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The Gospel of Luke

Introduction

The heart of the Bible is found in the four Gospels. The Gospels are the Good News of God and His revelation in Jesus Christ. All of the Old Testament has been preparatory for the coming of the Messiah and the New Testament declares and illuminates God's revelation.

Each of the four Gospels teaches us and proclaims the same Good News given unto man. But each one presents the story in its own unique perspective. Each Gospel presents its own special appeal for the reader. Because of the uniqueness of each Gospel it is profitable for the hearer of the good news and brings its own special beauty in the portrayal of Jesus Christ. There are many who take a special preference to the Gospel of Luke. The author of this Gospel spent much energy in his research and was meticulous in presenting his Gospel as a complete and truthful account of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. This Gospel emphasizes God's love for all people of all walks of life and wanting to leave none behind.

Title

The title of this Gospel account comes from the author's name as well as the other three Gospels. It is generally accepted that the author was Luke who, unlike the other writers of the Gospels, was a Gentile. A Gentile was a non-Jew. Luke was the only Gentile to write any of the books of Scripture. Luke not only wrote the Gospel of Luke but also the Book of Acts.

Author and Date

There is little known about Luke as he never included any personal information about himself in any of his writing. We know little about his background or of his conversion to the Christian faith. Luke is identified as a native of the city of Antioch by Eusebius and Jerome. Luke spent much of his time as a companion of the Apostle Paul from the time of Paul's Macedonian vision, (Acts 16:9-10) to Paul's martyrdom. (2 Timothy 4:11)

We know that Luke was not only a historian but also a physician as Paul referred to Luke. (Colossians 4:14) The medical abilities of Luke become evident in the high detail of his accounts of Jesus' healing ministry.

It is clear to us that the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts were written by the same author. (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1) In neither book Luke does not identify himself as the author but his use of "we" in many sections of Acts shows that he was a close companion of the Apostle Paul. (Acts 16:10-17; Acts 20:5-15; Acts 21:1-18; Acts 27:1-28:16) Paul mentions Luke often and is the only one who fits the profile to be the author of the books of Luke and Acts. (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 1:24) The early Church Fathers agree unanimously that Luke was the author of Luke and Acts as well.

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Both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts appear to have been written about the same time with the Gospel being written first. They are a two volume work addressed to Theophilus. (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1) Luke's work gives a sweeping history from the time of Jesus' birth to Paul's imprisonment in Rome. (Acts 28:30-31)

The book of Acts concludes with Paul's imprisonment and leads us to believe that Luke wrote both books at that time. (AD 60-62) Luke recorded Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of Rome in AD 70 but he does not speak to the fulfillment of that prophecy. Luke usually did record the fulfillment of prophecy, (Acts 11:28) so it is unlikely that Luke wrote after his time in Rome with Paul.

Background and Setting

Both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts were written and dedicated to Theophilus. Theophilus was a person and not an honorary title. The Coptic Church claims that the person was a Jew of Alexandria. Similarly, John Wesley in his notes on the New Testament recorded that Theophilus was "a person of eminent quality at Alexandria", which he understood to be the tradition "of the ancients". Others say that Theophilus was probably a Roman official of some sort, because Luke referred to him as "most excellent" (Luke 1:3), although in the parallel introduction to Acts he is simply referred to as 'O Theophilus'. (Wikipedia)

Luke's writing was not here say or second hand information. Luke states that his source was that of eye witnesses and stated that he himself was not a witness to these events in his Gospel. (Luke 1:1-2) Luke's purpose was to give an ordered account of the events of the Life of Jesus. This does not mean that Luke was restricted to a chronological order in every instance. Luke claim to eyewitness accounts does not disclaim divine inspiration for his work. In all Scripture divine inspiration does not set aside personality, vocabularies, and styles of the human authors. Luke's research for his work was also by divine providence. The writings of Luke were moved by the Spirit of God. (2 Peter 1:21)

Theological Themes

In the Gospel of Luke we grasp the love that Jesus had for the Gentiles, Samaritans, women, children, tax-collectors, sinners, and others often regarded as outcast by the Jewish nation.

Luke often mentioned the Holy Spirit in his Gospel. (Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 67; Luke 2:25; 4:14, 18; Luke 11:13; Luke 12:12) Luke also emphasized the prayer life of Jesus. (Luke 3:21; Luke 5:16; Luke 6:12; Luke 9:18, 28-29; Luke 11:1, 22:32, 42; Luke 23:34, 46) Joyful praise is a distinctive theme in this Gospel. Three chapters have hymn like passages. (Luke 1:46-55, 67-79; Luke 2:29-32) Jesus had great concern for the poor and said much about possessions. (Luke 4:18; Luke 6:20, 30; Luke 14:13, 21) Jesus also had much instruction about how we are to use our possessions. (Luke 12:13-34; Luke 16:1-31; Luke 18:18-30)

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Chapter 1

Prologue

Verses 1-4

It is clear in verse 1 that Luke was not the first Gospel writer. The Gospel of Mark was one of the Gospels that was written before Luke's work. Over fifty verses found in Luke can be seen in their essence in the Gospel of Mark. There is a higher percentage of verses in the Gospel of Matthew found from Mark, ninety percent. It is believed that Matthew and Luke had copies of the Gospel of Mark at the time of their writing.

It is likely that these early writings were not complete in their account of the coming, teachings, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Luke implies this in verse 3. ***"It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus."*** The earlier writings were of only one or a few perspectives of the Gospel message. An example would be that Luke and Matthew focused on the teachings of Jesus much more than Mark. This tends to make us think that there were many written records of the teachings of Jesus and Luke and Matthew had copies.

The Gospel writers wrote after a period of time when there was much teaching and preaching by those who had been with Jesus. The people of Palestine were literate but they did not depend on the written word as much as we do today. They were very skilled in memorization and spoke from the heart. This was a century old practice of their forefathers. This skill was used by God in the early period for spreading the Gospel.

The Apostles were busy in this period telling and re-telling all that Jesus had said and done. The people heard, learned, memorized and told of what they had heard and learned. As time passed people began to write these things and the Apostles were on hand to be sure that the truth was being written. It is unknown when these first writings were produced.

One factor that encouraged the writing of the Gospels was the spread of the Gospel to the Roman and Greek world. These Gentile populations were less skilled at memorization than the Jewish people. The Gentiles were more reliant upon the written word.

Another reason was the Church letters written by the Apostle Paul and the other Apostles. Most of the Church Epistles were written before the Gospels. The use of Church letters was to communicate to the converts in places that the Apostles could not personally be at any given time. These letters greatly extended their influence.

The greatest reason for the writing of the Gospels was that the era of the Apostles was passing. As the Apostles grew older and some of them passed from the scene, the Church fathers realized that their testimony needed to be preserved.

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Luke and the others did not write something of their own interpretation or by a vision of their own thinking. They wrote the teachings of the eye-witness accounts of the Apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In verse three we see the word “also.” Luke was writing to Theophilus so that he would know the correct account of all that had happened. The word “also” tells us that Luke considered that it was important for himself also to investigate the truth. The question then becomes why Luke felt the need to write his Gospel account.

The other writings at the time were focused on various perspectives and not on the whole Gospel message. The focus of Matthew was to present Jesus to the Jewish readers as the proven Messiah. Mark stressed the facts and actions of Jesus rather than themes or topics. John’s focus is stated in the following verse. **“But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”** (John 20:31) Luke wanted to write a complete account and his research included everything from the beginning. Therefore the Gospel of Luke is longer than the other three Gospels. In fact if you include the Book of Acts Luke wrote more of the New Testament than any other writer. An example would be that Luke went back to the events related to the birth of Jesus where Mark began with the ministry of John the Baptist. Of course Luke did not tell all that his research had revealed to him but only that which fitted his purpose.

One of the goals of Luke was to write an orderly account of the life of Jesus. Luke wanted to take all that he had learned from his research and place them in an orderly account from Jesus’ coming, teachings, miracles, ministry, death, and resurrection. Orderly does not mean that there is an exact chronological order at every point of the story. Luke’s Gospel has more to do with a logical and meaningful flow of the events and teaching of Jesus’ ministry.

Verses 1-4 also show that there is no contradiction of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures and the full utilization of human skill and process. God was able to use the research and talent of Luke whose goal was to use a wide source as his foundation for a well-written and faith inspiring account of **“all that Jesus began to do and teach.”** (Acts 1:1)

Luke’s account was to give Theophilus the truth and certainty of the Christian Gospel. Luke was not only a careful writer of the history of the life and work of Jesus Christ, but he was a faithful witness. In our times historians tend to be more objective and have criticized Luke for his perspective of faith. The historians view is very influential of what he writes. Historians strive to be objective but readily admit that their perspective has an effect upon what they write. Luke was a very careful and exact historian but he made no secret of his faith or his purpose to persuade others to have a faith in Jesus Christ.

