find no fault in Him," the Jews became more and more upset. Finally they hurled an accusation that caused Pilate to pause in fear: "He claimed to be the Son of God!"

The Jews were unrelenting. Finally, in a basin of water, Pilate publicly washed his hands of the whole affair and proclaimed himself innocent of the blood of Christ. At this, the Jews declared, "Let His blood be on us and upon our children" (Mt 27:25).

This was the beginning of the death of the nation of Israel. This remorseless act marked the death of the chosen nation's soul; the Roman invasion and destruction of the city thirty-seven years later would mark the death of its body as well.

## **Topic 2: Golgotha**

### **Friday, April 3, AD 33**

The mockery of the six trials was now over. We now turn to the solemn events that followed and led to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pilate's tribunal was closed, and the palace was deserted by the multitudes. The procession of death began.

## The Place Called Golgotha



### Assignment

- Read Matthew 27:32-38; Mark 15:21-28; Luke 23:26-34; and John 19:17-24; 23:38.
- Please read the article “The Crucifixion of Christ.” Note in particular the discussion of Simon of Cyrene.

### The Crucifixion of Christ

#### The Road to Calvary

Today, executions are usually carried out in prison. But the Romans preferred a public display, and the crowds enjoyed it. In many places people sentenced to death are allowed days or weeks to prepare for eternity. And in many countries, like the United States, there are opportunities for appeal after appeal so that the sentence may not be carried out for many years. Even in ancient Rome, it was customary to grant the condemned ten days before they faced their end. But Jesus was immediately rushed off to crucifixion on a hill called Golgotha. Today, a church is built on the probable site of this hill.

Crucifixion was intended to impose the greatest possible indignity upon the victim. Stripped naked and on public display as a criminal, he was lifted up before the gaping eyes of horrified passersby.

One special indignity was that the victim was required to carry his own cross. In many pictures of this scene, the cross is portrayed to have been very large, but in reality it was about the height of the victim. However, it was very heavy. Jesus had been awake all night and endured such horrendous scourging that His exhaustion rendered Him unable to carry this weighty burden.

The soldiers lay hold of a bystander named Simon of Cyrene. Cyrene was an important coastal city of North Africa, in modern day Libya, that had a large Jewish colony (Acts 2:10). He was either an immigrant living near Jerusalem or, more likely, a pilgrim who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. No doubt he had business of his own, perhaps family to see, but he was called out to carry the cross on Jesus’ behalf. We may surmise that he was revolted to be in touch with the cross, which made him ceremonially unclean. Like the hangman’s noose, it was an instrument of death, no one wanted to touch. As he walked along with Jesus and the robbers, it would have appeared that he too was on his way to execution, and he must have felt some of the shame that was directed at Jesus.

We are told that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus. Only Mark mentions Simon’s sons (Mk 15:21), suggesting that they were disciples known to his readers in Rome. Paul called Rufus a “choice man in the Lord” (Rom 16:13). This of course, indicates that Simon and his household became believers in Christ. He is listed as a prominent Christian in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1). Simon was undoubtedly impressed with the dignity and character of Christ as he carried that cross for Him.

Simon’s trek to Calvary was bitter and shame filled. Yet think about how glorious that same journey appeared to him many years later. It was, no doubt, the highlight of his life. Many of us today, knowing as we do who Jesus really is, would have loved to have been the one privileged to minister to Him in that way. A day is coming when all of us will be rewarded for every cup of water we give to Jesus when we minister to the needy (Mt 25:34-41).

Finally, notice the amazing sovereignty of God in all of this. Had Simon come to Jerusalem just one hour earlier or later, he would not have been there at that specific time. What a coincidence that he just happened to be a passerby at the precise time that Jesus sank to His knees and needed assistance. For Simon this encounter must have seemed like an interruption, an annoyance, and a humiliation; but it turned out to be the gateway to a new life. Simon's life changed, and he became a leader in the new Christian movement. Chance meetings, even those that seem very negative, can be used by God to alter the outcomes of our lives.

## QUESTION 6

There are three practical and applicable passages of Scripture which will help your reflections on the experience of Simon recorded in the article. Read Matthew 16:24-26; 25:34-41; and Hebrews 12:1-13. Take a moment to think on these things, and record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

## On the Cross

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 27:39-44; Mark 15:29-32; Luke 23:35-37; 23:39-44; and John 19:25-27.
- Please read "The First Word from the Cross." in James Stalker's *The Trials and Death of Jesus Christ*.

This topic will consider specifically our Lord's seven last words before He died. We will use James Stalker's profound meditations on this theme as the basis for our study. We provide an edited and abbreviated version for your study here.

The last words of a great man often significantly reveal his heart, his values, and his life purpose. The last seven words of Christ display for us His priorities and the supreme dignity of His character.

## The Seven Words From the Cross

### The First Word From the Cross

But Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."  
(Lk 23:34)

#### "Father"

When crucified individuals spoke from their crosses, their words usually wildly expressed pain, uselessly pled for release, cursed God, or cursed those who had inflicted their sufferings. But when Jesus had recovered from the initial shock of the driving of the nails into His hands and feet, His first word was a prayer: the word "Father."

When righteousness is trampled underfoot and wrong is triumphant, faith is tempted to ask if there is really a loving and wise God seated on the throne of the universe, or if life is instead decided by chance. Great saints have been driven, by the pressure of pain and disappointment, to desperately and disrespectfully challenge God's righteousness. Though He was bleeding, surrounded by darkness and a raging pack of wolf-like enemies, Jesus' faith was unshaken. He was sinking into churning abysses of pain and desertion, but He still said "Father."

Could good possibly rise out of such an abyss of wrong? The salvation of the world, the noblest event of history, came out of it. This is the supreme lesson to God's children never to despair. All may be dark, everything may seem to be going to ruins, and evil may seem to be enthroned on the seat of God; yet God lives and is in control. There are no accidents. He sits above the tumult of the present, and He will bring forth the dawn from the womb of the darkness.

## **"Forgive them"**

Long ago, Jesus had taught, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Mt 5:44). And He practiced what He taught; He is the one teacher whose teachings and actions completely coincide. His doctrine often seemed too high for this world, but He proved that it can be realized on earth when He prayed, despite the terrible torture and mockery, "Father, forgive them."

Revenge is one of the sweetest satisfactions to our natural hearts. But all Jesus' life, He was revealing God, and in the short time He had remaining He would reveal God's highest nature. On the cross, divine character flamed in His humanity like the fire in the burning bush and was heard aloud when He prayed, "Father, forgive them." It told them all that God is love.

## **"For they know not what they do."**

Jesus backed up His prayer for the forgiveness of His enemies with the argument that they did not know what they were doing. This allows us to see further still into the depths of His love. Instead of seeing His tormentors in the worst possible light, as injured people are most likely to do, when His pain was the worst Jesus still sought excuses for their offenses against Him.

Was it true? Could it truly be said of all of them that they did not know what they were doing? We must not limit divine mercy. In some measure, every sinner does not know what he is doing. Jesus knew that they needed forgiveness, indicating that they were truly guilty. And He understood the consequences of their actions better than they did—His fear for their wellbeing made Him forget His own sufferings and fling Himself between them and their fate.

Were the crucifiers of Jesus really forgiven? How could God forgive them if they did not cooperate, seeking forgiveness themselves?

But prayer can also act reflexively on the spirit of the person who offers it, calming, sweetening, and invigorating. By praying that His enemies might be forgiven, Jesus was enabled to drive back the spirits of anger and revenge that tried to force their way into His soul. It is impossible to forgive without a delicious sense of deliverance and peace in the forgiving heart.

## **QUESTION 7**

What five words describe a father? Spend time with the Lord asking Him to reveal to you what His Fatherhood means to you. The last words of Christ included words of forgiveness. Is there someone you need to forgive? Record your answers to these questions in your Life Notebook.

## **The Second Word From the Cross**

And Jesus said to him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." (Lk 23:43)

The people had called Him a friend of tax collectors and sinners, and now they illustrated this idea when they crucified Him between two thieves. Jesus came to the world to identify Himself with sinners; their cause was His, and His fate was entwined with theirs. The behavior of the two between whom He hung that day prefigured what has been happening every day since: Some sinners believe on Him and are saved, while others do not, hearing instead the message of death.

One of the criminals who was hanging there railed at him, saying, "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Don't you fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we rightly so, for we are getting what we deserve for what we did, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom." (Lk 23:39-42)

One thief repented; the other did not. What a base expression of wickedness to be involved, so close to death, in hurling mocking, angry words at a fellow sufferer! Of course, the intense pain made crucified people likely to do or say anything; lashing out violently would help them momentarily forget their agony. They were reduced to the condition of tortured animals that will bite at anything which approaches them. This was the state of the unrepentant thief.

But the other drew back from his companion with horror, and for the first time he saw how vile a wretch he was. This was brought home to him by the patience and peace of Jesus.

We set no limits to the invitation of the Savior, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out" (Jn 6:37). However late a sinner may be in coming, let him come.

The robber was thinking of some date far off when Christ might intervene in his behalf, but Christ says, "Today." This was a promise that as soon as death launched him out of time into eternity, Christ would be waiting there to receive him.

The thief spoke to Him as to a King and prayed to Him as to God. And Jesus accepted the worship; He spoke of paradise as a familiar place. This great sinner laid on Christ the weight of his soul, his sins, and his eternity; and Christ accepted the burden. "Today you will be with Me." All heaven is in those two last words.

## QUESTION 8

Christ's next word from the cross was addressed to one of the two thieves who were being crucified with Him. Think for a moment about why this man repented and believed on Christ. Read 2 Peter 3:1 as you consider your answer and record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

### The Third Word From the Cross

So when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing there, he said to his mother, "Woman, look, here is your son!" He then said to his disciple, "Look, here is your mother!" From that very time the disciple took her into his own home." (Jn 19:26–27)

As Jesus' pained gaze drifted over the multitude, His eyes lighted on His mother, standing at the foot of the cross.

When Mary had carried her infant into the temple as a young mother, the prophet Simeon had foretold that a sword would pierce through her own soul also (Lk 2:33-35). Perhaps she had often wondered what this mysterious prediction might mean. But now she knew, for the sword was piercing her, stab after stab. A mother naturally expects her son to lay *her* head in the grave; and far worse, she never wants to helplessly watch Him die the death of a criminal.

But there was worse still—the sword cut deeper. Before His birth the angel had promised her that Jesus would be great, a ruler from David's throne forever on an unending throne (Lk 1:30-33). This promise was fading before her eyes, along with the life of the One she had raised and watched through obscurity and persecution. He was dying; and the greatness, the glory, and the kingdom had never come.

The cross was the only road to a throne that was far loftier than any Mary had ever imagined for her Son. One day, Mary was to understand this too; but meantime the sword had pierced very deep.

In spite of His own greatness, work, and suffering on this cross, Jesus remained Mary's Son and demonstrated His undying affection. To His mother He said, "Woman, behold thy son," indicating John with His eyes; and to the disciple He said, "Behold thy mother." It was a plain, almost legal direction, overflowing with love to both Mary and John.

From the pulpit of His cross, Jesus preached to all ages a sermon on the fifth commandment: Honor your father and mother. Even on the cross, where He was bearing the sin of the world, He was thinking of the comfort of His widowed mother. Let the needy and the deserted take courage from this, and cast all their care upon Him, for He cares for them.

Next our Lord turns His attention to His widowed mother, Mary.

## QUESTION 9

Read “The Third Word on the Cross” (placed earlier in the lesson) and then reflect on your relationship with your parents. Scripture says “honor your father and mother” (Eph 6:1-2). What does it look like in your culture to fulfill that command? Record your answer in your Life Notebook.

## It Is Finished

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 27:45-50; Mark 15:33-37; Luke 23:44-45; 23:46; and John 19:28-30
- Please read “The Fourth Word on the Cross.” You will read the sections on the fifth, sixth, and seventh words later in this topic.

### The Fourth Word from the Cross

Around three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mk 15:34.)

The Seven Words from the Cross may be divided into two groups. In the first three of Christ’s final words from the cross—the prayer for His crucifiers, the word to the penitent thief, and the directions about His mother—our Lord was dealing with the interests of others. In the last four, He was absorbed in His own concerns. This division is natural. Many dying men, after arranging their affairs and saying their farewells, turn their faces to the wall to encounter death alone with God.

A long interval elapsed. From the sixth hour to the ninth, Jesus was silent and there was darkness over all the land. Perhaps this weird phenomenon hushed the noises round the cross to some degree.

Those three hours were not spent in intimate communion with his Father. The very opposite of this was true. All of His life Jesus had never found Himself forsaken. The members of His own household and hometown rejected Him, and ultimately the nation at large followed the same course. At last, in the middle of His crisis, one of His nearest followers betrayed Him and the rest fled. But through these keen disappointments, He had always been able to turn away from them and cast Himself with confidence on God.

The deepest question of all is whether Jesus’ bodily weakness and perhaps a temporary blurring of inward vision, led to only a sense of being abandoned, or if God had actually forsaken Him.

It is both, but the latter is in the forefront. Jesus was crushed with sin’s utmost hideous brutality—crushed to death. Luther and Calvin allowed themselves to say that our Lord endured the torments of the damned. The heavenly Father now regarded His Son as the greatest sinner beneath the sun, subjecting Him to the whole weight of His wrath.