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Coming of the Christ

Verses 1:5 to 2:52

The first portion of Luke's Gospel is the introduction of the Good News. The Greek word for Good News is "euaggelizo" and is the word from which we get evangelism. We see this word in 1:19 and 2:10. Most of the themes of this Gospel are more developed in later chapters but are introduced in these verses from 1:5 to 2:52. They are; the fulfillment of the Old Testament in Christ; prayer; the Holy Spirit; salvation; forgiveness; hope for the outcast; light for the people; the dawning of a new day; and the role of women in God's work.

The birth of John the Baptist and Jesus are intermixed and their relationship is of a major concern in these verses. John is the last and the greatest of the prophets. Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world.

The events of these verses are filled with mystery and miracles. Angels deliver messages from God. A child is born to an elderly couple well passed child bearing years. A virgin conceives and gives birth to a son. This was before the age of great medical science and it was amazing that Elizabeth was able to become with child. And for a virgin to become pregnant was a miracle.

Most miracles in the Bible fall into three periods of redemptive work. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt, Elijah and Elisha and the menace of Baal worship, and the events connected to the coming of Christ and the spread of the Gospel to a pagan world. The Bible clearly shows that God the Creator is and remains active in human history on behalf of His people. Anyone who will accept this visible truth has opened the door to the miraculous. Some are offended by the inference of the miraculous in the birth of Jesus. Others would be surprised of its cosmic significance if it were not accompanied by signs and wonders.

Answer to Prayer (1:5-25)

True Righteousness Verses 5-7

Zachariah and Elizabeth represent true righteousness. Their righteousness was not of the legalism that so many were in Israel of that day. They were members of the priestly family but they were different from the priest that controlled the Temple for their own advantage. They were prayerful and hoped for the coming of the Messiah.

They were of the mold of people that are mentioned in Luke 1:5 to 2:52 and are closely connected to the coming of the Christ. They, Mary and Joseph, Simeon, and Anna were the true righteous of Israel. They were people of faith in the Lord God.

Rebirth of Prophecy Verses 8-17

An angel appeared to Zachariah while he was offering incense in the Temple. Zachariah was an elderly man and this was his only time to perform his priestly service. There were many priest in Israel and only once in a lifetime did they have the opportunity to offer incense in the Temple. This would have been a high point in the life of Zachariah and as

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he was officiating his service unto God an angel appeared before him. Naturally Zechariah was terrified and the angel told Zechariah to not be afraid that his prayer had been answered. Elizabeth was barren and they had been praying that God would give them a child. The angel told Zachariah that she would have a child, a boy, and he was to name him John.

As the priest offering incense unto the Lord Zachariah would have been in prayer for the coming of the Messiah. It is the perfect timing of the Lord that Zechariah would be in the Temple on this day and that the announcement of the birth of John would be given unto him, and that child would be his. Now the official and personal prayers of Zechariah and Elizabeth had been answered as well as that of the people with the coming of the Messiah. The angel came unto Zachariah because the forerunner of the Messiah, John the Baptist would be born unto his wife Elizabeth. It would be Zachariah's son, John the Baptist that would call the people to repentance before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hearing that his son John would be filled with the Holy Spirit was an amazing statement as in Old Testament times only prophets of God were filled with the Holy Spirit. This pointed to the prophetic duties of John the Baptist. This also fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy that there would be a renewal of the Spirit and a rebirth of prophecy in connection with the coming of the Messiah. (Joel 2:28)

In verses 16-17 the angel recalls the prophecy of the Prophet Malachi of the promise that the return of Elijah would call the people to repentance. (Malachi 4:5-6)

Too Good to be True Verses 18-25

Zachariah responded to the angel much in the same way as Abraham when under the same circumstances. (Genesis 15:8) But Zachariah did not have the same strength of faith that Abraham had. The prophecy of the angel must have seemed too good to be true and Zachariah had doubt. Because of this unbelief Zachariah was struck dumb, unable to speak, until the birth of his son John the Baptist.

For Elizabeth this was great news and she rejoiced. It was a dishonor for a woman to be unable to give birth to a child and the years of waiting for an answer to their prayers had been long. She felt the anticipation and joy that the angel Gabriel had spoken of in verses 14.

A Miraculous Conception Verses 26-38

Zachariah and Elizabeth were not wealthy or powerful people and neither was Mary. But Mary, like Zachariah and Elizabeth, was a person of faith and integrity. It is significant that God would chose such people to be the parents of John the Baptist and Jesus.

The announcement to Zachariah and May have some parallels. In each case the angel Gabriel appeared and announced the birth of a son who was to play a role in the plan of God. Both the sons were born under unusual circumstances and both were named by the angel. In spite of this there is greater significance.

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There was a great difference between the two sons. John was to be a prophetic messenger, and Jesus was to be the Messiah, the Son of God. Each of them was called great, verses 15, 32, but Jesus by far was the greater. Take note of the titles of Jesus in verses 32-33, 35. In 32-33 we see the messianic passages as in, (2 Samuel 7:13-16; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 9:6-7). And in verse 35 Jesus is referred to as the Son of God, a title that is repeated by a voice from heaven at His baptism (3:22) and at the transfiguration. (9:35)

A more striking difference is the virgin birth. Jesus was not a child born to an old couple but to a virgin. Mary was engaged to Joseph but she was not his wife. She was a virgin. After the angels announcement Mary asked, "**Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"**" The angel told Mary that she would be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit in such a way that the child would be the Son of God. It is not that God had a sexual relation with Mary but a relation as in Genesis 1 where the Spirit of God was working in creation. The conception of John the Baptist has its parallel in the Old Testament with Abraham and Sarah in their old age. The conception of Jesus has it parallel in the miracle of divine creation.

There are ancient stories of divine beings that sprang forth fully grown into life. Jesus was divinely conceived and formed in the womb of His mother Mary. Jesus went through the process of a natural birth and grew into a man. This demonstrates the blending of the divine and the humanity of Jesus' conception and birth. This is not the message of the Gospel, the virgin birth. There is no salvation for man in the virgin birth of Jesus. The Gospel message is His death and resurrection.

There is also a difference between Zachariah and Mary's response to the prophecy of the angel Gabriel. Both were troubled and afraid by the appearance of Gabriel and they both questioned how such things could happen to them. But Zachariah did not have to faith to believe in what the angel was telling him and because of this he was struck dumb. But Mary believed the word of the Lord's angel. The angel Gabriel also told Mary that her relative Elizabeth was also with child even in her old age. Gabriel repeated the words spoken to Abraham and Sarah when they had received the promise of a son in their old age. (Genesis 18:14) "**For nothing will be impossible with God.**" (Verse 37) Mary had faith in the words of the angel and responded with trust and submission to the will of God.

Exalting the Lowly Verses 39-56

Mary was so excited that she quickly went to see Elizabeth to share with her the wonderful news. When Mary arrived at Elizabeth's home Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke as a prophet. She identified Mary as the mother of the Lord. "**And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me?"**" This acknowledgement reinforces that the child of Mary was superior.

The words of Gabriel in verse 28 and Elizabeth's words in verse 42 in later years exalted Mary to a divine state of her own. The point of these passages have become missed

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along with the whole New Testament. Mary was not the source of grace but only the recipient. Mary's blessedness came from her willingness to bless all as the channel of divine grace from God.

Mary's Song Verses 46-56

These verses expose the humility and trust that Mary had in her Lord. It is also a hymn like poem and is often called the Magnificat and is the first word in the Latin Bible. Here Mary displays her knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures as a lot of her speech comes from that material. Especially from Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. Mary was rejoicing to the Lord that He would find favor with one of such a lowly state. This, the very basis upon which she was called blessed by future generations. What had happened to Mary was bigger than she, as it was a sign of what God was doing for all people, not only His servant Israel.

Her song was also a celebration of the changed position of mankind under God's new order. It is also a demonstration that God's help is not given to the proud, mighty, and the rich of the world. People of this order seldom think of their need beyond themselves. The poor and lowly as Mary are open to God's grace and help. God's exaltation of Mary from her low estate was a sign of what God would do for all His oppressed people. For all people who know their need for the grace of God.

The Birth of a New Day Verses 57-80

The name of a child had great significance in the Jewish culture. At the birth of John the Baptist there was an amount of drama connected. The relatives and neighbors of Zachariah naturally thought that the child would be named after him. Elizabeth and Zachariah remembered the words of the angel and named the child John. The outcome of the drama caused the people to wonder what special destiny was ahead for the child named John. The people stated, "**What then will this child turn out to be?**" **For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.**" The Hebrew meaning of the name John is, "Jehovah has been gracious."

John the Baptist was to become a light in the darkness and this was the answer to the question of the people. Elizabeth when filled with the Spirit spoke prophetically concerning Mary's child. Now Zachariah was filled with the Spirit and spoke of a new day that was dawning. The hymn of Zachariah is often called the "Benedictus."

Zachariah did not speak so much about his son John the Baptist as he spoke about the coming of the promised Messiah. He spoke only as John the Baptist would be the one who was to prepare that way for the coming of the Messiah. Zachariah, as well as Elizabeth knew that John was not the main person in view and spoke this, "**And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways.**"

In the first half of Zachariah's hymn joins together a number of Old Testament promises that are now to be fulfilled by the coming of the Messiah. The language that Zachariah used is much like the language used in the deliverance of the Israelites from the land of

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Egypt. The promise that God had made to Abraham and David was also to be completed by the Messiah. The Messiah would also be an answer to the prophets of Israel.

The second half of Zachariah's hymn was more spiritual in a universal tone. He spoke of victory over the enemies of Israel. He also spoke of forgiveness of sins and salvation. There is an analogy using the sunrise in which he says, "**With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us.**"

We are given a picture that the world is living in darkness and the shadow of death. The coming of the Messiah would be a light that would pierce through that darkness. Though it was not stated here this prophecy was inclusive of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The universality of this become clearer later on in Luke and the book of Acts. Luke saw the truth that the people were covered in the fear of pagan superstition, in the darkness of their sin, and in the hopelessness of a relentless shadow of death.

The childhood of John the Baptist is summed up in the last verse. "**And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.**" The verse ends with great anticipation of when John would return from the wilderness. There the word of the Lord would come to him and he would go out and call a world to repentance.

New Testament Women

Name	Description	Scripture
Anna	Recognized Jesus as the long waited Messiah	Luke 2:36-38
Bernice	Sister of Agrippa before whom Paul made his defense	Acts 25:13
Candace	A Queen of Ethiopia	Acts 8:27
Chloe	Woman who knew of divisions in the Church of Corinth	1 Corinthians 1:11
Claudia	Christian of Rome	2 Timothy 4:21
Damaris	Woman of Athens converted under Paul's ministry	Acts 17:34
Dorcas (Tabitha)	Christian of Joppa who was raised from the dead by Peter	Acts 9:36-41
Drusilla	Wife of Felix, governor of Judea	Acts 24:24
Elizabeth	Mother of John the Baptist	Luke 1:5, 13
Eunice	Mother of Timothy	2 Timothy 1:5
Herodias	Queen who demanded the execution of John the Baptist	Matthew 14:3-10
Joanna	Provided for the material needs of Jesus	Luke 8:3
Lois	Grandmother of Timothy	2 Timothy 1:5
Lydia	Converted under Paul's ministry in Philippi	Acts 16:14
Martha & Mary	Sisters of Lazarus; friends of Jesus	Luke 10:38-42
Mary Magdalene	Woman which Jesus cast out demons	Matthew 27:56-61

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Phoebe	A servant, perhaps a deaconess. In the Church at Cenchrea	Romans 16:1-2
Priscilla	Wife of Aquila; laborer with Paul at Corinth and Ephesus	Acts 18:2, 18-19
Salome	Mother of Jesus' disciples James & John	Matthew 20:20-24
Sapphira	Held back goods from the early Christian community	Acts 5:1
Susanna	Provided for the material needs of Jesus	Luke 8:3

Chapter 2

The Good News of Great Joy Verses 1-20

The Emperor of Rome was Caesar Augustus and he ruled over most of the civilized world.

Caesar Augustus

Augustus (23 September 63 BC – 19 August 14 AD) was the founder of the Roman Empire and its first Emperor, ruling from 27 BC until his death in AD 14. He was born Gaius Octavius into an old and wealthy equestrian branch of the plebeian Octavia family. His maternal great-uncle Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC, and Octavius was named in Caesar's will as his adopted son and heir. He, Mark Antony, and Marcus Lepidus formed the Second Triumvirate to defeat the assassins of Caesar. Following their victory at Philippi, the Triumvirate divided the Roman Republic among themselves and ruled as military dictators. The Triumvirate was eventually torn apart under the competing ambitions of its members. Lepidus was driven into exile and stripped of his position, and Antony committed suicide following his defeat at the Battle of Actium by Octavian in 31 BC.

After the demise of the Second Triumvirate, Augustus restored the outward facade of the free Republic, with governmental power vested in the Roman Senate, the executive magistrates, and the legislative assemblies. In reality, however, he retained his autocratic power over the Republic as a military dictator. By law, Augustus held a collection of powers granted to him for life by the Senate, including supreme military command, and those of tribune and censor. It took several years for Augustus to develop the framework within which a formally republican state could be led under his sole rule. He rejected monarchical titles, and instead called himself Princeps Civitatis ("First Citizen of the State"). The resulting constitutional framework became known as the Principate, the first phase of the Roman Empire.

The reign of Augustus initiated an era of relative peace known as the Pax Romana (The Roman Peace). The Roman world was largely free from large-scale conflict for more than two centuries, despite continuous wars of imperial expansion on the Empire's frontiers and one year-long civil war over the imperial succession. Augustus dramatically enlarged the Empire, annexing Egypt, Dalmatia, Pannonia, Noricum, and Raetia; expanding possessions in Africa; expanding into Germania; and completing the conquest of Hispania.

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Beyond the frontiers, he secured the Empire with a buffer region of client states and made peace with the Parthian Empire through diplomacy. He reformed the Roman system of taxation, developed networks of roads with an official courier system, established a standing army, established the Praetorian Guard, created official police and fire-fighting services for Rome, and rebuilt much of the city during his reign.

Augustus died in AD 14 at the age of 75. He may have died from natural causes, although there were unconfirmed rumors that his wife Livia poisoned him. He was succeeded as Emperor by his adopted son (also stepson and former son-in-law) Tiberius. (Wikipedia)

Good News of Great Joy 1-20

Though during Augustus' reign it was relatively peaceful he was unable to give true peace. As Epictetus wrote: *"While the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief, and envy. He cannot give peace of heart, for which man yearns more than even for outward peace."* In Luke's Gospel he tells of One who will give that kind of peace that lay beyond the power of men.

Luke demonstrates the power of God to move in the affairs of the nations to accomplish His own purposes. In the Old Testament we see how God used Cyrus to achieve His own purpose for His people. (Isaiah 45:1) In the same way God used Augustus' tax plan to bring Mary and Joseph to the appointed place for the birth of Jesus. This was to fulfill the Prophecy of the Prophet Micah. (Micah 5:2)

The Apostle Paul referenced that birth of Christ as, ***"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law."*** (Galatians 4:4) Paul's point was that God sent His Son into the world in His time and in His way. Rulers in the world may think that they are in control of the destiny of their people but it is God who is in control. God is able to take the events of the government and the world and make them conform to His own plan and purpose.

There are many points in Luke's narrative that are signs which herald the divine intervention of God into human history. One of the most dramatic is the angel's announcement to the shepherds on the night of the birth of Jesus. Three verses of the narrative focus on the significance of this event, verses 10, 11, 14.

In verse 10 we see the announcement of the angels, ***"Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people."*** The earlier announcements were to people personally as with Zachariah and Mary. But in verses 8-14 we see the first public announcement.

Shepherds were the lowest of the low on the social scale. God gave the first public proclamation of the good news to the social outcast of the people. This was a deliberate choice as the Gospel was for all people and thus, it was first announced to a group of people who were excluded from society.

Verses 11 focuses on the One whose coming was heralded. Here Jesus is given three titles and each one is significant. The word Savior was a familiar word to the Jews and

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the Gentiles. It carried the meaning of a healer, a deliverer, and a benefactor. It was a word that was used of the great men of the day such as Caesar Augustus who was often heralded as a savior.

Christ mean Messiah, the anointed one to rule as King. This would be a fulfillment of the promise God made to David. Lord is a word from the Greek translation of its use in the Old Testament to represent Yahweh. This then speaks of the divine nature of the One who was born.

The heralding angel after his announcement was joined by a heavenly host of angels who praised God with these words, "**Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.**" In some manuscripts we will read "**peace, good will to men.**" When the words good will is translated it is a word consistently used of God's goodwill and not humanities. A paraphrase of this passage could be "peace to people who are the objects of God's goodwill." The Angels were not pointing to a select group of people of good will upon God would bestow His blessings. The heavenly host was praising God for His offer of peace to all people. Therefore they were praising God for the good news of great joy to all people described in verse 10.

The shepherds were not only the first to hear the good news but they were the first to testify of that good news. They were quick to respond to the good news and were also diligent to tell others of the good news. And as they returned they were praising God for all they had seen and heard.

Luke gives us some insight into the mind of Mary in that she pondered all these things in her heart. This could mean that Mary was a valuable source of information for Luke in writing his gospel. Luke also makes the same observation in verse 51.