Isaiah tells us,

But he lifted up our illnesses, he carried our pain; even though we thought he was being punished, attacked by God, and afflicted for something he had done. He was



wounded because of our rebellious deeds, crushed because of our sins; he endured punishment that made us well; because of his wounds we have been healed.” (Isa 53:4-5)

And Paul explains,

God made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we would become the righteousness of God.” (2 Cor 5:21)

Feeling forsaken of God, He rushed into the arms of God; and these arms closed round Him in loving protection. As the brooding darkness disappeared from the land at the ninth hour, His mind also emerged from eclipse. His last words were uttered with His usual serenity.

The Seven Words from the Cross may be divided into two groups. In the first three—namely, the prayer for His crucifiers, the word to the penitent thief, and the directions about His mother—our Lord was dealing with the interests of others; in the last four, to which we now pass, He was absorbed in His own concerns. This division is natural. Many a dying man, after arranging his affairs and saying his farewells, turns his face to the wall, to encounter death and be alone with God. It was highly characteristic of Jesus, however, before turning to His own things, first to mind the things of others. (James Stalker, *The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*)

## QUESTION 10

The article concerning “The Fourth Word on the Cross” (placed earlier in the lesson) leads us into question of the problem of the presence of evil and suffering in a world ruled by a holy, loving, and omniscient God. What insight does this fourth word give us into this issue of pain and suffering? This cry also tells us that, like Job, Moses, and the psalmist, we can be honest with God about our doubts and feelings. How is your relationship with God right now? Are you asking “Why?” Write out a prayer to God that expresses your honest feelings in your Life Notebook.

### The Fifth Word from the Cross

After this Jesus, realizing that by this time everything was completed, said (in order to fulfill the scripture), “I am thirsty!” (Jn 19:28)

What Scripture was fulfilled? No doubt Psalm 22:15 was in John’s mind. There upon the cross, with His hands and feet pierced the dying Messiah of Israel exclaimed His extreme, agonizing thirst—His only cry of physical pain on the cross. Otherwise He preserved absolute self-control. He was absorbed either in caring for others or in prayer to God.

Remember the great word of the Son of God,

“For I tell you the truth, whoever gives you a cup of water because you bear Christ’s name will never lose his reward.”}i} (Mk 9:41)

Do you wish to draw even nearer to Christ and hold the cup, not only to His members, but also to His own very lips? This is possible too. Jesus still says, “I thirst.” He thirsts for love. He thirsts for prayer. He thirsts for service. He thirsts for holiness. Whenever the heart of a human being turns to Him with genuine penitence, affection or consecration, the Savior’s thirst is satisfied.

Having completed His life work and His suffering, the Savior asked for a drink. The fifth word from the cross was “I am thirsty.”

## QUESTION 11

After reading the article on “The Fifth Word on the Cross” (placed earlier in the lesson), open your Life Notebook once again. Based upon what you read, describe two ways in which you could reach out to thirsty people in your world. Also write how you could satisfy the Savior’s thirst this week.

### The Sixth Word from the Cross

When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said, “It is completed!” (Jn 19:30)

Both the suffering of our Lord and His work were finishing together; and it is natural to suppose that He was referring to both in this cry of victory. Suffering and work are the two sides of every life, both prominent in the life of Christ. He had both a great work to accomplish and He suffered greatly in the process of achieving it. The sixth word was first a worker's cry of achievement; and, secondly, a sufferer's cry of relief. Perhaps one of His uppermost thoughts, when He said "It is finished," was that all that had been foretold about Him in the ancient Scriptures had been fulfilled.

The Greek word is *tetelestai*. While it basically means “to bring to completion,” it has an economic meaning as well. When an invoice had been paid, the word “*tetelestai*” was written across it. It meant “paid in full.” How appropriate, for Christ had just “paid in full” the penalty our sin demanded. We stand acquitted, justified, before the bar of justice. Our sin has been forgiven and we are bid to come boldly to the throne of grace with a confidence that we are loved, accepted, and that our eternal destiny is secure.

Those standing near the cross heard Jesus exclaim that He had completed the work which the Father had sent Him to do. He said, “It is finished.”

Stalker’s “The Sixth Word on the Cross” (placed earlier in the lesson) teaches us something about fulfilling God’s purpose for our lives. A characteristic of successful people is that they begin all projects with the end in view. They ask, “What will it look like when the task is completed?” Jesus applied this to His entire life.

Imagine yourself at a funeral. Music plays as you enter the chapel with the several hundred other attendees. This particular funeral is an “open casket” funeral, like those practiced in the United States and some other countries. One by one, those attending the service walk to the front and cast one last gaze upon the deceased, then return to their seats. When it is your turn, you too rise, go to the front and look into the face of this dead individual. As you do, you are shocked and surprised. The person in the casket is you! This is your funeral, ten years from today. Badly shaken, you return to your seat to see what occurs next.

On the stage at the front of the church, your spouse and children, your sister, and several colleagues from work and church are gathered to express something about you.

## QUESTION 12

After reading “The Sixth Word on the Cross” (placed earlier in the lesson), reflect on the funeral scene described above and ask yourself, “What would I want them to say?” Your answer to that question will tell you something about your deepest values in life. You may not always live up to them, but at least you will be able to identify what “it is finished” might look like for you. Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook. Memorize 2 Timothy 4:6-8 and use Paul’s last words as a threefold model for your reflections.

### The Seventh Word from the Cross

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And after he said this he breathed his last. (Lk 23:46)

The last word of the dying Savior was a quotation from Scripture. This was not the first time He quoted Scripture on the cross. His great cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" was also borrowed from the Old Testament, and it is possible that there is Scriptural allusion in others of the Seven Words. In this last word, we find Him praying the Psalms—Psalm 22 in the fourth word, and now Psalm 31 in His seventh.

Jesus knew where to go in the Scriptures for the language He needed, for He had diligently studied the holy words His entire life. He heard it at home as a child; He listened to it in the synagogue; He probably poured over synagogue rolls even in secret, learning the words through and through. So when He became a preacher, His apt use of it could put professional scholars to shame. He used it to fight the enemy in the wilderness; and now it upheld Him in His dying moments.

When we, like Jesus, have hidden God's Word in our hearts, it is a present help in every time of need.

This article is adapted from James Stalker's *The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*. New York: Hodder and Stroughton, 1984.

When Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade, was told three years before his death that he had a terminal illness, he said, "All my life I have been teaching believers how to live well, now at the end the Lord has given me the privilege of teaching them how to die well."

The final word of Jesus on the Cross teaches us something about how to die well. Please read the article "The Seventh Word on the Cross" (placed earlier in the lesson).

### **QUESTION 13**

Stalker points out that while on the cross, Jesus prayed two psalms: Psalm 22 and Psalm 31. Please read Psalm 31:1-24 now. Notice the entire context of the psalm and particularly Psalm 31:5; 14-15. As you read Psalm 31, note all the parallels with the life of Christ and record them. Then, if you are able, get down on your knees and do what Jesus did: Pray the psalm back to God, interspersing your own requests and praises as various phrases of the psalm suggest them to your mind.

## **Topic 3: Awesome Wonders**

### **Assignment**

- Read Matthew 27:51-56; Mark 15:38-41; Luke 23:45; 23:47-49; and John 19:31-37.
- Read "Awesome Wonders."

### **Awesome Wonders**

The New Testament records three events which in various ways signified the dawn of the new era.

1. A supernatural darkness from noon to 3:00 p.m.
2. The tearing of the curtain in the temple from top to bottom
3. The resuscitation of some Old Testament saints

The Messiah had come, salvation had been achieved, and God provided testimony from nature and miracles to these astounding facts.

## Darkness Over the Earth

The first wonder was the darkness that came over the area from noon until 3:00 p.m., when Jesus cried His last words and then died. This was close to the official time when the sacrificial lamb was offered in the temple during the Passover Feast. For many Jews, this would bring judgment to mind. The darkness could have been caused by an extremely heavy cloud cover, a dust storm, or even a solar eclipse, all of which would have been considered omens of judgment. An eclipse at midday would be particularly noteworthy.

## Resuscitation of Some OT Saints

The resuscitation of many Old Testament saints that Matthew mentions may prefigure the final resurrection of all the saints at the second coming (Dan 12:1-2). The appearance of these signs in the city would be terrifying. These saints were not resurrected in the sense of receiving resurrection bodies; they were revived, resuscitated and eventually died natural deaths.

## The Rending of the Temple Veil

The “veil” probably refers to the inner veil separating the holy place from the Holy of Holies. Its rending would have occurred during the time of the evening sacrifice, when it would be obvious to the attending priests.



*The veil in Herod's temple was torn from top to bottom at the time that Christ died. This indicated that the old economy had passed, and now all men had free access to the presence of God and no longer needed a human priest.*

The rending of the veil signified that God's presence had departed from the temple, and now all people had access to God freely through the righteousness of His Son.

The temple and sacrificial system had ended (Heb 6:19-20; 9:3; 10:19-20). The priestly aristocracy probably would not have publicized the rending of the veil because it occurred at the time of Jesus' death, which seemed an unlikely coincidence.

The high priest rent his garments at Jesus's blasphemy; God, in response, rent the veil of the temple due to the blasphemy of crucifying His Son.

## QUESTION 14

Awesome wonders occurred at or near the time of Christ's death. Record in your own words the significance of each sign in your Life Notebook.

## Topic 4: Burial

### Friday, April 3, AD 33

Jesus died at 3 p.m., and a man named Joseph of Arimathea stopped to ask Pilate's permission to bury His body before sundown. One could not move a corpse on the Sabbath, which would begin at six o'clock that evening. Normally, the Romans simply allowed the corpse to rot on the cross, but Pilate had already deferred to Jewish scruples once, and now he did so again.

Apparently, Joseph had purchased the linen grave clothes earlier, and the women had already prepared the spices that would diminish the stench and pay final respect to the deceased.

## The Tomb

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; and John 19:38-42.
- Review "Christ's Death and Burial."

### Christ's Death and Burial

In some religions, the death of Jesus on the cross is doubted. However, the following points support the reality of Jesus' death on the cross:

1. Old Testament prophets foretold the death of the Christ, and their prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus. The Lord was to be pierced (Ps 22:16; Zech 12:10), led as a lamb to the slaughter (Isa 53:7), slain as the Passover sacrifice (Ex 12:1; 1 Cor 5:7), and to enter into Sheol, the realm of the dead (Ps 16:10; Acts 2:22-32).
2. Jesus Himself declared that He would be killed (Mt 16:21), and that His body would be in the grave three days (Mt 12:40).
3. Other authorities and military acknowledged and affirmed the death of Christ: A Roman centurion, and Pontius Pilate (Mk 15:39, 44-45).
4. The New Testament spokesmen uniformly affirmed that Jesus died. Peter proclaimed this message (Acts 2:23; 3:15; 1 Pet 1:18-21), as did Stephen (Acts 7:52), Paul (Acts 13:28; 1 Cor 15:1), and others (Rev 5:9; 11:8; 12:11).
5. Secular history confirms that Christ died. Josephus, the Jewish historian, refers to Jesus' death (*Antiquities* 18.3.3). The Roman writer Tacitus said that Christ was executed by Pilate (*Annals* 15.44). The early enemies of Christianity, e.g., Celsus and Lucian, also conceded that Jesus was put to death, as did the Patristic writers of the ante-Nicene (pre AD 325) period.

## QUESTION 15

Based on the article, match the Scripture or ancient writer on the on the left with the corresponding proof that Jesus did die and was buried.

<i>Source</i>	<i>Proof</i>
Isaiah 53:7	States in <i>The Annals</i> that Jesus was executed under Pilate
Tacitus	States in <i>The Antiquity of the Jews</i> that Jesus was put to death
Matthew 16:21	An enemy of Christianity says Jesus was put to death
Celsus	Paul, a former enemy of Christ, says He was killed
Acts 13:28	Jesus predicts His own death
Josephus	The Old Testament predicts Jesus' death

## The Tomb is Sealed



### Assignment

- Read Matthew 27:62-66.
- Please read the sealing of the tomb section of the article on the resurrection.

### Evidence for the Resurrection

#### Sealing of the Tomb

A Roman guard of strictly disciplined fighting men was stationed to guard the tomb. This guard affixed on the tomb the Roman seal, which was meant to prevent any attempt at vandalizing the sepulcher. Anyone trying to move the stone from the tomb's entrance would have broken the seal and thus incurred the wrath of Roman law....

So many security precautions were taken with the trial, crucifixion, burial, entombment, sealing, and guarding of Christ's tomb that it becomes very difficult for critics to defend their position that Christ did not rise from the dead.

Adapted from an article by Josh McDowell, found at <http://www.leaderu.com/everystudent/easter/articles/josh2.html> on the Internet.

## QUESTION 16

According to the article, breaking the seal of the tomb would not have led to any serious consequences. *True or False?*

## **Topic 5: Matching Events**

### **QUESTION 17**

To help you memorize these events, we have compiled a list of important events in the life of Christ. Take a moment and review events 40, 44, 46, 55, 57, 58, 59, and 60 in the Matching Events chart found in the appendix. Cover the event descriptions and see if you can identify the associated Scriptures.