Glory to Israel and Light to the Gentiles Verses 21-39

The Temple was the central place of worship for the Israelite nation and a place that they found their hope. In 1:5 the opening of the story was in the Temple and Jesus was presented in the Temple in 2:21-38. Five times Luke tells us that Joseph and Mary acted according to the law. Verses 22, 23, 24, 27, 39. There were three ceremonies that were performed according to the law. On the eighth day they circumcised Jesus. (Genesis 17:9-14) They also named Him Jesus as the angel had instructed. Mary also went to the Temple for purification as prescribed by the law. (Leviticus 12:1-8) May and Joseph presented Jesus in the Temple for the redemption of the first male born child. (Exodus 13:2, 12-15)

There is only one mention of Simeon in the Scriptures. Three times in these verses the Spirit's influence on Simeon is mentioned. Verses 25, 26, 27. Both Simeon and Anna spoke prophetically when the infant Jesus was brought to the Temple. They were two Godly elderly people who represented Old Testament faith at its best. They both recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah. All of the first believers in Jesus were Jewish and Luke presents Jesus as the Messiah of Israel. True Israelites recognized him as such.

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In Simeon's prophecy he blessed God for allowing him to see God's salvation, which God had, "**Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples.**" This salvation would not only be for the Israelite people but also the Gentiles. It is a strong theme in the Gospel of Luke that God's revelation was for all people and even more so in the Book of Acts. This inclusion is clearer in verse 32. "**A Light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.**"

Simeon's prophecy to Mary is the first mention in Luke to the mission of Jesus being one of suffering. This is the first time that the shadow of the cross falls across the path of Jesus. Mary must have in later life remembered these words of Simeon. Anna's prophecy reinforced the words of Simeon.

In His Father's House Verses 40-52

Here we have the only insight of Jesus' youth. There have been other writings about the time of Jesus' youth but the early Christians only accepted this account from the Gospel of Luke.

In this account Luke stresses the mystery between the humanity and the divineness of Jesus. It has been a stumbling block to many a non-believer the paradox of the incarnation. Jesus was fully divine and fully human. Jesus was born to a virgin but He was born. Jesus experienced the normal growth process but at the age of twelve He knew of His divinity.

Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem to find Jesus who was missing from the trip back to Nazareth. When they found Him in the Temple they were amazed. Jesus was found in the midst of the teachers. The teachers of that day combined their lectures with answering questions from their students. Jesus had amazed the teachers of the Temple with His insightful questions and careful attention. They were astounded by the wise answers from the boy from Galilee.

The question that Mary asked Jesus and His answer is the heart of this passage. There are two translations to the verse which read, "In my Father's house," and "about my Father's business." Because they were in the Temple the former is the more likely interpretation.

Either way Jesus was fully aware of His unique relationship to the Heavenly Father. Mary's question is interesting to look into. "**Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.**" It is clear from the question that Jesus was with them and that He was obedient to them. Yet His answer clearly asserts His sense of His Sonship to the Heavenly Father.

This short look at the childhood of Jesus forms a bridge between His birth and His adult ministry. As a child He was a respectful son but when in adulthood He began a mission that neither His family nor His followers could fully understand. Mary's anxiety in the Temple foreshadows the future anxieties, as Jesus undertook to do the will of His Heavenly Father.

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Some may wonder what Mary marveled at Simeon's prophecy and then astonished by Jesus' words in the Temple. Mary was fully aware of the wonders of His coming and why, would she be astonished by what He did?

This overlooks that Mary knew who Jesus was but did not know how His mission would unfold. As with others Mary was puzzled by the way that Jesus set about to accomplish His mission. (Mark 3:21, 31-35; John 2:3-5) We can see Mary as a pilgrim of faith as she marveled at the way the drama played out. As Mary traveled on it is probable that she had more questions than answers.

Chapter 3

Preparation and Commitment 3:1 to 4:13

We now read a prelude to the ministry of Jesus. There is a common thread here to Luke 1:5 to 2:52. In these sections both can be seen as an introduction to the main body of Luke's Gospel in chapter 4 at verse 14. In the first section we read of the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus. This second section tells us what happened before the public ministry of Jesus.

In these first to introductory sections the lives of John the Baptist and Jesus are intertwined. This section begins with the ministry of John the Baptist and is followed with Jesus' commitment to His ministry.

A Sermon that was the Man

Alfred Plummer says of John the Baptist: "*The whole man was a sermon.*" John the Baptist was a man who was consumed by his mission. Luke tells us of his calling. (Verses 1-6) He tells of his message. (Verses 7-14) What John the Baptist said about the Messiah. (Verses 15-17) And we learn of John's arrest. (Verses 18-20)

John's Time Had Come Verses 1-6

Luke took care to set his Gospel in the framework of world history. Luke begins with a list of the leaders of the time. He identifies Herod the king of Judea, Caesar Augustus and Quirinius, the governor of Syria. Luke also mentions Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate, Herod Antipas, Philip, Lysanius, Annas, and Caiaphas. This allows the readers to date the events that follow. It is thought that the ministry of John the Baptist began around 26 to 29 AD. But Luke's concern is to stress the worldwide significance of John's call. Luke was writing a Gospel for all the people and he wanted Theophilus and Gentile readers to see that salvation for the world was from the beginning of his Gospel.

We left John the Baptist in the wilderness in chapter 1 verse 80 and now the years of preparation were over. John's time had come and now he was called upon the world stage to prepare for the momentous events that were to follow.

John's message was not only one of repentance before the coming of the Messiah but also the need for Baptism and its message. In the Old Testament the prophets had used

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various kinds of symbolism in their prophecy. The sign that John used was Baptism. This was a way to show a sign of repentance and forgiveness.

In the New Testament repentance, Baptism, and forgiveness are referred to. John did not view Baptism as a ritual that caused forgiveness in itself. Baptism was a sign of the forgiveness that results from genuine repentance.

In all four of the Gospels John's ministry is referred to by quotations of Isaiah 40:3-5. (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2-3; John 1:23) Only in the Gospel of Luke do we read the quote, "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Here again we see the consistency of Luke's emphasis on the worldwide mission of the Savior.

What Repentance Is Verses 7-14

John's message was repentance and Baptism was the sign. It is clear from these verses that the people needed forgiveness but they came for Baptism. John called these people, "a brood of vipers." John would not baptize them because he saw no sign of repentance. Unless there is no change of heart the act of baptism is a farce. Baptism is only meaningful as a sign of true repentance. It is repentance not baptism that brings forgiveness.

When a Gentile converted to the Jewish faith one of the requirements was a form of baptism. The Gentile was immersed in water as part of his entrance into Judaism as a proselyte. In two ways the baptism of John was different than that of a proselyte. First it was John who did the baptizing, as he was called John the Baptist, which means the baptizer. (Matthew 3:1; Mark 1:4) More importantly John's baptism had a strong moral and universal basis. Proselyte baptism assumed that the Gentile was an outsider who needed to be baptized in order to become an insider. John's baptism assumed that everyone needed repentance in order to be an insider.

John warned his fellow Jews not to presume upon the ancestry. Their relationship was not a guarantee of being right with God. Without repentance all people stand in the wrath of God as sinners. This truth applies to Jews as well as to Gentiles. The good side of this is that God can create sons of Abraham. If God can create sons of Abraham out of stones, then He surely can create sons out of people whatever their ancestry. Paul made much of this point in his letter to the Romans. (Romans 2:25-29)

There is a difference between the people of verses 7-9 and the people of verses 10-14. The first group presumed on their ancestry and did not repent. The second group of people heeded John's call to repentance.

The groups of people in verses 10-14 represented the social outcast of the day. The tax collectors and soldiers who enforced taxes were despised. But it was they who repented and were baptized by John. They were not the supposedly righteous and religious people of the day.

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John's explanation of repentance was in simple and practical terms. For the average person repentance was turning from a life of looking out for oneself to caring about others. A life of sharing their food and clothing with those who had none.

John pointed in focusing on the sins of the tax collectors, who were guilty of graft. They were told to collect no more than what was due. The soldiers were probably Jewish soldier-police who helped enforce the will of the tax collectors. They would use their force to take what was not rightly theirs. Repentance for them was to live within their own means and not taking what we not theirs.

Spirit and the Fire Verse 15-17

The activity of John drew great interest and speculation. Some even wondered if he was the Messiah. John quickly denied that he was the Messiah. In the tradition of the day John said he was a slave in comparison to the Messiah. That it would be he that would remove the shoes of the Messiah.

There were two other ways that John pictured his inferiority to the Messiah. John said that he baptized with water but the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. That he preached judgment but the Messiah would bring judgment.

John's picture of the judgment of the Messiah was an ax poised to cut down the tree that does not bear good fruit. In verse 17 the picture is the thresher which separates the chaff from the good grain and then burns the chaff. John's understanding of a judge later caused him to wonder of the approach Jesus was taking.

Truth Hurts Verses 18-30

Herod Antipas was one of the sons of Herod the Great who was in his last days when John and Jesus were born. (Matthew 2:1) Herod Antipas was subject to the authority of Rome, his rule was as tetrarch in Galilee during the ministry of John and Jesus. Both Herod and Herodias had been married to other people. Herod to the daughter of the king of Arabia and Herodias to Herod's half-brother Philip. Herod persuaded Herodias to leave Philip and marry him, while he divorced his wife.

John could not be quite about such evil by a royal couple. He followed in the noble train of earlier prophets like Nathan and Elijah. Herod was hurt by the truth and so was Herodias. Herod added to his earlier evils by putting John in prison. The truth also hurt John. While he was in prison Herod had John executed because of his commitment to the truth. Jesus later paid tribute to John for his prophetic boldness.

A Commitment to Service 3:21 to 4:13

The prelude to the ministry of Jesus shows His commitment to a mission of service and sacrifice. Jesus made that commitment at His baptism. The genealogy of Jesus not only ties Him to Israel but to all humanity. His resistance to temptation shows that He was fully committed to the mission and the will of His Heavenly Father.

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A Word from Heaven Verses 21-22

In Luke's account of the baptism of Jesus we see that it was a public event. This shows that Jesus wanted to identify with the people that He had come to serve and to save.

In Luke's account of the baptism of Jesus we see that when the Spirit descended upon Him He was praying as the voice spoke. Luke places great stress on the fact that Jesus had a constant prayer life. (Luke 6:12; Luke 9:18, 28; Luke 10:21; Luke 11:1; 22:32; Luke 23:34, 46)

There are two occasions in which the voice of God spoke to and the message was basically the same. At the baptism of Jesus and on the mount of transfiguration with Peter, James, and John.

Two passages of Scripture are quoted from the Old Testament. Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1. These passages show God's approval of His Messiah. Later in the life of Jesus we see that He saw His mission as a continuation of His role as God's Messiah and Servant. Jesus saw His baptism as a public commitment to His mission. His baptism was not like that of others to signify repentance. Jesus had no sins to repent of. Jesus was baptized as the Suffering Servant and took His stand with the sinners that He had come to save. The voice that came for heaven was a benediction and an assurance on His mission of service and sacrifice.

Mission for Humanity Verses 23-38

In the Gospel of Matthew we find a genealogy of Jesus going back to Abraham which stresses that He was a Jew and rightful eternal King in the line of David. (Matthew 1:1-17) Luke's genealogy of Jesus goes all the way back to Adam. Luke may be stressing the complete mission of Jesus that He is the Savior of the world. It is a universal ministry and not confined to the Jewish state.

An emphasis of Luke is the universal ministry of Jesus at the beginning of his Gospel. Other differences between Matthew and Luke are more difficult to explain. There are different names especially from David to Jesus. Matthew traced from David through Nathan while Luke went through Solomon. One solution for this is that Matthew traced the lineage of Jesus through Joseph and Luke through Mary. Another is that Matthew traced the royal line through David while Luke gives the line to which Joseph belonged. Another proposed solution is that a levirate marriage had taken place by Joseph's mother. According to this view Heli died childless, his widow married Jacob. Thus Matthew list through Jacob his actual father and Luke uses Heli his legal father.

Both Matthew and Luke believed in the virgin birth. However, the custom is to trace a genealogy through the father. Thus, Luke wrote that Jesus was ***"the son of Joseph."***

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Chapter 4

Tempted Just as We Verses 1-13

After the baptism of Jesus He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where He fasted and was tempted by Satan. Both Matthew and Luke record the virgin birth of Jesus but neither ties the sinlessness of Jesus to the virgin birth. Jesus was sinless because He resisted the temptations of Satan. The writer of Hebrews testifies to this. (Hebrews 4:15)

The Temptations of Jesus were real as ours are. The temptations of Jesus were unique in His experience with them in two ways. One is He only resisted the temptation and did not sin. Jesus met His temptation on the spiritual battleground and emerged as the victor. As we go through our lives we will at some point in time fall into temptation. The questions become who knows more about temptation, the one who yields to it or the one who endures? Surely it would be the one who endures. It is Jesus who knows the full weight and fury of temptation. It is only Jesus that has successfully endured all of the power of Satan and resisted his temptations.

The temptations of Jesus are unique in another way as well. Jesus is the Son of God and committed to the role of the suffering servant. Only Jesus could be tempted to compromise His mission. We can be tempted to fail to fulfill God's mission for us but only Jesus could be tempted to misuse His power for His own selfish gains rather than for God's glory and the salvation of mankind.

Here is the clue to understanding these passages. Jesus was committed to a mission of self-giving service that would ultimately lead to the cross. There were many throughout His ministry that would proclaim Him as the Messiah if He would be the Messiah that they wanted Him to be. Even His closest followers misunderstood the mission to which He had been called.

Before beginning His ministry Jesus would have to go through a forty day period of testing. Jesus was led by the Spirit into this time of testing. This time of testing would strengthen Him and give Him the resolve for the task that lay before Him. Satan would use this time to offer his subtle temptations to cause Him to yield and abort His mission.

The first temptation was a physical temptation. Jesus had been fasting for forty days and surely hungry. But it was more than to feed Himself miraculously. It was a temptation to go on a feeding ministry to feed hungry people. God had fed the Israelites with manna during the Exodus from Egypt to the Promise Land. Jesus' hunger must have brought to mind the pang of hunger that many in the world were suffering. His compassion towards people must have caused this to be a powerful temptation.

Jesus resisted by quoting the scripture of Deuteronomy 8:3. As painful as hunger is people have a greater need than food and that is to be in communion and obedience with God.

The second temptation was that of power, the power of a world ruler. The subtle attraction to this temptation was that it matched the expectations that the people has of the coming

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Messiah. Many of Jesus' day were looking for a king to expand the glory of King David's Kingdom. The Messiah that they were hoping for would defeat all of Israel's enemies and make Israel a world power.

The twist of this temptation was the element of truth that was in it. Jesus was the Messiah, He was the son of David and heir to the universal kingdom. However, Jesus knew the difference between His Kingdom and the kingdom that His country men wanted. In the Gospel of John we read how Jesus refused to be such a king as the people wanted. (John 6:15) Jesus also when confronted by Pilate tried to explain His Kingdom to him. (John 18:36)

Most people who follow Satan do not pray to him or follow him in some dark rite. If Jesus was to worship Satan He would have had to lay claim to all that He could without regard to the Will of His Heavily Father and of the needs of humanity.

As before Jesus resisted the temptation of Satan with Scripture that is found in Deuteronomy 6:13. To serve the Lord God we have to have a wholehearted devotion. As worshiping Satan meant selfish grasp for power, worshiping God means a commitment to God's mission of self-giving service to Him and others.

The third and last temptation was to perform a miracle on the pinnacle of the Temple. The people were waiting for a Messiah that could perform signs and wonders. There was no better place for Jesus to do this than at the center of Jewish culture. This would have brought Him instant notoriety.

Sense Jesus had used the Word of God to combat Satan in the previous temptations Satan used the Scripture within the final temptation. Satan used scripture from Psalm 91:11-12. If Jesus was the Son of God, then God would not allow Him to suffer harm by casting Himself down from the Pinnacle. Again Jesus used Scripture to combat that temptation from Deuteronomy 6:16. We are to have faith and trust in God's Word not presumptuous grandstanding.

Jesus won a crucial victory but Satan found many other opportunities to tempt Jesus with many of the same temptations. In the last days of Jesus' ministry Satan tempted Jesus with great fury. (22:3, 31) Jesus was tempted on many occasions during His earthly ministry. At the Last Supper Jesus said. ***"You are those who have stood by Me in My trials."*** (Luke 22:28)

Ministry in Galilee

The ministry of Jesus in Galilee is recorded from Luke 4:14 to 9:50. A lot of the events that took place here are also found in the Gospel of Mark and many of Jesus' teachings from this section are found in the Gospel of Matthew. In these chapters many subjects are dealt with but there are three main themes that run through this part of the ministry of Jesus. Each theme will tie in later in Luke and in the Book of Acts.

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The uniqueness of Jesus in His ministry was that His life was Spirit led in His service to the people. It is implicit that the kind of ministry Jesus was conducting was the way of the cross, and it became explicit near the end of this part of His life. (Luke 9:22-23)

The response to His ministry was handled differently by the people. At first Jesus was very popular amongst the people but soon gave way to misunderstanding and opposition. This set the stage for His ultimate rejection and crucifixion.