## Lesson 11 Lesson Notes

### Question 4

Remember that when Pilate asked Christ, “What is truth?” he left and did not wait for an answer. This revealed his heart. He really did not want to know. He had had his chance.

Christ’s response to this abuse was an example we too may follow.

- **Step 1 – Confessing and cleansing.** ( *“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”* 1 Pet 2:22.)
- **Step 2 – Not insulting.** ( *“ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats”* 1 Pet 2:23. 1 Pet 3:8-12.)
- **Step 3 – Trusting the situation in God’s hands.** ( *“He entrusted himself to him who judges justly”* 1 Pet 2:23.)
- **Step 4 – Keeping the end goal in mind.** ( He suffered to heal. *“ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”* (1 Pet 2:24.)



## Lesson 11 Self Check

### QUESTION 1

Shortly after Jesus' resurrection, many Old Testament saints were resurrected from the dead as well. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 2

Which of the following does not provide secular evidence, outside of the Bible, for the death of Jesus?

- A. Josephus in *Antiquities*.
- B. Pontius Pilate in *My Records*.
- C. Tacitus in *Annals*.
- D. Celsus, an enemy of Christianity.

### QUESTION 3

What does the fourth word from the cross show?

- A. Jesus had memorized the psalms.
- B. Jesus doubted God's existence.
- C. Jesus was not in communion with the Father.
- D. No one has a sure hope of salvation.

### QUESTION 4

What must we do to follow in Christ's steps when we suffer?

- A. Learn to trust our entire situation to God.
- B. Promise to obey Christ in everything.
- C. Agree to forgive those who sincerely ask for forgiveness.
- D. Be willing to gracefully confront the one who offended us.

### QUESTION 5

The thief on the cross trusted in Christ at the last moment. Based on what you studied in the lesson, what is the most likely implication we can draw from this?

- A. This should caution us against any emphasis on last minute conversion.
- B. This was probably the last event in a series of event which led to his decision to trust Christ.
- C. His decision may have been false in that all he wanted was to guarantee final arrival in heaven if in fact there is a heaven.
- D. His decision was probably invalid because there was not baptism with water involved.

### QUESTION 6

Part of Mary's grief when she saw her son hanging on the cross was that it seemed that the promises that He would sit on David's throne were unfulfilled. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 7

It is impossible for us to satisfy Jesus' thirst today. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 8**

How do we know that access to God is now available to all through Christ?

- A. The temple veil was torn.
- B. The Roman centurion stated it was so.
- C. Some Old Testament saints were resuscitated.
- D. The sky turned dark at Jesus' death.

**QUESTION 9**

Which prophecies were fulfilled in Christ's final trial before Pilate?

- A. Psalm 22:14
- B. Isaiah 52:13-15
- C. Zechariah 11:12-14
- D. Isaiah 53:7

**QUESTION 10**

Which of the following are meanings of "It is finished!"? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Jesus had entrusted the care of His mother to John.
- B. Jesus had finished His life work.
- C. The transaction of payment for our sin had been completed.
- D. The thief had been promised that he would indeed be in paradise.

## Lesson 11 Answers to Questions

### QUESTION 1

<i>Barabbas</i>	<i>Scripture</i>
He was under the condemnation of the Law.	Galatians 2:20
He knew Jesus was a substitute.	Romans 5:6-8
He knew he had done nothing to merit release.	Revelation 21:6; Ephesians 2:8-9
All he had to do was accept the pardon	John 1:12-13

**QUESTION 2:** *Your answer should be one of the following:*

five, 5

**QUESTION 3:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 4:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 5**

D. Isaiah 53:7

**QUESTION 6:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 7:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 8:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 9:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 10:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 11:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 12:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 13:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 14:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 15**

<i>Source</i>	<i>Proof</i>
Isaiah 53:7	The Old Testament predicts Jesus' death
Tacitus	States in <i>The Annals</i> that Jesus was executed under Pilate
Matthew 16:21	Jesus predicts His own death
Celsus	An enemy of Christianity says Jesus was put to death
Acts 13:28	Paul, a former enemy of Christ, says He was killed
Josephus	States in <i>The Antiquity of the Jews</i> that Jesus was put to death

**QUESTION 16:** False [Breaking the seal would lead to certain execution]

**QUESTION 17:** *See Matching Events chart*

## Lesson 11 Self Check Answers

**QUESTION 1:** False

**QUESTION 2**

B. Pontius Pilate in *My Records*.

**QUESTION 3**

C. Jesus was not in communion with the Father.

**QUESTION 4**

A. Learn to trust our entire situation to God.

**QUESTION 5**

B. This was probably the last event in a series of event which led to his decision to trust Christ.

**QUESTION 6:** True

**QUESTION 7:** False

**QUESTION 8**

A. The temple veil was torn.

**QUESTION 9**

D. Isaiah 53:7

**QUESTION 10**

B. Jesus had finished His life work.

C. The transaction of payment for our sin had been completed.



# Lesson 12: The Resurrection and Ascension

---

Jesus' movement seemed to have been a failure. Instead of restoring the Davidic theocracy, the Messiah had been crucified. Frightened, confused, and unsure what to do next, some of the disciples returned to their fishing businesses. But something happened that changed the entire course of human history: Jesus of Nazareth came out of the tomb in resurrection power. He is ALIVE! The discouragement that had overshadowed the disciples is now replaced with awe and amazement.

In Topic 1, we will explore some Scriptures that explain the significance of the resurrection for the Christian faith. What difference would it make if Jesus had never risen from the dead?

In Topic 2, we will consider some of the historical data that could win the case for resurrection in a court of law. Why does this evidence compel such conviction in the lives of millions that Jesus of Nazareth came out of the tomb in resurrection power?

In Topic 3, we will watch two of Jesus' disciples encounter Christ when they take a twelve-kilometer journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus. We will consider how to make the intimate "experience of the burning heart" real in our lives.

In Topic 4, we will watch the reaction of the disciple Thomas when ten of his friends told him that they had seen Jesus alive after His death and burial, walking through walls into their meeting room. Is Thomas's skepticism and doubt really so hard to believe?

In Topic 5, we see how carefully Jesus selected the times and places of His appearances to His disciples. Through another miraculous catch of fish and an encounter with Peter, who had denied Him, we see a main theme of Jesus' training technique: He imparted His life to His disciples.

In Topic 6, we will consider Jesus' last words while on earth: the Great Commission. What is the essence of the gospel and the Great Commission? What is the significance of His ascension? These are the final questions we will address in this course regarding the greatest life.

## Lesson Outline

Topic 1: The Resurrection

Topic 2: Evidence for the Resurrection

Topic 3: The Road to Emmaus

Talking With Jesus

The Burning Heart

Topic 4: Behind Locked Doors

Topic 5: A Fishing Trip with the Disciples

Topic 6: Parting Words

Parting Words in Galilee

The Ascension From the Mount of Olives

Topic 7: Matching Events and Scripture

## Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Explain the significance of the resurrection for the Christian faith and the historical evidence for the resurrection and be able to share this with others
- Learn about the experience of the burning heart and how to strengthen your personal communication and awareness of the presence of Christ in your life
- Discuss a key aspect of how Jesus trained His men—the impartation of His very life
- Develop a clear understanding of the Great Commission and the biblical and practical significance of the ascension

## Topic 1: The Resurrection

**Sunday, April 4, AD 33**

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; and John 20:1-8.



Early Sunday morning, some women came to Jesus' tomb to anoint His body for burial. They had seen Joseph and Nicodemus roll the heavy stone over the entrance (Mt 28:1-4), and they were concerned about how they would get inside.

However, to their surprise, the stone had already been rolled away and the tomb was empty! An earthquake shook the ground, and an angel appeared from heaven. The Roman soldiers guarding the tomb were so badly frightened, they trembled and apparently fainted. Although they had been posted there to seal and guard the tomb, their strength was useless before this angelic messenger.

Even though the soldiers were afraid, the angel had a special message for the women: "Christ has risen!" They hurried away to tell the disciples as they'd been instructed.

After they departed, the guards left and went into the city (Mt 28:11) and reported to the chief priests what had happened. Immediately the leaders devised the story that the disciples had come in the middle of the night and stolen the body. The soldiers were paid off and assured that they would be protected.

### QUESTION 1

Reflect for a moment on the probability of the story that the disciples stole the body. How would you respond to someone who held this position?

After recording your thoughts, read the suggested answers.

#### **Disciples Stole the Body**

The story the disciples stole the body was widely circulated, and in spite of its intrinsic improbability, it is believed by some today. However it defies all logic. First of all, how could the soldiers know that the disciples stole the body if they were asleep? Also, why would they admit to falling asleep? The penalty for sleeping

would have been execution!

Furthermore, if the disciples did steal the body, how were they able to fight an elite squad of highly trained soldiers who are comparable to a squad of American Marines?

The disciples would have been psychologically incapable of such a falsehood. They were scattered and afraid after Jesus was arrested. Execution of such a plot was beyond their ability. Nevertheless, for some people, truth is harder to accept than a lie.

The resurrection of Christ changed the history of the world. No event or series of events has so revolutionized society or turned the world upside down as Christ's bodily resurrection from the grave.

## QUESTION 2

The significance of the resurrection is often referenced throughout the New Testament. Match the Scripture with the corresponding significance of the resurrection.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Significance of the Resurrection</i>
Romans 1:4	Demonstrates God's power over sin and death
Ephesians 1:19-20	Guarantees our justification, confirming that the Father accepted Christ's sacrifice
Romans 4:25	Gives assurance that we are no longer under the penalty of sin and that that our faith is true and living
1 Corinthians 15:25	Guarantees the believer's bodily resurrection
1 Corinthians 15:12-19	Validates His deity

## Topic 2: Evidence for the Resurrection

**Sunday, April 4, AD 33**

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; and John 20:1-8.
- Please read "The Evidence for the Resurrection."

### Evidence for the Resurrection

#### A Question of History

After more than seven hundred hours of studying this subject, I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is either one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted on the minds of human beings—or it is the most remarkable fact of history.

Here are some of the facts relevant to the resurrection: Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish prophet who claimed to be the Christ prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures, was arrested, was judged a political criminal, and was crucified. Three days after His death and burial, some women who went to His tomb found the body gone. In subsequent weeks, His disciples claimed that God had raised Him from the dead and that He appeared to them various times before ascending into heaven.



From that foundation, Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire and has continued to exert great influence down through the centuries.

## **Living Witnesses**

The New Testament accounts of the resurrection were being circulated within the lifetimes of men and women alive at the time of the resurrection. Those people could certainly have confirmed or denied the accuracy of such accounts.

The writers of the four Gospels either had themselves been witnesses or else were relating the accounts of eyewitnesses of the actual events. In advocating their case for the gospel, a word that means "good news," the apostles appealed (even when confronting their most severe opponents) to common knowledge concerning the facts of the resurrection (Lk 1:1-4).

F. F. Bruce, Rylands professor of biblical criticism and exegesis at the University of Manchester, says concerning the value of the New Testament records as primary sources: *"Had there been any tendency to depart from the facts in any material respect, the possible presence of hostile witnesses in the audience would have served as a further corrective."*

## **Is the New Testament Reliable?**

Because the New Testament provides the primary historical source for information on the resurrection, many critics during the nineteenth century attacked the reliability of these biblical documents.

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, archaeological discoveries had confirmed the accuracy of the New Testament manuscripts. Discoveries of early papyri bridged the gap between the time of Christ and existing manuscripts from a later date.

Those findings increased scholarly confidence in the reliability of the Bible. William F. Albright, who in his day was the world's foremost biblical archaeologist, said:

*"We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about AD 80, two full generations before the date between 130 and 150 given by the more radical New Testament critics of today."*

Coinciding with the papyri discoveries, an abundance of other manuscripts came to light (over 24,000 copies of early New Testament manuscripts are known to be in existence today). The historian Luke wrote of "authentic evidence" concerning the resurrection. Sir William Ramsay, who spent fifteen years attempting to undermine Luke credentials as a historian, and to refute the reliability of the New Testament, finally concluded:

*"Luke is a historian of the first rank . . . This author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians."*

## **Background**

The New Testament witnesses were fully aware of the background against which the resurrection took place. The body of Jesus, in accordance with Jewish burial custom, was wrapped in a linen cloth. About forty-five kilograms of aromatic spices, mixed together to form a gummy substance, were applied to the wrappings of cloth about the body (Jn 19:19). After the body was placed in a solid rock tomb, an extremely large stone was rolled against the entrance of the tomb. Large stones weighing approximately two tons were normally rolled (by means of levers) against a tomb entrance.

A Roman guard of strictly disciplined fighting men was stationed to guard the tomb. This guard affixed on the tomb the Roman seal, which was meant to prevent any attempt at vandalizing the

sepulcher. Anyone trying to move the stone from the tomb's entrance would have broken the seal and thus incurred the wrath of Roman law.

But three days later the tomb was empty. The followers of Jesus said He had risen from the dead. They reported that He appeared to them during a period of forty days, showing Himself to them by many "infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3).

Paul the apostle recounted that Jesus appeared to more than five hundred of His followers at one time, the majority of whom were still alive and who could confirm what Paul wrote (1 Cor 15:1-8).

So many security precautions were taken with the trial, crucifixion, burial, entombment, sealing, and guarding of Christ's tomb that it becomes very difficult for critics to defend their position that Christ did not rise from the dead. Consider these facts:

### **FACT 1: BROKEN ROMAN SEAL**

As we have said, the first obvious fact was the breaking of the seal that stood for the power and authority of the Roman Empire. The consequences of breaking the seal were extremely severe. The FBI and CIA of the Roman Empire would be called into action to find the man or men who were responsible. If they were apprehended, it meant automatic execution by crucifixion upside down. People feared the breaking of the seal. Jesus' disciples displayed signs of cowardice when they hid themselves. Peter, one of these disciples, went out and denied Christ three times.

### **FACT 2: EMPTY TOMB**

As we have already discussed, another obvious fact after the resurrection was the empty tomb. The disciples of Christ did not go off to Athens or Rome to preach that Christ was raised from the dead. Rather, they went right back to the city of Jerusalem, where, if what they were teaching was false, the falsity would be evident. The empty tomb was "too notorious to be denied. The resurrection "could have not been maintained in Jerusalem for a single day, for a single hour, if the emptiness of the tomb had not been established as a fact for all concerned.

Remember, the Jewish authorities were being openly accused of crucifying their Messiah by those who said that He had risen from the dead. They would have certainly gone to the tomb to see if it was empty to disprove the accusations and prove their innocence. If it was not empty, the disciples' claims would be refuted. The fact that they had to rationalize its emptiness is the one fact that proves beyond a doubt that the tomb was indeed empty.

Both Jewish and Roman sources and traditions admit an empty tomb. Those resources range from Josephus (a first century Jewish Historian) to a compilation of fifth-century Jewish writings called the "*Toledoth Jeshu*." This is positive evidence from a hostile source, which is the strongest kind of historical evidence. In essence, this means that if a source admits a fact decidedly not in its favor, then that fact is genuine.

Gamaliel, who was a member of the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin, put forth the suggestion that the rise of the Christian movement might be God's doing; he could not have done that if the tomb were still occupied, or if the Sanhedrin knew the whereabouts of Christ's body (Acts 5:34-40).

Dr. Paul Maier observes that

*"If all the evidence is weighed carefully and fairly, it is indeed justifiable, according to the canons of historical research, to conclude that the sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathea, in which Jesus was buried, was actually empty on the morning of the first Easter. And no shred of evidence has yet been discovered in literary sources, epigraphy, or archaeology that would disprove this statement."*

### **FACT 3: LARGE STONE MOVED**

On that Sunday morning the first thing that impressed the people who approached the tomb was the unusual position of the one and a half to two ton stone that had been lodged in front.

Those who observed the stone after the resurrection describe its position as having been rolled away from the entrance of the tomb (Mk 16:2-4), but also away from the entire massive tomb itself (Lk 24:2). It was in such a position that it looked as if it had been picked up and carried away. Now, I ask you, if the disciples had wanted to come in, tiptoe around the sleeping guards, and then roll the stone over and steal Jesus' body, how could they have done that without the guards' awareness?

#### **FACT 4: ROMAN GUARD FLEES**

The Roman guards fled. They left their place of responsibility. How can their flight be explained, when Roman military discipline was so exceptional? The fear of their superiors' wrath and the possibility of death meant that they paid close attention to the minutest details of their jobs.

One way a guard was put to death was by being stripped of his clothes and then burned alive in a fire started with his garments. If it was not apparent which soldier had failed in his duty and then lots were drawn to see which one would be punished with death for the guard unit's failure. Certainly the entire unit would not have fallen asleep with that kind of threat over their heads. Dr. George Currie, a student of Roman military discipline, wrote that fear of punishment "produced flawless attention to duty, especially in the night watches."

#### **FACT 5: GRAVECLOTHES TELL A TALE**

In a literal sense, against all statements to the contrary, the tomb was not totally empty—because of an amazing phenomenon. John, a disciple of Jesus, looked over to the place where the body of Jesus had lain, and there were the grave clothes, in the form of the body, slightly caved in and empty—like the empty chrysalis of a caterpillar's cocoon (Jn 20:4-9).. That's enough to make a believer out of anybody. John never did get over it. The first thing that stuck in the minds of the disciples was not the empty tomb, but rather the empty grave clothes—undisturbed in form and position.

#### **FACT 6: JESUS' APPEARANCES CONFIRMED**

Christ appeared alive on several occasions after the cataclysmic events of that first Easter . When studying an event in history, it is important to know whether enough people who were participants or eyewitnesses to the event were alive when the facts about the event were published. To know this is obviously helpful in ascertaining the accuracy of the published report. If the number of eyewitnesses is substantial, the event can be regarded as fairly well established. For instance, if we all witness a murder, and a later police report turns out to be a fabrication of lies, we as eyewitnesses can refute it.

#### **OVER 500 WITNESSES**

Several very important factors are often overlooked when considering Christ's post-resurrection appearances to individuals. The first is the large number of witnesses of Christ after that resurrection morning. One of the earliest records of Christ's appearing after the resurrection is by Paul. The apostle appealed to his audience's knowledge of the fact that Christ had been seen by more than five hundred people at one time. Paul reminded them that the majority of those people were still alive and could be questioned (1 Cor 15:1-8).

Dr. Edwin M. Yamauchi, associate professor of history at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, emphasizes:

*"What gives a special authority to the list (of witnesses) as historical evidence is the reference to most of the five hundred brethren being still alive. St. Paul says in effect, 'If you do not believe me, you can ask them.' Such a statement in an admittedly genuine letter written within thirty years of the event is almost as strong evidence as one could hope to get for something that happened nearly two thousand years ago."*

Let's take the more than five hundred witnesses who saw Jesus alive after His death and burial, and place them in a courtroom. Do you realize that if each of those five hundred people were to testify for only six minutes, including cross-examination, you would have an amazing fifty hours of

firsthand testimony? Add to this the testimony of many other eyewitnesses and you would well have the largest and most lopsided trial in history.

### **HOSTILE WITNESSES**

Another factor crucial to interpreting Christ's appearances is that He also appeared to those who were hostile or unconvinced.

Over and over again, I have read or heard people comment that Jesus was seen alive after His death and burial only by His friends and followers. Using that argument, they attempt to water down the overwhelming impact of the multiple eyewitness accounts. But that line of reasoning is so pathetic it hardly deserves comment. No author or informed individual would regard Saul of Tarsus as being a follower of Christ. The facts show the exact opposite. Saul despised Christ and persecuted Christ's followers. It was a life-shattering experience when Christ appeared to him. Although he was at the time not a disciple, he later became the apostle Paul, one of the greatest witnesses for the truth of the resurrection.

If the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt.

The argument that Christ's appearances were only to followers is an argument for the most part from silence, and arguments from silence can be dangerous. It is equally possible that all to whom Jesus appeared became followers. No one acquainted with the facts can accurately say that Jesus appeared to just "an insignificant few." It is obviously absurd to reject a man's testimony as biased simply because he saw something and believed what he saw!

Imagine that you were a witness to the assassination of a prominent political figure in your country. To your surprise, the defense attorney for the alleged assassin said that your testimony must be rejected on the grounds that you believed what you saw and were therefore biased!

Christians believe that Jesus was bodily resurrected in time and space by the supernatural power of God. The difficulties of belief may be great, but the problems inherent in unbelief present even greater difficulties.

The theories advanced to explain the resurrection by "natural causes" are weak; they actually help to build confidence in the truth of the resurrection.

### **HALLUCINATIONS?**

Another attempted explanation claims that the appearances of Jesus after the resurrection were either illusions or hallucinations. Unsupported by the psychological principles governing the appearances of hallucinations, this theory also does not coincide with the historical situation. Again, where was the actual body, and why wasn't it produced?

### **DID JESUS SWOON?**

The swoon theory, which says that Jesus didn't die; he merely fainted from exhaustion and loss of blood. Everyone thought Him dead, but later He resuscitated and the disciples thought it to be a resurrection. Skeptic David Friedrich Strauss—certainly no believer in the resurrection—gave the deathblow to any thought that Jesus revived from a swoon:

*It is impossible that a being who had stolen half-dead out of the sepulcher, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening and indulgence, and who still at last yielded to His sufferings, could have given to the disciples the impression that He was a Conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life, an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry. Such a resuscitation could only have weakened the impression which He had made upon them in life and in death, at the most could only have given it an elegiac voice, but could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm, have elevated their reverence into worship.*

## THE BODY STOLEN?

Then consider the theory that the body was stolen by the disciples while the guards slept. The depression and cowardice of the disciples provide a hard-hitting argument against their suddenly becoming so brave and daring as to face a detachment of soldiers at the tomb and steal the body. They were in no mood to attempt anything like that.

The theory that the Jewish or Roman authorities moved Christ's body is no more reasonable an explanation for the empty tomb than theft by the disciples. If the authorities had the body in their possession or knew where it was, why, when the disciples were preaching the resurrection in Jerusalem, didn't they explain: "Wait! We moved the body, see, He didn't rise from the grave"?

And if such a rebuttal failed, why didn't they explain exactly where Jesus' body lay? If this failed, why didn't they recover the corpse, put it on a cart, and wheel it through the center of Jerusalem? Such an action would have destroyed Christianity—not in the cradle, but in the womb!

How did the apostles meet their deaths?

- Jude was crucified
- Matthew was slain by the sword
- Philip was scourged and then crucified
- Peter was crucified upside down, he said he was not worthy to be crucified in the same manner as his master
- James was thrown from the pinnacle of a tower and stoned to death down below
- Thomas was run through by a spear in India
- John was almost put into a cauldron of boiling oil but escaped death and died on the island of Patmos

It is one thing to be deluded, as many have done, but it is another to die for something you know to be a lie and if they had stolen the body they would know Christianity and their claims were a hoax. Men do not die such deaths in support of something they know to be false.

## THE RESURRECTION IS A FACT

Professor Thomas Arnold, for fourteen years a headmaster of Rugby, author of the famous, *History of Rome*, and appointed to the chair of modern history at Oxford, was well acquainted with the value of evidence in determining historical facts. This great scholar said:

*I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.*

Brooke Foss Westcott, an English scholar, said:

*Raking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no historic incident better or more variously supported than the resurrection of Christ. Nothing but the antecedent assumption that it must be false could have suggested the idea of deficiency in the proof of it.*

## REAL PROOF: THE DISCIPLES' LIVES

But the most telling testimony of all must be the lives of those early Christians. We must ask ourselves: What caused them to go everywhere telling the message of the risen Christ?

Had there been any visible benefits accrued to them from their efforts—prestige, wealth, increased social status or material benefits—we might logically attempt to account for their actions, for their whole-hearted and total allegiance to this "risen Christ."

As a reward for their efforts, however, those early Christians were beaten, stoned to death, thrown to the lions, tortured and crucified. Every conceivable method was used to stop them from talking.

Yet, they laid down their lives as the ultimate proof of their complete confidence in the truth of their message.

Adapted from an article by Josh McDowell, found at <http://www.leaderu.com/everystudent/easter/articles/josh2.html> on the Internet.



Simon Greenleaf, one of the great legal scholars of the nineteenth century, wrote a textbook on the proper use of evidence in a court of law. Today many law schools still subscribe to its criteria for distinguishing good evidence from bad. Greenleaf, once a skeptic, was asked to examine the testimonial evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Would it hold up in a court of law? He concluded:

There is sufficient admissible testimonial evidence to establish as fact in any court in Britain or the United States, the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave.

### QUESTION 3

After reading the article, you should have an overall understanding of the facts and proofs for Christ's resurrection. Now it is time to put it into your own words. Summarize three of the evidences that seem particularly compelling to you in your Life Notebook.

### QUESTION 4

According to the article, what were some of the most important facts regarding the testimony of the witnesses? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. They were all believers
- B. Some were hostile
- C. He only appeared privately to them
- D. Many were still alive

### QUESTION 5

Please review the section of "Evidence of the Resurrection" entitled "Fact 2: Empty Tomb" (placed earlier in the lesson). One single fact establishes that the tomb was empty. What is it?

- A. More than five hundred saw Him at the same time.
- B. The leaders had to fabricate the stolen-body theory to explain why the tomb was empty.
- C. Mass hallucinations are not possible.
- D. Jesus could not have swooned and then appeared vital and powerful.

## QUESTION 6

Please read Matthew 28:11-15. What is astounding about the response of the Sanhedrin? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. They appear to be totally oblivious to the truth in defending their criminal action. They even disregarded the testimony of their personal guards.
- B. Their deep-seated unbelief substantiates what Abraham said when he spoke to the rich man in Hades, “If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead” (Lk 16:31).
- C. They resort to a criminal bribery to hide the truth, yet supposedly they are the guardians of truth for Israel.
- D. They resort to the ridiculous story that the guards had fallen asleep. If the Roman guards were asleep, how would they know that the disciples took the body?

## QUESTION 7

Some claim that Jesus never actually died on the cross; that someone else became a substitute for Him. This contradicts all facts and evidence in historical records, and no evidence exists in support of this claim. Based on your reading of “Evidence for the Resurrection” (placed earlier in the lesson), how would you respond to this view? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

## Topic 3: The Road to Emmaus

### Sunday afternoon, April 5, AD 33

On the day of our Lord’s fourth appearance, two of His disciples were walking on the road from Jerusalem to a village named Emmaus, which was about thirteen kilometers (nine miles) away. They were discussing with each other the terrible events that had just transpired in Jerusalem when a stranger joined them and asked, “What are these matters you are discussing so intently as you walk along?” (Lk 24:17).