In these chapters Jesus called and began to train His disciples and most of them were from Galilee. These men continued with Jesus throughout His ministry. After the death and resurrection of Jesus these disciples became the core witnesses of His work. (Acts 1:11, 13, 21-22)

Ministry in Miniature

From the beginning of Jesus' ministry Luke recorded an incident which has all the characteristics of His later ministry. This includes both His personal ministry in Luke and continues in Acts as He works through His followers. Jesus went to His hometown synagogue as the Spirit led Servant that the Prophet Isaiah spoke of. At first the people were amazed by Him but it turned to skepticism and a demand for signs. Jesus then compared Himself to the prophets Elijah and Elisha who God had sent to the Gentiles. The people of Nazareth had a violent reaction to this statement of mission to help the Gentiles and Jesus went on to do His work.

Starting Good 14-15

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry we see three facts that characterized His ministry. He ministered to the people in the power of the Spirit, He taught in their synagogues, and He was highly praised. In verse 14 we see that Jesus was moving in the power of the Spirit and this pertains to what preceded and what followed.

In His early ministry Jesus centered upon the synagogues of Galilee. The synagogue was the central meeting place for the people to worship and receive religious instruction. But even in His early days Jesus was not confined to the synagogues but as the opposition grew we read less of Him teaching in the synagogues. There is in the ministry of Jesus a visible contrast between His popularity and the open hostility that developed. (4:28-29; 6:11)

People are the Mission 4:16-21

In verse 16 we see another bit of information about the childhood of Jesus and His youth. While growing up it had become the custom of Jesus to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. In the Gospel of Matthew (13:54-58) and the Gospel of Mark (6:1-6) the visit of Jesus to the synagogue in Nazareth are recorded. They both place this visit at a later time in His ministry. Because of this Bible students believe that Luke recorded a different visit than Matthew and Mark. But it is probably the same visit in all three gospels. Luke writes the longest Gospel account but they tell the same basic story with the same general outcome. All three of these Synoptic Gospels quote the proverb that a prophet is not accepted in his home country. (Mark 6:4; Matthew 13:57; Luke 4:24)

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The explanation for this may be that Luke promised an orderly account and is not chronological. Luke was inspired to start the ministry of Jesus in His hometown synagogue. Another example would be that Luke told of John the Baptist imprisonment (3:19-20) before he told of the baptism of Jesus. (3:21-22)

A Servant of the Lord 17-21

We also find here an early record of the proceedings that took place in the synagogue service. Here Jesus speaks from the words of the Prophet Isaiah. (Isaiah 61:1-2; Isaiah 58:6) It may have been the passage for the day or Jesus may have chosen these passages.

The next two verses are among the most important in the gospel. Only in Luke do we find the understanding of Jesus giving a statement of His mission. At Jesus' baptism we heard a voice from heaven which used language from Isaiah 42:1. Whatever these servants passages meant to the early readers the Christians followed Jesus seeing Him as the ultimate servant.

Jesus was the Servant anointed by the Spirit to help the people. His was a proclamation of a mission of liberation. He came to help the poor, the blind, and the oppressed. Later John the Baptist questioned Jesus and He answered him describing His ministry in similar terms. (7:22)

It was the custom to stand when reading the Scripture and then to sit while teaching the Scripture. Verse 21 is the beginning of His teaching. Only Jesus could have begun to teach in such a way. Jesus proclaimed to be the fulfillment of the prophet's words and He claimed that it was a present reality.

Skeptical Listeners 22-24

At first the reaction to what Jesus was saying was favorable. They were impressed by the way in which He spoke. In verse 21 we saw only the beginning of His lesson and by verse 22 we begin to see the changing emotion as they listened. At first they were impressed but then they began to have questions come into their minds. They could not see the discrepancy between the message and the man. These people of Nazareth knew Jesus, they knew His father Joseph. They could not connect that He was the Servant that Isaiah had promised. Jesus knowing their skepticism used two proverbs to illustrate their feelings. "Physician, heal yourself" would have meant that a physician that could heal others would not be able to heal himself. By saying this it meant that Jesus had healed elsewhere and so why could He not heal in Nazareth? It was expected by Jesus that they would have wanted proof and that He would have to perform a miracle as He had done in Capernaum. The other proverb was "No prophet is acceptable in his own country."

A Servant to Help Others 25-27

Jesus reminded them of two prophets from the Old Testament. During the famine of Elijah's day there were many widows but Elijah was sent to a woman that lived in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel but the prophet healed Naaman the Syrian. Both the widow and Naaman were Gentiles.

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This story of the Prophet Elijah was in answer to their want of a miracle. The ministry of Jesus was a broad ministry because of the great human need. His ministry could not be confined to His home town or even to His own nation. When these verses are taken along with verse 24 we see that this event is twofold. As Israel had many times before refused their prophets so they too would reject Jesus. Elijah and Elisha had ministered to Gentiles and so would Jesus.

Worshippers to a Mob 28-29

Their reaction to what Jesus had said made them so mad that they ran Him out of town and tried to kill Him. Why did these worshippers become a bloodthirsty mob? Jesus had told them how two of their revered prophets had gone to the Gentiles rather than to their own people. We see this scene play out again several times in the Book of Acts. (Acts 22:21-22) The Apostle Paul had been speaking in Jerusalem. They listened to him until he told them that he had been commissioned to preach to the Gentiles. They became very angry with him.

Going His Way 30

This verse is a foreshadow of future events. It is epitomizing of the outcome of a gospel for all people. Jesus passed through the angry mob and went on His way to complete His heaven sent mission. Jesus would not always be able to escape His enemies but the purpose of God would not be thwarted. After His death came His resurrection. Beyond the rejection of His people was His mission to all people. In a way then verse 30 foreshadows the rest of the Gospel of Luke and Acts.

The Word and its Mighty Works

Luke 4:18-19 describes the ministry that Jesus had embarked upon. In Luke 4:31 to 5:16 we see some of the early miracles of Jesus. They were acts of compassion toward persons who had various kinds of desperate needs. These miracles were also signs of the good news of the Kingdom of God. Most of the miracles were done by His word and others by His touch.

The people responded to His early miracles in a superficial way. Jesus was popular. Many saw Him as a miracle worker and they followed Him to seek cures. Because of His popularity with the people there were conflicts with the religious leaders and they are found in Luke 5:17 through 6:11 and are absent from Luke 4:31 to 5:16. The people did not oppose Jesus but they were not committed to Him either. Simon Peter was the exception whose response in 5:1-11 marks a crucial step not only in his life but in the history of Christianity.

What is the World 31-37

Capernaum was located on the Sea of Galilee and provided a base for Jesus' Galilean ministry. Luke 4:31-44 is centered in and around Capernaum. In verses 31-37 the events took place in a synagogue. Jesus taught there in much the same way as 4:16-21 describes His teaching at the synagogue of Nazareth. The people were amazed at His authority. There were many teachers of the law in Galilee but Jesus was very different.

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Jesus did not cite others for reference to what He was teaching. Jesus spoke on His own authority.

In the synagogue Jesus came upon a man with an unclean spirit. The demon addressed Jesus by name and begged Him not to destroy him. The demon also knew that Jesus was the "Holy One of God. Jesus commanded the demon to come out of the man.

Throughout the ministry of Jesus He encountered demon possessed people. Jesus saw them as possessed by evil spirits over which they had no control. The demons were of satanic power and is destructive to the human welfare. It was a purpose of Jesus to break the power of demonic forces over people. Jesus' miracles of driving the demons out are signs of the greater battle against Satan.

A Larger Ministry 38-44

On that same Sabbath Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law of a high fever. Before the sunset had set Simon's house and the street outside was crowded with people. People with all kinds of illnesses had heard of Jesus' miracles and had come seeking healing. It had been a long and tiring day but Jesus laid His hands upon them and healed them.

The next day Jesus went to a lonely place, Mark 1:35 says that He went there to pray. But the people followed Him and tried to keep Him from leaving. Jesus gave them a very important answer. ***"I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose."***

Jesus would not allow His ministry to be dictated by others and would not allow His work to be limited to only one area. Jesus intended to go to all of the Jewish territory and minister to the people. At a later time His followers were told to go into all the world with the good news.

We also see here that Jesus did not want to be known only as a miracle worker. He was performing some miracles as an act of compassion and others as signs of the kingdom. But Jesus had come to preach and make the good news real about God's grace and presence.

The Suffering Prophet

Jesus is described by many titles in the gospels, including Messiah, Son of David, Son of Man, Son of God, and Lord. In Luke a key title is Prophet. Jesus was the prophet that Moses had predicted in Deuteronomy 18:15.