Luke tells us that they were “kept from recognizing him.” Apparently, the stranger had veiled their perception of who He was.

### Talking with Jesus

The two disciples were sad and downcast. One of them, Cleopas, somewhat surprised at this fellow traveler’s apparent ignorance of recent events, said to Him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that have happened there in these days?” (Lk 24:18).

When the stranger asked, “What things?” they told him about Jesus, the great prophet, who performed mighty deeds before all the people, and how they had hoped that He would redeem Israel. Instead, their hopes had been dashed to the ground when He had died a shameful death on the cross. However, they had heard amazing stories about the women visiting the tomb seeing angels and finding an empty tomb.

### Assignment

- Read Luke 24:13-35.



The stranger remarked, “You foolish people—how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Wasn’t it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into his glory?” (Lk 24:25–26).

Their problem, He said, was their spiritual dullness. There was a long history from the Old Testament and many predictions that the Messiah would die before He entered into His glory. They should have known this.

### QUESTION 8

Spiritual dullness can affect us as much as it did the Emmaus travelers. Match the Scripture with the corresponding teaching.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Teaching</i>
1 Peter 2:1-3	The Lord will give insight into the meaning and application of the Bible.
1 Corinthians 2:14	Nonbelievers cannot understand biblical truth.
2 Timothy 2:7	Neglect of spiritual growth can hinder one’s ability to receive spiritual illumination from the Holy Spirit in the Bible.
1 Corinthians 2:15	Newborn believers need spiritual milk in order to grow.
1 Corinthians 3:1-2	The person who you are determines your ability to see and understand spiritual truth.
Hebrews 5:11-14	One who continues to drink only “milk” will never have spiritual discernment.

Then, beginning with Moses and continuing through all the prophets, He went through the Scriptures concerning Himself. What a marvelous time that would have been!

As they approached Emmaus (about a three-hour walk), the stranger indicated that He must continue on His way. However, they pressed Him to sit down with them for a simple meal. As He blessed the bread and then broke it, their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. It was Jesus, and He was alive!

At that moment, He disappeared.

The disciples looked at each other in astonishment and asked, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he was speaking with us on the road, while he was explaining the scriptures to us?” (Lk 24:32).



## QUESTION 9

Match each Old Testament prediction of Messiah with the New Testament passage that speaks of its fulfillment.

<i>Old Testament Prophecy</i>	<i>New Testament Fulfillment</i>
Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:5
Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 26:15
Zechariah 11:12-13	Mark 10:45
Psalms 22:18	Matthew 21:1-10
Psalms 22:14-16	Luke 23:33
Isaiah 53:5-6	Matthew 27:35

No wonder their hearts burned within them!

## The Burning Heart

On the day of our Lord's fourth appearance, two of His disciples were walking from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus, a distance of about eight miles (thirteen kilometers). As they walked, they discussed the terrible events of that Passover in Jerusalem. And then a stranger joined them. At first they did not recognize Him, but after they shared a meal, the travelers' eyes were opened and they realized that their guest had been the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! Why hadn't they known, they wondered, when even as He spoke and illuminated the Scriptures for them, their hearts had burned within them?

This "experience of the burning heart" is something the Holy Spirit wants to bring to the heart of everyone who knows Christ.

Notice what these Emmaus travelers said about this experience:

"Did not our hearts burn within us while he was speaking with us on the road, while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?" (Lk 24:32)

Notice that they did not say, "Did not our hearts burn within us while **we talked about Him** on the road?" Furthermore, they did not say, "Did not our hearts burn within us while **we talked with Him** on the road?" Instead they said, "Did not our hearts burn within us as **He talked with us** on the road!"

They had had the first experience of the burning heart as they heard the Scriptures taught by the Lord Jesus Christ.

How can we know the experience of the burning heart today? Even though this experience can come to different people in many different ways, what follows is an approach many believers throughout the centuries have found helpful: Following four movements of the heart.

### **The first movement of the heart is reading Scripture with a listening ear.**

Most people think of prayer as an encounter with God that is up to us to initiate. We start off telling God about our needs and then wait for Him to reply. Usually we have a list of requests, and we talk continually to Him about them. When He does not seem to reply, we feel prayer is a waste of time. However, the whole idea of talking to God and then waiting for Him to answer is backward.

To experience the burning heart, we must first allow God to talk to us in Scriptures. Remember the Emmaus travelers. Their hearts burned as **He talked with them**. What we sometimes forget is that God

has already started a conversation with us in the Bible, and when we read with a listening ear, we are listening to God speaking to us as the Holy Spirit illuminates our minds.

The goal of pursuing the burning heart is to encounter God and fellowship with Him. Our conversation with Him begins with us listening, not talking.

How do we listen?

First, we select a small portion of Scripture and read it, perhaps only ten or fifteen verses. As you read, ask yourself, “What does the text say?”

Secondly, read the text out loud and slowly. Read just a few words at time. This is not a study. There is no need to read hurriedly, as you might when reading through the Bible in a year.

Finally, you might consider reading a good devotional commentary along with the text, such as *Matthew Henry* or possibly the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* or some other good commentary on a particular book.

We must listen with our hearts; listen deeply.

After reading the Scripture slowly out loud, **the next movement in the experience of the burning heart is meditation**. As the heart moves into this phase, we read the text once more, but with a focus on what God is saying to us personally.

David describes meditation like this:

In my heart **I store up your words**, so I might not sin against you. You deserve praise, O Lord! **Teach me** your statutes! **With my lips I proclaim** all the regulations you have revealed. I rejoice in the lifestyle prescribed by your rules as if they were riches of all kinds. **I will meditate** on your precepts and focus on your behavior. **I find delight** in your statutes. (Ps 119:11–19)

The first movement of the burning heart asks the question, “What does the text say?” The second movement asks, “What does the text say *to me*?”

Take a sentence of the text, and re-read it slowly; allow it to dominate your mind. During meditation, we allow our thoughts to wander to various experiences in our past or present and reflect upon how the text relates to those experiences.

How do we know when to move from reading to meditation? It is a natural movement that occurs as the text brings to mind personal experiences, and connections between the text and those experiences begin to take over our thinking. Just let it happen.

The final phase of meditation is delighting in the Scripture. There’s no one specific way to do this, but here is one approach:

If the text is a narrative, put yourself into the story; use your imagination to enter the scene yourself and ask questions of the text.

- What does this teach me about faith?
- What does this teach me about God?
- Where does Christ speak personally to me in these verses?
- What attitudes or habits should I change in order to live this out?
- Why am I resistant to reflecting on the text more carefully?

**The next movement in knowing the experience of the burning heart is prayer.**

Paul tells us,

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Phil 4:6)

When we read, we ask: “What does the text say?”

When we meditate, we ask: “What does the text say to me?”

When we pray, we ask: “What do I want to say to God after reading and meditating on this text?”

This kind of prayer does not begin with list of with things we want to pray about, although those things may be included. Rather this kind of prayer is a response. The words we read and meditated on become the words of our prayer. We begin to pray the phrases of Scripture back to God.

Many find it helpful at this point to journal—write out the prayer in a journal, record your thoughts, and pray what you have written back to God. This gives a personal record of your experiences with God which you can read in future days with much profit.

When does this movement to prayer begin? It begins when in our meditation we feel questions emerging to our mind such as “How should I respond?” “Am I willing to change?” This is the time to move to prayer. At that point we stop our questioning and meditating on the text.

**The final movement of the heart is silence**, prayer with few words, simply resting in God's presence as He makes Himself known to you in Scripture.

O Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; Nor do I involve myself in great matters, Or in things too difficult for me. Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; Like a weaned child rests against his mother, My soul is like a weaned child within me. (Ps 131:1-2)

The word for “quiet” in Hebrew is a strong word that means **“BE QUIET!”**

What does it mean that we are to become like a “weaned child?” A newborn views his mother as a source of food; a weaned child just wants to be with her.

This suggests an attitude of receptivity and expectation; an attitude that says, “Lord, I just want to be with You and listen to You.”

Just allow yourself to be receptive to God. You don't have to **do** anything. During this time you may want to go back into mediation. That is fine—just let your thoughts and emotions flow. Just be with Him. You are communing with Christ, not fulfilling a schedule or obligation. Just allow Him to minister to you.

Being quiet and resting in His presence can be difficult. How do we block out the background noise? Sometimes our minds become filled with coming events of the day; perhaps we feel we should be reading a certain number of chapters of the Bible today to fulfill our schedules. Or, perhaps, some theological or interpretive point caught our attention, and our minds are off on a tangent so we never get to prayer. This happens to all of us.

Teresa of Avila gave this helpful illustration to help us find the balance between reading and resting. She says when a fire has been lighted by our prayers, we may need to place a twig or two on the fire from time to time, such as a few words of Scripture, meditation on a phrase, but she says we should not throw branches on it (meaning a lengthy study of Scripture or mental activity) because they will extinguish the flame.

Now that you have met God in the experience of the burning heart, it is time for a practical application.

When we read with a listening ear, we ask, “What does the text say?”

When we meditate, we ask, “What does the text say to me?”

When we pray, we ask, “What do I want to say to God after reading and meditating on this text?”

When we apply, we ask, “Lord what do you want me to do in response?”

James reminds us how important this is.

But be sure you live out the message and do not merely listen to it and so deceive yourselves. For if someone merely listens to the message and does not live it out, he is like someone who gazes at his own face in a mirror. For he gazes at himself and then goes out and immediately forgets what sort of person he was.” (Jas 1:22–25)

According to James, merely hearing God and knowing His presence in Scripture is not the goal. We have not really known the experience of the burning heart until we have done what God said to us. Otherwise, we deceive ourselves: We are substituting an emotional response for a volitional decision.

Paul tells us,

But the aim of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.” (1 Tim 1:5)

### **QUESTION 10**

Take a moment to review this material on the experience of the burning heart. Then find a quiet, private place, and practice what you learned for twenty minutes. Record your thoughts on the experience in your Life Notebook.

## **Topic 4: Behind Locked Doors**

**Sunday Evening, April 5, AD 33**

### **Assignment**

- Read Luke 24:36-49 and John 20:19-29.



The events on the Emmaus road were life-changing. Jesus was alive! In their excitement, the travelers probably ran most of the way back to Jerusalem to find the other disciples.

### **QUESTION 11**

Why do you think Jesus asked them for something to eat? Record your thoughts, then read the possible answers.

#### **Jesus Eats with His Disciples**

This showed that He was not a ghost, an angel, or an apparition but had a real physical body. His resurrection was not a spiritual resurrection or a mass hallucination. Jesus’ eating with His disciples showed all believers that resurrection life is not a life without a body. We will have a body like Christ’s in His resurrection (Phil 3:20).

## QUESTION 12

Jesus breathed on them the Holy Spirit (Jn 19:22; Lk 24:49). What is the significance of this? Record your thoughts. Check the possible answers after you record your response.

### Jesus Breathes the Holy Spirit upon His Disciples.

“The image and wording of breathing on them recalls God’s creative work in making Adam (Gen 2:7). Now this post-Resurrection ‘breathing’ was a new kind of creative work, for they would soon become new creations (Eph 2:8-10). This reception of the Spirit was in anticipation of the day of Pentecost and should be understood as a partial limited gift of knowledge, understanding, and empowerment until Pentecost, 50 days later.” (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2:343)

When Jesus appeared to the ten disciples and the Emmaus travelers, Thomas was not there. When Thomas saw the disciples after Jesus had gone, he expressed his doubts that the event had even occurred.

Yet, eight days later the disciples, Thomas included, all gathered behind locked doors again. Jesus appeared to them again, and even though He had not been present when Thomas told the other disciples that he did not yet believe, Jesus knew of Thomas’s doubts.

It may not be fair to think of Thomas as a doubter. Had he been present before when Jesus had manifested himself, he would surely have believed.

## QUESTION 13

Reflect for a moment on some of the things we learned about Jesus and the nature of the resurrection in this encounter (Jn 20:24-29). Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.



While critics of the gospel have accused the early church of making up this story, this is highly unlikely. Is it reasonable to assume that the church would present one of the twelve apostles as unbelieving to the point of obstinacy (Jn 20:15)? Just because the story obviously has an apologetic purpose, this is no reason to doubt its historicity. The demonstration of the Lord’s hands and feet is similarly stressed by Luke (Lk 24:39).

## QUESTION 14

How is John 20:30-31 related to the encounter with Thomas described in John 20:26-29? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. There is no apparent connection.
- B. Thomas’ doubt became the occasion for one of the greatest confessions of Christ recorded in the Gospels, “My Lord and my God!”
- C. It shows that faith in Christ is difficult for those who have not actually seen Him.
- D. Thomas’s confession naturally led to the purpose statement of the entire gospel.

## QUESTION 15

Based on John 20:31, which of the following items must be included in any genuine gospel explanation? (Select all that apply.)

- A. Belief that Jesus is the Messiah
- B. Faith in Christ
- C. Submission to Christ's Lordship
- D. Belief that Jesus is God
- E. Repentance
- F. Baptism

There is a chronological problem here which deserves brief comment. The disciples were commanded to remain in Jerusalem (Lk 24:49), yet the angel at the tomb had told them earlier that Jesus would meet them after they proceeded to Galilee (Mt 28:7). We know that after the events recorded in Luke 24, Jesus did in fact meet them in Galilee (Mt 28:16-20; Mk 16:14-18; Jn 21:1-25).

What then are we to say about the command to remain in Jerusalem until the day of Pentecost, which occurred forty days after the events recorded in Luke 24?

The best explanation is that when they are commanded to remain at Jerusalem, we must understand this to mean *after* they had returned from Galilee. It is clear from Matthew 26:32 and Matthew 28:10 that Jesus did not change His original intention to go to Galilee and see them there.

In the next topic we will study on the events that occurred in Galilee weeks later, during a fishing trip on the Sea of Tiberius.

## Topic 5: A Fishing Trip With the Disciples

Later in April, AD 33

### Assignment

- Read John 21:1-25.
- Read "Impartation" by Robert Coleman.

### Impartation

From *The Master Plan for Evangelism* by Robert Coleman. (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1963).

#### He Gave Himself Away

Jesus wanted His followers to obey Him. But in recognizing this truth, He realized that His disciples would discover the deeper experience of His Spirit. And in receiving His Spirit they would know the love of God for a lost world. That is why His demands upon discipline were accepted without argument. The disciples understood that they were not just keeping a law, but were responding to One that loved them, and Who was willing to give of Himself for them.

His was a life of giving-giving away what the Father had given Him (Jn 15:15; 17:4, 8, 14). He gave them His peace by which He was sustained in tribulation (Jn 16:33; cf., Mt 11:28). He gave them His joy in which He labored amid the sufferings and sorrows about Him (Jn 15:11; 17:13). He gave them the keys to His kingdom which the powers of Hell could never prevail against (Mt 16:19; cf., Lk 12:32). Indeed, He gave them His own glory which was His before the worlds were made, that they all might be one even as He was one in the Father (Jn 17:22, 24). He gave all He had-nothing was withheld, not even His own life.

Love is like that. It is always giving itself away. When it is self-contained, it is not love. In this sense, Jesus brought clearly into focus before His followers just what was meant when "God so loved the world" (Jn 3:16). It meant that God gave all He had to those He loved, even His "only begotten Son." And for the Son, in incarnating that love, it meant renouncing His own right of living and giving His life for the world. Only in this light-when the Son is put in place of the world-can one even begin to understand the cross. Yet in this realization, the cross of Christ is inevitable, for the infinite love of God can only express itself in an infinite way. Just as man by his sin had to die, so God by His love had to send His Son to die in our place. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).

## **The Compulsion Of Evangelism**

That is why He lost no opportunity to impress upon His followers the deep compulsion of His own soul aflame with the love of God for a lost world. Everything He did and said was motivated by this consuming passion. His life was simply the revelation in time of God's eternal purpose to save for Himself a people. Supremely this is what the disciples needed to learn, not in theory, but in practice.

And they saw it practiced before them in many ways every day. Though the demonstrations were often painfully hard to accept, as when He washed their feet (Jn 13:1-20), they could not miss what He meant. They saw how their Master denied Himself many of the comforts and pleasures of the world and became a servant among them. They saw how the things which they cherished- physical satisfaction, popular acclaim, prestige-He refused; while the things which they sought to escape- poverty, humiliation, sorrow, and even death-He accepted willingly for their sake. As they watched Him minister to the sick, comfort the sorrowing, and preach the Gospel to the poor, it was clear that the Master considered no service too small nor sacrifice too great when it was rendered for the glory of God. They may not have always understood it, and certainly could not explain it, but they could never mistake it.

## **His Sanctification**

The constant renewing of His consecration of Himself to God through loving service to others constituted Jesus' sanctification. This was brought out clearly in His High Priestly prayer when he said: "As Thou didst send Me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also maybe sanctified in truth" (Jn 17:18,19). Note that this setting apart of Himself unto God, which is indicated in the word "sanctify," was not necessary in Jesus' case to effect cleansing, since He was always pure. Nor was it necessary in order to receive power for service, since Jesus already had all the power He could use. Rather His sanctification, as the context reveals, was in the area of commitment to the task for which He had been "sent into the world,"<sup>1</sup> and in dedication to that purpose of evangelism, He continually gave His life "for their sakes."

His sanctification then was not for the purpose of benefiting Himself, but it was for His disciples, that they might "be sanctified in truth."<sup>1</sup> That is to say, in giving Himself to God, Jesus gave Himself to those about Him so that they might come to know through His life a similar commitment to the mission for which He had come into the world. His whole evangelistic plan hinged on this dedication, and in turn, the faithfulness with which His disciples gave themselves in love to the world about them.

## **Credentials Of The Ministry**

This was to be the measure by which they were to regard their own service in His Name. They were to give as freely as they had received (Mt 10:8). They were to love one another as He loved them (Jn 13:34, 35). By this token they were to be His disciples (Jn 15:9,10). Herein was contained all His commandments (Jn 15:12-17; cf., Mt 22:37-40; Mk 12:30-31; Lk 10:27). Love-Calvary love-was the standard. Just as they had seen for three years, the disciples were to give themselves in selfless devotion to those whom the Father loved and for whom their Master died (Jn 17:23).

Such a demonstration of love through them was to be the way that the world would know that the Gospel was true. How else would the multitudes ever be convinced? Love is the only way to win the free response of men, and this is possible only by the Presence of Christ within the heart. Thus Jesus prayed: "O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not, but I knew Thee; and these knew that Thou didst send Me; and I made known unto them Thy Name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them, and I in them" (Jn 17:25, 26).

## **The Work Of The Holy Spirit**

Let no one imagine, however, that this kind of an experience with Christ could be engendered by human ingenuity. Jesus made it abundantly clear that His life was mediated only through the Holy Spirit. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (Jn 6:63). That is why even to begin to live in Christ one had to be born again (Jn 3:3-9). The corrupted nature of man had to be regenerated by the Spirit of God before it could be conformed to its true created purpose in the Divine image. Likewise, it was the Spirit that sustained and nourished the transformed life of a disciple as he continued to grow in knowledge and grace (Jn 4:14; 7:38, 39). By the same Spirit one was made clean through the Word and set apart unto God for holy service (Jn 15:3; 17:17; cf., Eph. 5:26). From beginning to end, experiencing the living Christ in any personal way was the work of the Holy Spirit.

By the same token it was only the Spirit of God that enabled one to carry on the redemptive mission of evangelism. Jesus underscored this truth early in relation to His own work by declaring that what He did was in cooperation with "the Spirit of the Lord." It was by His virtue that He preached the Gospel to the poor, healed the brokenhearted, proclaimed deliverance to the captive, opened the eyes of the blind, cast out demons, and set at liberty those that were oppressed (Lk 4:18; Mt 12:28). Jesus was God in revelation; but the Spirit was God in operation. He was the Agent of God actually effecting through men the eternal plan of salvation. Thus Jesus explained to His disciples that the Spirit would prepare the way for their ministry. He would give them utterance to speak (Mat. 10:19, 20; Mk 13:11; Lk 12:12). He would convict the world "in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (Jn 16:9). He would give illumination of truth that men might know the Lord (Mt 22:43; cf., Mk 12:36; Jn 16:14). By His power the disciples were promised the very ability to do the works of their Lord (Jn 14:12). In this light, evangelism was not interpreted as a human undertaking at all, but a divine project which had been going on from the beginning and would continue until God's purpose was fulfilled. It was altogether the Spirit's work. All the disciples were asked to do was to let the Spirit have complete charge of their lives.

## **Another Comforter**

From the standpoint of their own satisfaction, however, the disciples needed to learn in a more meaningful way the relationship of the Spirit to the Person of their Lord. Jesus, of course, recognized this need, and therefore He spoke more specifically about it as the days of His flesh came to a close. Up to this point He had always been with them. He had been their Comforter; their Teacher; their Guide. In fellowship with Him the disciples had known courage and strength; with Him they felt that everything was possible; but their trouble was that Jesus was going back to Heaven. Under these circumstances, Jesus needed to explain to them how they would get along after He had gone.

It was at this time that Jesus told them about the Spirit as "Another Comforter," an Advocate, One Who would stand by their side, a Person that would take exactly the same place with them in the unseen realm of reality that Jesus had filled in the visible experience of the flesh (Jn 14:16). Just as He had ministered to them for three years, now the Spirit would guide them into all truth (Jn 16:13). He would show them things to come (Jn 16:13). He would teach them what they needed to know (Jn 14:26). He would help them pray (Jn 14:12, 13; 16:23, 24). In short, He would glorify the Son by taking the things of Christ and making them real to His followers (Jn 16:14, 15). The world could not receive this truth, for it did not know Jesus; but the disciples knew Him, for He was with them, and in the Spirit, He would continue to be with them forever (Jn 14:17).



This was no theory, no creed, no makeshift arrangement that Jesus was talking about. It was the promise of a real compensation for the loss which the disciples were to sustain. "Another Comforter" just like Jesus was to fill them with the very Presence of the Master. Indeed, the privileges which the disciples were to enjoy in this deeper relationship to the Spirit were greater than they had known as Jesus walked with them along the roads of Galilee. After all, in His flesh, Jesus was confined to one body and one place, but in the Spirit these limitations were all removed. Now He could be with them always, and literally be enabled never to leave them nor forsake them (Mt 28:20; cf., Jn 14:16). Looking at it from this perspective, it was better for Jesus, having finished His work, to return to the Father and send the blessed Comforter to come and take His place (Jn 16:7).

## **The Secret Of The Victorious Life**

It is easy to see then why Jesus expected His disciples to tarry until this promise became a reality to them (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5, 8; 2:33). How else could they ever fulfill the commission of their Lord with joy and inward peace? They needed an experience of Christ so real that their lives would be filled with His Presence. Evangelism had to become a burning compulsion within them purifying their desires and guiding their thoughts. Nothing less than a personal baptism of the Holy Spirit would suffice. The superhuman work to which they were called demanded supernatural help—an endowment of power from on High. This meant that the disciples through confession of their deep seated pride and enmity in utter surrender of themselves to Christ had to come by faith into a new and refining experience of the Spirit's infilling. The fact that these men were of the common lot of mankind was no hindrance at all. It only serves to remind us of the mighty power of the Spirit of God accomplishing His purpose in men fully yielded to His control. After all, the power is in the Spirit of Christ. It is not who we are, but Who He is that makes the difference.

## **A Truth Hidden From Unbelievers**

However, it is well to mention again that only those who followed Jesus all the way came to know the glory of this experience. Those who followed at a distance, like the multitudes, as well as those who stubbornly refused to walk in the light of His Word, like the Pharisees, did not even hear about the work of the blessed Comforter. As noted before, Jesus would not cast His pearls before those who did not want them.<sup>1</sup>

This characterized His teaching throughout life. Jesus purposely reserved for His few chosen disciples, and particularly the twelve, His most revealing things (Lk 10:22; Mt 11:27; cf., Mt 16:17). Indeed, their eyes and ears were blessed. Many prophets and kings had desired to see the things which they saw, and to hear the things which they heard, yet could not (Mt 13:16, 17; Lk 10:23, 24; cf., Mt 13:10, 11; Mk 4:10-11; Lk 8:9,10). Such a policy may seem strange until it is realized again that Jesus was deliberately investing all He had in these few men so that they could be properly prepared to do His work.

## **The Principle Issue Today**

The whole thing evolves around the Person of the Master. Basically His way was His life. And so it must be with His followers. We must have His life in us by the Spirit if we are to do His work and practice His teaching. Any evangelistic work without this is as lifeless as it is meaningless. Only as the Spirit of Christ in us exalts the Son are men drawn unto the Father.

Of course, we cannot give something away which we do not possess ourselves. The very ability to give away our life in Christ is the proof of its possession. Nor can we withhold that which we possess in the Spirit of Christ, and still keep it. The Spirit of God always insists on making Christ known. Here is the great paradox of life—we must die to ourselves in order to live in Christ, and in that renunciation of ourselves, we must give ourselves away in service and devotion to our Lord. This was Jesus' method of evangelism, seen at first only by His few followers, but through them it was to become the power of God in overcoming the world.

But we cannot stop there. It is also necessary for one to see in us a clear demonstration of the way to live His life. Thus, we must understand another obvious aspect of Jesus' strategy with His disciples.

It had been a tumultuous week for the disciples. Their Master had been betrayed by one of their own and crucified. Now He had appeared to some of the women, to Peter, and then to all of them behind locked doors—and then disappeared! What now? Still uncertain of the next step to take, they returned to their homes and previous vocations in Galilee. Most of them were fishermen, and they began, once again, the hard work of fishing.

Jesus had told them that after His resurrection He would go before them to Galilee, and an angel had promised the women that Jesus would meet with them there as well (Mt 26:32; 28:7). In this topic we will see that He did.

Early one morning, seven of Jesus' disciples floated toward shore in their fishing boat, after casting their nets into the sea all night, always pulling them back empty.