As a prophet Jesus preached God's word and performed miracles like those of the great Old Testament prophets. When Jesus raised the widow's son, the People cried out, "A mighty prophet has risen amongst us." (7:16) The disciples on the Emmaus road identified Him as a prophet who did powerful miracles, and He was a mighty teacher. (24:19)

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Like other prophets, Jesus suffered for His testimony. While the people linked Jesus' prophetic office to His miracles and teaching, Jesus connected it especially to His suffering. At Nazareth, He affirmed that "no prophet is accepted in his own hometown, (4:24) and He later accused Israel of murdering its prophets. (11:47-52) As He journeyed to Jerusalem, He exclaimed, It wouldn't do for a prophet of God to be killed except in Jerusalem! (13:33)

In the Old Testament, when Israel did not heed God's prophets, divine judgment followed. Similarly, God's people had to listen to Jesus or face judgment.

Just as the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah confirms that He is the Savior for all people, so His role as prophet confirms that His message comes from God, and His words are the authentic words of God, which must be heard and obeyed.

Chapter 5

Obedience 1-5

Simon had already known Jesus but until this incident he had remained a fisherman. It was his business and not a hobby but a way of earning his living. Fishing was his profession and he was good at his work. Simon was partnered with James and John and they were very successful in the fishing business.

The command that Jesus gave Simon most likely took him by surprise. Simon was a man who spook his mind and told Jesus that they had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. But because He had told him to do so Simon dropped the net into the water. Simon knew that Jesus was different than any other man he had met and obeyed His command in obedience.

Confession 6-8

The miracle of the tremendous amount of fish caught in the net of Simon overwhelmed Simon, the nets, and the boat of Simon. Simon already knew that this man, Jesus, was unlike any other and the great amount of fish confirmed what he had been feeling about Jesus. Simon had already observed miracles performed by Jesus by the result of His authoritarian Word. Overwhelmed by this experience Simon was humbled to his knees in the presence of Jesus.

Simon confessed, "**Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!**" We may recall that the Prophet Isaiah had the same reaction when in the presence of God. (Isaiah 6:5) Simon felt and knew the difference between him and Jesus. The grace and power of Jesus made Simon aware of his own sinfulness. Knowing that he was unworthy Simon asked Jesus to depart from him.

Commitment 9-11

Instead of leaving Simon Jesus spoke words of comfort and challenged him. Because Jesus understood what Simon was feeling He dealt compassionately with Simon's fear and agitation of spirit. Then Jesus called Simon and told him to follow. "**Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.**" (Mathew 4:19)

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One of the themes of the Gospel of Luke is the acceptance of Jesus of the unacceptable. This was the experience of Simon. Simon was confident not only because of the words of assurance from Jesus but also that He would call him to service. This is a beautiful picture of God's amazing grace that He not only allows us into His presence but call us into His service.

Simon's response was that of complete commitment. He may have already been thinking about it from previous meetings with Jesus. Simon was an established fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, he was married, and had a home. This was not an easy decision for Simon to make but in his heart he knew that this was an opportunity that he must take. In the mind of Simon the die was cast and he cut ties with his past and followed Jesus for the remainder of his life totally committed.

We know enough about Simon that this was just the beginning. It was just the beginning of his pilgrimage as a disciple of Jesus. But it was the first step and no pilgrimage can begin without that first committed step.

Reaching the untouchable 12-16

In all of society there was none more pitiful than the leper. Their disease was a slow and lingering death. They were put off from the rest of society and had no contact even with their own families. Only a corpse was more unclean than that of a leper. Yet Jesus dared to touch the leper and to speak with His authority to bring healing. Here again we see Jesus' ability to reach the untouchable. Jesus told the leper to tell no one that He had healed him but to go to the priest and offer sacrifices, the word got out to the people, and they flocked to hear Him and to be healed. Jesus then withdrew and went off to pray. Jesus was not wanting to be known only as a miracle worker.

The "Sins" of Jesus 5:17 to 6:11

The New Testament testifies that Jesus was sinless. But His opponents, however, accused Him of a number of sins. In this section of Scripture we read of four issues that his opponents saw as sinful. The forgiveness of sins, associating with sinners, fasting, and the Sabbath.

The dignitaries 17-26

The scribes and Pharisees have heard of Jesus and now they have turned up to investigate. They have come from all over Galilee and Judea and including Jerusalem. At this point there was no evil intent mentioned but they became Jesus' worst critics.

The Pharisees were a leading party of the Jews in that day. They held to a strict interpretation of the law and kept it according to their tradition. They were people who were superior in their biblical knowledge and would not associate with unclean people or things. The teachers of the law were called scribes and were professional students of the law. Most of the scribes were Pharisees as well.

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Sins forgiven 18-20

Why did Jesus deal with a man's sins before healing that man? There could be a connection between sin and illness either real or imagined. There were many in that day that believed that sin brought on sickness. (John 9:2) Most likely Jesus dealt with the man's sin first because this was his greatest need. The total person was a concern of Jesus but at the heart of a person is the problem of sin and guilt. Jesus' healing was a sign of salvation from the moral and spiritual sickness of sin.

Blasphemer of Savior 21-26

Here we see the first charge against Jesus from the scribes and Pharisees was that of blasphemy. Jesus forgave sins something that only God could do according to the scribes and Pharisees. This would have been correct if Jesus was not the Son of God and was just another man. Any person who claimed to be God was a blasphemer. Only the Messiah or the Son of God could claim deity. But Jesus was not a blasphemer because He acted with Divine authority to declare sins forgiven. Jesus said, ***"But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."***

Jesus did claim divine status but He did not use any of the Messianic titles, instead He called Himself the Son of man. Verse 24 is the first time in the Gospel of Luke Jesus uses this title. This is the title that Jesus used more than any other when referring to Himself and who He was. It may be that Jesus avoided the better known titles because the people had preconceived ideas as to their meaning. Jesus was able to bring His own meaning to the title Son of man.

Jesus used this title, Son of man, to stress two aspects of His redemptive work, death and resurrection. (Luke 9:22) In one way the Son of man is a humble sufferer who seems weak and then on the other hand He is vindicated and glorified in Divine power. (Luke 9:26)

Associated with Sinners 27-32

In this Gospel of Luke we see Jesus as a friend to the sinners. Jesus associated with all kinds of people and this placed Him on a collision course with the Pharisees.

Levi the tax collector invited Jesus to supper. Fellowship around the supper table is one of the closest of human associations. Pharisees only associate with people who observed the law strictly and followed the rituals of cleanliness.

There were two groups that were guests at the supper with Levi. Neither of these two groups met the standard of the Pharisees. Tax collectors were social outcasts in the Jewish community. They were known to be collaborators with the foreign dominated government of the day. They were extortionists and took more tax than was required by the government to line their own pockets. In their daily duties they had contact with many people who were unclean. In this text the word sinner means people that paid little heed to the religious rituals of the Pharisees.

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It has been said that the Pharisees believed in salvation by separation while Jesus practiced salvation by association. The Pharisees made every effort to separate themselves from the unclean people. They would receive sinners but only after they had repented and became a Pharisee. Jesus only befriended the sinners but He did not become a sinner. He befriended them only to help them to find their way to God and a new life. The Pharisees called Jesus a sinner for associating with sinners and Jesus called the Pharisees sinners for not associating with sinners.

Fast or Feast 33-39

In the Old Testament there was only one time of required fasting and that was in connection with the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16:29) During a crisis fasting was practiced. The Pharisees, as pious as they were, fasted twice each week. (Luke 18:12) Fasting for the Pharisee was a mark of their special commitment and dedication. So the Pharisees were critical of Jesus and His disciples for not fasting.

Jesus explained to the Pharisees that fasting was not appropriate during the wedding feast. In the Bible the messianic age was referred to as the wedding feast. In this statement Jesus was claiming to be the Bridegroom for whom the feast was being held.

The Pharisees accused Jesus of frivolousness and neglecting basic spiritual disciplines. Jesus on occasion did fast, and He often spent time in prayer. But Jesus did not make fasting into a ritual. Fasting for Jesus was a natural fast which resulted from more important matters. (John 4:31-34)

Old and the New 36-39

Jesus offered an analogy to broaden the application which Luke called a parable. At issue was the new way of Jesus with the old way of Judaism. Jesus' way cannot be patched onto Judaism like a piece of cloth.

Jesus also used an analogy with old and new wine. Pouring the new way of the gospel into the old wineskins of Judaism would result in spilling the new wine and ruining the old wineskins. Luke only records the words of verse 39. Jesus may have been speaking of those who would always cling to the old way. Their argument would be that the old way is best as old wine is best.

Chapter 6

Lord of the Sabbath 1-5

The Jewish keeping of the Sabbath day was a mark of a believer in the God of the Old Testament. For the Pharisees it was near to the top of the list of pharisaic ventures. As in other laws of the Old Testament the Pharisees had their own rigid requirements and definitions of the law.