In the distance, they saw a stranger walking upon the shore. Perhaps because of the distance and the early morning light, they did not recognize Him when He said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" "No," they replied. The stranger called another instruction: "Throw your nets on the other side of the boat!" A bit puzzled, the disciples complied. The nets were pulled back so full, the men were not able to haul it all in! Peter counted exactly 153 fish!

John was the first to recognize the stranger as the Lord Jesus. They could not bring their boat to shore quickly enough. They greeted their Master, and then they shared breakfast together on the beach.

### **QUESTION 16**

Please read Matthew 26:33, Luke 22:33, and John 13:37. With these verses in mind, why do you think Jesus said, "Do you truly love Me more than [the other disciples]?" (Jn 21:15)?

### **QUESTION 17**

Why do you think Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him? Read John 18:17; 25; 27 before you record your answer in your Life Notebook.

### **QUESTION 18**

In John 21:15-17, what three commands did Jesus give to Peter? How would you apply this to your own ministry to others? How can these commands be fulfilled in a church context? How did Jesus fulfill them? Record your responses and an application of this in your own church in your Life Notebook.

## **Topic 6: Parting Words**

### **Thursday, May 14, AD 33.**

We now come to the final section of our study of the greatest life that was ever lived. In this topic, we will learn of His final teaching to His disciples during His final forty days on earth (Acts 1:1-3).

After the time with Jesus in Galilee, the disciples headed south to remain in the city as Jesus commanded them (Lk 24:49). They waited for Him, and then He appeared one final time. Finally, He led them to the Mount of Olives, where they witnessed His ascension (Acts 1:9-10).

## Parting Words in Galilee

### Assignment

- Read Matthew 28:16-20 and Mark 16:14-18.

The events of this topic probably occurred sometime after the fishing trip in Galilee mentioned in the preceding topic. As mentioned in the preceding topic, Jesus had promised to meet them in Galilee (Mt 26:32) and the women had been instructed by the angel and Jesus to go there as well (Mt 28:7, 10).

In Galilee, He met with His disciples several more times before they went to Jerusalem to witness His ascension and to be endowed with power from the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' final words on earth, spoken in Galilee, have come to be known as His Great Commission.

### QUESTION 19

Match each Scripture with its unique emphasis on the Great Commission.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Unique Emphasis</i>
Matthew 28:18-20	Teach them to observe all the things which I have taught
Mark 16:15	Proclaim national repentance and the forgiveness of sins
Luke 24:47	Preach the gospel
John 20:21	We are to testify to what Christ has done
Acts 1:8	We are to model Christ's way of life to the world

### QUESTION 20

Based on reading the passages in the previous question, what is the basic thrust of the Great Commission?

- A. To explain how people can come to know Christ
- B. To make disciples
- C. To strive for social justice in all cultures
- D. To minister to the poor

### QUESTION 21

Please read the Great Commission carefully in Matthew 28:16-20. Notice its five components. Record your thoughts on the significance of each section of the Commission to us today in your Life Notebook.

1. "All authority on heaven and earth has been given to Me"
2. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations"
3. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"
4. "Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."
5. "And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."

## The Ascension from the Mount of Olives

### Assignment

- Read Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-8; Mark 16:19-20.



Earlier, when Jesus had appeared to the disciples the day after the resurrection, He had told them to remain in the city of Jerusalem until they were imbued with power from on high (Lk 24:49). So the disciples proceeded south once again to wait upon the Lord in the city where He was crucified. (Acts 1:4-5). We are not sure how long they waited, but the wait was well worth it.

The ascension took place on the Mount of Olives two kilometers across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem, where Jesus had given a prophetic discourse forty-five days before.

Now Jesus issued His final charge to His disciples and many others, and then they watched, spellbound, as He ascended into heaven, disappearing into the clouds. Two angels appeared and promised that one day Jesus would return in the same manner. The disciples then returned to Jerusalem to wait for the coming Holy Spirit.

## **QUESTION 22**

Jesus appeared a number of times to different people during the forty days between His resurrection and ascension. Please review once again these Scriptures: Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 15:9-11; 16:14-18, Luke 24:1-51; John 20:11-29; 21:1-23, Acts 1:1-11; 9:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:4-8.

Then open your Life Notebook and under each reference:

- Record the people to whom Jesus appeared.
- Identify when and where each appearance occurred.
- Summarize comments Jesus made to those to whom He appeared.

During this forty-day period, the disciples received a clearer understanding of Jesus and His mission. Now they were able to grasp the things He had taught them prior to His crucifixion and were ready to embark on their life work.

The ascension marked the end of the period of Christ's humiliation and His entrance into the state of exaltation. Even the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension involved some limitation; for example, with respect to showing His glory. Notice that His post-resurrection, pre-ascension appearances did not startle the disciples as far as the appearance of His resurrection body was concerned. But the post-ascension appearance of Christ to John described in Revelation 1 was much more awe-inspiring.

The ascension having taken place, Christ then was ready to begin His ministry of intercession for those who are His own.

## **QUESTION 23**

Please read the article from Ryrie's *Basic Theology* on the Ascension of Christ and summarize this story in one paragraph.

### **The Ascension of Christ**

From Charles Ryrie's *Basic Theology*. Adapted from Chapter 47. Ministries of Christ

The resurrection and ascension of our Lord provided His entrance into heaven and the beginning of additional ministries for Him. One, at least, He has already done; others He is doing throughout the entire period between His ascension and His second coming; others are yet to begin in the future. In this chapter we shall look at these ministries briefly (since many overlap other areas of theology).

## **I. PAST MINISTRY**

Before His death our Lord promised not to leave the disciples orphans but to send another Paraclete (Jn 14:16–18, 26; 15:26; 16:7). That last verse plainly says that the coming of the Spirit depended on Christ's going to the Father.

Peter reiterated this on the Day of Pentecost, claiming that it was the risen and ascended Christ who sent the Holy Spirit and accompanying proofs that they witnessed on that day (Acts 2:33). Both the Resurrection (Acts 2:32) and Ascension (Acts 2:34) are specifically mentioned by Peter as prerequisite to the sending of the Spirit.

## **II. PRESENT MINISTRY**

### **A. As Head of His Body**

By His resurrection and ascension our Lord was positioned in the place of honor at the right hand of the Father to be Head over the church, His body (Eph 1:20–23). This involves a number of specific ministries He performs in relation to the body.

*1. He formed the body.* He formed the body by sending the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost to baptize believers into the body (Acts 1:5; 2:33; 1 Cor 12:13). Though the Spirit's work of baptizing is the immediate agent that effects placing people in the body, the ascended Christ is the ultimate Agent because He sent the Spirit. The practical effect of this new position should be disassociation from the old life and demonstration of newness of life (Rom 6:4–5).

*2. He cares for His body in a number of ways.* He sanctifies it (Eph 5:26), a reference to the entire process of sanctification that begins at conversion and continues until we are presented perfect in His presence in heaven. Conversion in this passage is signified by the reference to "washing" and "with the word," the former apparently referring to baptism and the latter to the public confession by the one being baptized at that time.

His work of sanctifying includes nourishing and cherishing His body (Eph 5:29). To nourish means to bring to maturity (as in Eph 6:4). To cherish means literally to keep warm, thus to love and care for His children (the only other occurrence of the word is in 1 Thess 2:7).

*3. Our ascended Lord also gives gifts to the body.* (Eph 4:7–13). First He descended into "the lower parts [i.e.] the earth" ("earth" in Eph 4:9 is an appositive genitive that names the lower parts). Then He ascended on high. And when He ascended, He led captive a host of captives. Here Paul uses an illustration from Psalm 68:18 in which the triumphant warrior is exalted when he returns with captured prisoners. He receives gifts from the conquered people and gives gifts to his own people. Christ conquered sin and death during His ministry on earth; now He gives gifts to His followers during His ministry in heaven. In 1 Corinthians 12:5 the giving of gifts is also related to the Lord.

*4. The ascended Lord also empowers the body.* (Jn 15:1–10). This well-known illustration of the Vine and branches makes clear that without the power of the living Christ flowing through us we can do nothing. Clearly that power is resurrection power dependent on a relationship of our being in Him and His being in us (Jn 14:17). And that relationship did not exist before He went to the Father. On His part this ministry involves discipline or encouragement (depending on the meaning of "takes away" [Jn 15:2], as in John 11:39, but which can also mean "lifts up," as in Jn 8:59), and cleansing (Jn 15:3). On our part it requires abiding, which means keeping His commandments (Jn 15:10; 1 Jn 3:24).

### **B. As Priest for His People**

As a faithful Priest our ascended Lord sympathizes, succors, and gives grace to His people (Heb 2:18; 4:14–16). In the latter passage the writer predicates this ministry on the Ascension—He "passed through the heavens."

As a faithful Priest our Lord intercedes for His people (Heb 7:25). The writer linked this ministry to the fact that this Priest, unlike Old Testament priests, is not subject to death anymore but abides a Priest forever and lives forever to intercede for His people. As to the exact form this ministry may take in communicating or mentioning our needs we cannot fully know; but it apparently focuses both on the positive aspect of asking that things be prevented from happening in our lives (Lk 22:32) and the negative aspect of cleansing us from evil things that do happen (1 John 2:1-2). We will not know until we are in heaven all that this ministry of our High Priest has meant in our lives, both in its positive and negative facets.

As High Priest our Lord also serves as a Forerunner, assuring us that we will eventually have an entrance into heaven as He already has had (Heb 6:19–20). The word “forerunner” is used of a scout reconnoitering, or of a herald announcing the coming of a king; in other words, it implies that others are to follow. Christ is now in heaven as our Priest; this assures us that we will follow Him there someday.

### **C. As Preparer of a Place for Us**

Just before His death, the Lord informed the disciples that He was shortly going to prepare a place for them, after which He would return to take them there (Jn 14:1–3). The “Father’s house” refers to heaven, and in heaven are many abiding places. The word occurs only in verses 2 and 23 and indicates permanent residences. Part of His present work today is preparing these residences for His own. To be able to begin to do this He must go to the Father through the way (Jn 14:6) of death and resurrection.

## **Topic 7: Matching Events**

### **QUESTION 24**

To help you memorize these events, we have compiled a list of important events in the life of Christ. Take a moment and review events 54-61 in the article “Matching Events” in the appendix. Cover the event descriptions and see if you can identify the associated Scriptures.

## Lesson 12 Self Check

### QUESTION 1

If Jesus had not ascended to heaven, He would not be a high priest for us today. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 2

If Jesus had not risen from the dead, we would have no guarantee of which of the following?

- A. Our own resurrection bodies
- B. The Father's love for us
- C. Our justification
- D. The Holy Spirit's presence

### QUESTION 3

One single fact establishes that the tomb was empty. What is it?

- A. More than five hundred saw Him at the same time.
- B. The leaders had to fabricate the stolen-body theory to explain why the tomb was empty.
- C. Mass hallucinations are not possible.
- D. Jesus could not have swooned and then appeared vital and powerful.

### QUESTION 4

The first thing that impressed the disciples when they saw the tomb was that it was empty. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 5

What was the main cause for the experience of the burning heart, according to the Emmaus travelers?

- A. They talked about Christ as they journeyed.
- B. They talked to Christ as they journeyed.
- C. Christ broke the bread at the meal.
- D. Christ talked to them along the way.

### QUESTION 6

A valid presentation of the gospel and way to salvation must which of the following?

- A. Belief that Jesus is the Messiah and commitment to follow Him
- B. Faith in Christ and repentance
- C. Submission to Christ's Lordship and personal trust
- D. Personal faith in Christ
- E. Repentance and baptism
- F. Baptism and faith

### QUESTION 7

A probable significance of the fact that Jesus breathed on His disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit is that He wanted to show that believers can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit after they have believed. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 8

According to Robert Coleman in *Impartation*, what is the **principal** concept Jesus says is necessary, if we are to have a global impact?

- A. We must have His life in us by the Spirit if we are to do His work and practice His teaching.
- B. We must demonstrate love for others.
- C. We must clearly present the gospel.
- D. We must follow Jesus' discipleship model of working with only a few individuals.

### QUESTION 9

what is the basic thrust of the Great Commission?

- A. To explain how people can come to know Christ
- B. To make disciples
- C. To strive for social justice in all cultures
- D. To minister to the poor

### QUESTION 10

According to Ryrie's article on the Ascension in *Basic Theology*, a major purpose of the ascension was to open up the various priestly ministries of Christ for His church. *True or False?*



## Unit 4 Exam: Life of Christ, Volume 2

### QUESTION 1

Based on the article, which of the following was not a possible motivation Judas's betrayal of his Master?

- A. He was disappointed that he was not going to be reigning in the kingdom.
- B. He wanted monetary compensation for the sacrifices he had made.
- C. He was a thief.
- D. Jesus seemed uncertain about His role, so Judas wanted to force him to establish His kingdom.

### QUESTION 2

Which of the following was the most plausible of the possible reasons the temple guards fell to the ground?

- A. They fell down to worship Jesus.
- B. A supernatural force emanated from Jesus, knocking them over.
- C. They were slain in the Spirit.
- D. They were staggered by His self-disclosure as Yahweh.

### QUESTION 3

Because Peter denied his Lord, it is legitimate to conclude that for a time at least, he temporarily lost his salvation. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 4

Finally Caiaphas broke another rule of the Jewish court, placing Jesus under oath in order to force Him to condemn Himself. *True or False?*

### QUESTION 5

What was the purpose of the meeting before the Sanhedrin?

- A. To discern whether or not Jesus had in fact committed blasphemy
- B. To kill Jesus
- C. To investigate His claims to be the "Son of Man"
- D. To provide a forum where witnesses could be called

### QUESTION 6

Which of the following was not a reason the Sanhedrin took Jesus to Pilate instead of just executing Him themselves?

- A. They feared a public uprising.
- B. If the Jews executed Him it would be by stoning, which they did not prefer.
- C. It was illegal for them execute Him.
- D. They wanted Him to die the most humiliating death possible: crucifixion.

**QUESTION 7**

Which of the following best describes Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane?

- A. Heard and answered at a different time and in a different way
- B. Not heard by God
- C. Ignored by God
- D. Answered immediately by God

**QUESTION 8**

Jesus was completely sinless. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 9**

How many times did Pilate say Jesus was innocent?

- A. One
- B. Three
- C. Five
- D. Seven

**QUESTION 10**

According to the article, breaking the seal of the tomb would not have led to any serious consequences. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 11**

Shortly after Jesus' resurrection, many Old Testament saints were resurrected from the dead as well. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 12**

What does the fourth word from the cross show?

- A. Jesus had memorized the psalms.
- B. Jesus doubted God's existence.
- C. Jesus was not in communion with the Father.
- D. No one has a sure hope of salvation.

**QUESTION 13**

Which of the following does not provide secular evidence for the death of Jesus outside the Bible?

- A. Josephus in *Antiquities*.
- B. Pontius Pilate in *My Records*.
- C. Tacitus in *Annals*.
- D. Celsus, an enemy of Christianity.

**QUESTION 14**

Which of the answers below is the one given by the lesson regarding what we must do to follow in Christ's steps when we suffer?

- A. Learn to trust our entire situation to God.
- B. Promise of obey Christ in everything
- C. Agree to forgive those who sincerely ask for forgiveness.
- D. Be willing to gracefully confront the one who offended us.

**QUESTION 15**

The thief on the cross trusted in Christ at the last moment. Based on your study, what is the most likely implication we can draw from this?

- A. This should caution us against any emphasis on last minute conversion.
- B. This was probably the last event in a series of event that led to his decision to trust Christ.
- C. His decision may have been false in that all he wanted was to guarantee final arrival in heaven if in fact there is a heaven.
- D. His decision was probably invalid because there was not baptism with water involved.

**QUESTION 16**

It is impossible for us to satisfy Jesus' thirst today. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 17**

What is the basic thrust of the Great Commission?

- A. To explain how people can come to know Christ
- B. To make disciples
- C. To strive for social justice in all cultures
- D. To minister to the poor

**QUESTION 18**

If Jesus had not ascended to heaven, He would not be a high priest for us today. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 19**

What was the main cause for the experience of the burning heart, according to the Emmaus travelers?

- A. They talked about Christ as they journeyed.
- B. Christ talked to them along the way.
- C. They talked to Christ as they journeyed.
- D. Christ broke the bread at the meal.

**QUESTION 20**

According to Ryrie's article on the Ascension in *Basic Theology*, a major purpose of the ascension was to open up the various priestly ministries of Christ for His church. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 21**

According to “Trial Before Pilate,” what did Jesus mean when He claimed that His kingdom was not of this world? *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men.
- B. His kingdom has no political implications.
- C. His kingdom source and authority do not come from men.
- D. His kingdom will not be established by military or political means.

**QUESTION 22**

The ripping of the temple veil indicated that the way of access to God was now available to all Jews through Christ. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 23**

When Jesus screamed “*Tetelestai!*” from the cross, He meant “It has been paid in full!” *True or False?*

**QUESTION 24**

If Jesus had not risen from the dead, we could still be certain of our justification. *True or False?*

**QUESTION 25**

A valid presentation of the gospel and means to salvation must include which of the following?

- A. Belief that Jesus is the Messiah and commitment to follow Him
- B. Repentance and faith in Christ
- C. Submission to Christ’s Lordship and personal trust
- D. Personal faith in Christ

## Lesson 12 Answers to Questions

**QUESTION 1:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 2**

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Significance of the Resurrection</i>
Romans 1:4	Validates His deity
Ephesians 1:19-20	Demonstrates God's power over sin and death
Romans 4:25	Guarantees our justification, confirming that the Father accepted Christ's sacrifice
1 Corinthians 15:25	Guarantees the believer's bodily resurrection
1 Corinthians 15:12-19	Gives assurance that we are no longer under the penalty of sin and that that our faith is true and living

**QUESTION 3:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 4**

- B. Some were hostile
- D. Many were still alive

**QUESTION 5**

- B. The leaders had to fabricate the stolen-body theory to explain why the tomb was empty.

**QUESTION 6**

- A. They appear to be totally oblivious to the truth in defending their criminal action. They even disregarded the testimony of their personal guards.
- B. Their deep-seated unbelief substantiates what Abraham said when he spoke to the rich man in Hades, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead" (Lk 16:31).
- C. They resort to a criminal bribery to hide the truth, yet supposedly they are the guardians of truth for Israel.
- D. They resort to the ridiculous story that the guards had fallen asleep. If the Roman guards were asleep, how would they know that the disciples took the body?

**QUESTION 7:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 8**

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Teaching</i>
1 Peter 2:1-3	Newborn believers need spiritual milk in order to grow.
1 Corinthians 2:14	Nonbelievers cannot understand biblical truth.
2 Timothy 2:7	The Lord will give insight into the meaning and application of the Bible.
1 Corinthians 2:15	The person who you are determines your ability to see and understand spiritual truth.
1 Corinthians 3:1-2	Neglect of spiritual growth can hinder one's ability to receive spiritual illumination from the Holy Spirit in the Bible.
Hebrews 5:11-14	One who continues to drink only "milk" will never have spiritual discernment.

**QUESTION 9**

<i>Old Testament Prophecy</i>	<i>New Testament Fulfillment</i>
Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:5
Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:1-10
Zechariah 11:12-13	Matthew 26:15
Psalms 22:18	Matthew 27:35
Psalms 22:14-16	Luke 23:33
Isaiah 53:5-6	Mark 10:45

**QUESTION 10:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 11:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 12:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 13:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 14**

- B. Thomas' doubt became the occasion for one of the greatest confessions of Christ recorded in the Gospels, "My Lord and my God!"
- D. Thomas's confession naturally led to the purpose statement of the entire gospel.

**QUESTION 15**

- A. Belief that Jesus is the Messiah
- B. Faith in Christ
- D. Belief that Jesus is God

**QUESTION 16:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 17:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 18:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 19**

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Unique Emphasis</i>
Matthew 28:18-20	Teach them to observe all the things which I have taught
Mark 16:15	Preach the gospel
Luke 24:47	Proclaim national repentance and the forgiveness of sins
John 20:21	We are to model Christ's way of life to the world
Acts 1:8	We are to testify to what Christ has done

**QUESTION 20**

- B. To make disciples

**QUESTION 21:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 22:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 23:** *Your answer*

**QUESTION 24:** *See Matching Events chart*

## Lesson 12 Self Check Answers

**QUESTION 1:** True

**QUESTION 2**

C. Our justification

**QUESTION 3**

B. The leaders had to fabricate the stolen-body theory to explain why the tomb was empty.

**QUESTION 4:** False

**QUESTION 5**

D. Christ talked to them along the way.

**QUESTION 6**

D. Personal faith in Christ

**QUESTION 7:** False

**QUESTION 8**

A. We must have His life in us by the Spirit if we are to do His work and practice His teaching.

**QUESTION 9**

B. To make disciples

**QUESTION 10:** True

## Unit 4 Exam Answers

### QUESTION 1

D. Jesus seemed uncertain about His role, so Judas wanted to force him to establish His kingdom.

### QUESTION 2

D. They were staggered by His self-disclosure as Yahweh.

**QUESTION 3:** False

**QUESTION 4:** True

### QUESTION 5

B. To kill Jesus

### QUESTION 6

A. They feared a public uprising.

### QUESTION 7

A. Heard and answered at a different time and in a different way

**QUESTION 8:** True

### QUESTION 9

C. Five

**QUESTION 10:** False

**QUESTION 11:** False

### QUESTION 12

C. Jesus was not in communion with the Father.

### QUESTION 13

B. Pontius Pilate in *My Records*.

### QUESTION 14

A. Learn to trust our entire situation to God.

### QUESTION 15

B. This was probably the last event in a series of event that led to his decision to trust Christ.

**QUESTION 16:** False

### QUESTION 17

B. To make disciples

**QUESTION 18:** True

### QUESTION 19

B. Christ talked to them along the way.

**QUESTION 20:** True

### QUESTION 21

C. His kingdom source and authority do not come from men.

D. His kingdom will not be established by military or political means.

**QUESTION 22:** False

**QUESTION 23:** True

**QUESTION 24:** False

### QUESTION 25

D. Personal faith in Christ



# Finished at Last!

---

You have just finished studying the greatest life ever lived. People all over the world recognize that Jesus of Nazareth is the cornerstone of history: the greatest teacher, moral example, and model of God's way of life ever to draw breath on our planet. He was God in the flesh, just as He claimed to be.

In this course, you have traced His life from cradle to crucifixion to ascension. You have been exposed to the greatest teachings ever given to man. You now understand more clearly His life and mission and what He expects of you.

In His final commission, He instructed us to make disciples of all nations. If we really believe that He is who He claimed to be, there is nothing more important than sharing His teachings with others. We cannot make disciples if we are not first of all committed to be disciples. If Christ is God, and He died for you, following Him completely is not too great a sacrifice.

You have done well. You have completed this work and taken months to reflect on what you have read and studied.

Now, it's time to go forward and put it into practice.

## Appendix: Matching Events

The Greatest Life: Matching Events with Scripture I		
Event #	Scripture	Description
1	Luke 1:26	Angel foretells Jesus' birth
2	Luke 2	Jesus is born In Bethlehem
3	Matthew 2:1-12	Wise men visit Jesus
4	Luke 2:41-52	Jesus at age twelve in the temple
5	Matthew 3	John the Baptist begins his ministry
6	Matthew 3:13-17	Baptism of Christ
7	Matthew 4	Temptation by Satan
8	John 1	Jesus calls His first disciples
9	John 2	Jesus turns water to wine
10	John 2:12-22	First temple cleansing
11	John 3	Jesus and Nicodemus
12	John 4	Samaritan woman at the well
13	Luke 4	Rejection at Nazareth
14	Mark 1	Second call of the disciples
15	Mark 1; Matthew 4	Healing Peter's mother-in-law
16	Luke 5	First miraculous catch
17	Mark 2; Matthew 9	Paralytic forgiven and healed
18	Matt 9, Mark 2; Lk 5	Calling of Matthew
19	Matt 12; Mark 2; Luke 6	Sabbath controversy
20	Mark 3; Luke 6	Third calling of the twelve disciples
21	Mark 3; Luke 6	Sermon on the Mount



The Greatest Life: Matching Events with Scripture 2		
Event #	Scripture	Description
22	Matt 8; Luke 7	Healing a centurion's servant
23	Matt 12	Leader's rejection of kingdom offer
24	Matt 13; Mark 4; Luke 8	Ten parables of the kingdom
25	Matt 13; Mark 4; Luke 8	Calming the storm
26	Mark 5	Healing the demoniac
27	Mark 5	Jairus' daughter raised
28	Matt 9; Mark 5; Luke 8	Healing two blind men
29	Mark 6; Matt 9,10; Luke 9	The Twelve sent out
30	Matt 14:1	John the Baptist beheaded
31	Matt 14:13	Feeding the 5,000
32	Matt 14:22	Walking on water
33	John 6:22-71	Bread of Life Discourse
34	Matt 15:32-39	Feeding 4,000 Gentiles
35	Mark 8	Healing of the blind man at Bethesda
36	John 7:2-10	Jesus arrives at the Feast of Tabernacles and offers living water
37	John 8:1-9	Adulterous woman
38	John 8:12-47	Light of the World Discourse
39	John 9	Healing of man born blind
40	John 10	The Good Shepherd Discourse
41	John 10:22	Jesus attends Feast of Dedication and claims to be God



The Greatest Life: Matching Events with Scripture 3		
Event #	Scripture	Description
42	Matt 16; Mark 8; Luke 9	Peter's confession
43	Matt 17; Mark 9; Luke 9	The Transfiguration
44	Luke 10	Sending out the seventy
45	Luke 17	Healing the ten lepers
46	John 11	Raising of Lazarus
47	Luke 19	Healing of blind Bartimaeus
48	John 11:55-12:2	Jesus anointed by Mary, Martha's sister
49	Matt 21	Triumphal entry
50	Luke 19:45-46	Cursing the fig tree
51	Matt 21:12-19	Second temple cleansing
52	Matt 24	The Olivet Discourse
53	John 13-17	The Last Supper and Upper Room Discourse
54	Luke 22	Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
55	Luke 23	Jesus' crucifixion
56	Matthew 27	Jesus in the tomb
57	Matthew 28	Resurrection
58	Luke 24	Jesus on the road to Emmaus
59	John 20:19-23	Jesus appears to disciples
60	John 20:24-29	Jesus appears to Thomas and others
61	Mark 16	Jesus' ascension