Even the appearance of working on the Sabbath was to be avoided. They had drawn up a list of things that they considered work. The disciples had run afoul of this list by plucking grain and rubbing it in their hands. To the Pharisees this was harvesting and threshing the grain.

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Jesus had kept the Sabbath but only as the Old Testament had intended it to be kept. (Luke 4:16) But Jesus made no effort to conform to the rigid rules of the Pharisees. Jesus referred the Pharisees who complained about the disciples harvesting grain on the Sabbath to an example of David. At a time when David was desperately hungry he broke the law by eating the bread of the Presence. Jesus' reasoning was that if David could do this how much more could the son of David? Jesus did not use the title but it seems to be His point.

Doing Good on the Sabbath 6-11

In the Gospel of Mark includes the saying of Jesus, ***"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."*** (Mark 2:27) Luke did not record these words but makes the same point.

Jesus knowing what the Pharisees were thinking did not wait for them to complain. Jesus took the offensive and put the Pharisees on the spot. According to the Pharisees healing on the Sabbath was wrong unless there was a life threat. The man that Jesus healed was not in this type of a situation. The Pharisees thought the healing should be put off until the Sabbath was over. Jesus called a man with a withered hand to His side.

In the tradition of the Pharisees treatment of emergency cases was allowed. They could not argue against saving a life on the Sabbath. Jesus took this principle and applied a broader interpretation to helping a man rather than harming. Jesus stated His question in such a way that they could not answer His question. Jesus asked them, ***"I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?"*** Therefore Jesus healed the man. The Pharisees had focused their attention upon the negatives of what they could not do on the Sabbath where Jesus had focused on the positives of what can be done on the Sabbath.

The purpose of the Sabbath was to give man a day of rest from his labor. The Sabbath was God's law for the good of humanity. Any rules made by man that thwarts the purpose of God deserves to be treated by Jesus as He treated the tradition about not healing on the Sabbath. Doing good works is always in season.

This incident caused the Pharisees to be more than critics of Jesus but to become enemies.

Discipleship a Way of Life 6:12-49

In this section of Luke Jesus selects His closest followers and instructs them as His disciples. In verses 20-49 the verses is what is sometimes called the Sermon on the Plain. This Sermon is very similar to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. Both the Sermon on the Plain and the Sermon of the Mount are some of Jesus' most important teachings of how His disciples should live.

Sometimes we hear people say, "My religion is the Sermon on the Mount," or "I don't need religion, I just follow the Golden Rule." Such a person overlooks an important fact of Jesus' moral teachings. The teachings of Jesus were given to His disciples. He knew that

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they were committed to Him and to His way. The Sermon on the Mount and the Golden Rule are not simple ethical guidelines for the man on the street but are demanding principles for the committed followers of Jesus.

Call to Special Service 12-19

Luke stresses that Jesus spent the night in prayer before choosing His twelve disciples. By choosing twelve Jesus is signifying the creation of the new Israel. The twelve Apostles corresponded to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Disciples means learners or followers. Jesus chose the twelve from a larger group of disciples. In Mark 3:14 we read, "**And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach.**" The word Apostle means messenger sent under the authority of another. The word Apostles was used later of those who Jesus sent out to witness of His resurrection. The twelve disciple formed the core of these witnesses. Because of the betrayal of Judas another disciple was chosen.

Things Not as they Seem 20-26

To be blessed is to be happy, to be a fortunate one. Jesus called the poor, hungry, sad, and the persecuted as blessed. Jesus also pronounced woes of the counterparts as rich, well-fed, merry, and the popular.

This list is the opposite of our list of the fortunate. Jesus turned everything upside down from the world to make a point that the Kingdom of God is the ultimate good. The ones who are in poverty, who hunger, or in distress makes them blessed because they are open to God's reign in their lives. Those who's commitment to God's will are blessed because they arouse the anger of the evil doers.

By the same token woe to the wealthy, those of a full stomach, or of a carefree life because they are blind to their need for the good news of the Kingdom. And woe to those who crave popularity so that they do not take the risk of commitment of serving God and His way.

Love your Enemies 27-30

Love is at the very heart of the teachings of Jesus. The following verses are important in understanding what He means. Jesus means more than a sentimental feeling. A definition of an enemy is someone we do not feel good about. If we were to wait until we like our enemies, then we will never love our enemies. Jesus presents love as an action and not an emotion. No matter how we feel towards our enemies we are to act for their good and on their behalf. Jesus defined love for our enemies this way. "**But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.**"

Often we find that our feeling towards our enemies will change as we do good for them, bless them, and pray for them. But the feelings will follow the actions, not the actions following the feelings. To love our enemies we cannot wait for our feelings before doing good to them.

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It is our enemies that have hurt us in some way. The natural reaction is to get back at them in retaliation. Jesus teaches that we should absorb the hurt without seeking retaliation and give them back good for evil.

This very same principle applies to more than our enemies. Three of the four examples that Jesus provides apply to possessions. In each of the cases Jesus advocates giving and not grasping.

We cannot always practice the four examples in verses 29-30 literally. The point of each must be taken seriously. No list of specific applications can fit every situation that Christian love needs to be practiced. In some situations we may not be able to turn the other cheek or give more than the person is asking for. This passage does not express the whole of Christian love but Jesus is stressing the heart of Christian love. The Christian is to do good to others at the risk or cost to one's self.

The Golden Rule 31

The Golden Rule sums up the main point. This is not a rule that is reactive but pre-active. The Christian is to take the initiative. The Christian is to do good unto others that he would appreciate done unto him in return. The Christian is the light, the leader in the arena not the follower.

God's Kind of Love 32-36

People who are evil will do evil things no matter how others treat them. They will always give back evil for evil, and evil for good. The normal person gives evil for evil and good for good. Jesus is teaching us that we are to give good for good and good for evil. This is the way of God's love. There is nothing special in liking people who like us. This is how most people act. Jesus is calling us to God's kind of love. Those who display God's kind of love will be recognized as the sons of God.

Good in its Best Sense 37-42

Some religious people have been described as "good in the worst sense of the word." People who are concerned about doing right are tempted to become rigid and judgmental. In these verses Jesus is describing people who are good in the best sense of the word.

Good people of the best sense avoid the temptation to judge the sins of others. They practice a forgiving spirit. And they are generous towards others. In life we will reap what we sow. What one gives in life is what he will receive back from life. The one who constantly criticizes opens himself up to criticism. The merciful person will receive mercy. The generous will receive as freely as they give.

The blind are not able to lead the blind as they will lead the person astray. Pupils tend to become as their teachers. This context may be in reference to teachers or leaders who can see the faults of others but cannot see their own sin.

For an example of this Jesus uses irony and humor. The person who pays great attention to the faults of others is often blind to the sins of his own life. The rule here should be to be ever aware of our own sins. This would keep us aware of our great need for God's

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grace. There is not a better antidote for false pride and a spirit of being judgmental. At the same time we can forgive other because we have experienced the forgiveness of God. (Ephesians 4:32)

The Fruit Test 43-45

The character of a person is revealed by what that person does and says. Trees are known by their fruit. In the same way people reveal their inner attitude and values by their actions and words.

The Obedience Test 46-49

There are many who call Jesus Lord but they are not really His unless they do what He tells them to do. (John 14:15) What they profess to be should match what they show themselves to be. This could be the greatest indictment against Christians. Our daily walk often undercuts what we profess to be.

The difference between two kinds of people is not a failure to hear. They both know what Jesus would want them to do. The difference between the two is that one hears and obeys and the other does not obey.

Love in Action

One of the purposes of Jesus was to overcome evil with love not with the sword. In Luke 6:27-36 we see that Jesus taught love by his words and now in Luke 7:1 through 8:3 Jesus will teach love through His deeds. Jesus responds to the faith of a Gentile centurion by healing his servant. (7:1-10) Jesus restores the life of a widow's son. (7:11-17) When John the Baptist was perplexed by His ministry Jesus responded by telling of His ministry of help and healing. (7:18-35) And Jesus included among His followers a number of women. (8:1-3)

Chapter 7

Helping an Outsider Verses 1-10

A Roman centurion was an officer who had 100 men under his command. The centurion in this Scripture had a deep respect for the Jews and their religion even as He was a Gentile. This centurion may have been a God-fearing man as Cornelius in Acts 10:1-2, 28. The centurion had not become an official convert to Judaism but he did believe in many of their teachings. He had even built a synagogue for the Jewish people.

He was also a man of humility and a man of faith. He had sent word to Jesus saying, **"Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof."** The centurion had heard of the work that Jesus was doing and he believed that Jesus had authority over the sickness of his servant just as he had authority over his troops.

Jesus marveled over the faith of the centurion and said to those who were with Him, **"I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."** This act here in the Gospel of Luke has significance that in Luke's second book Acts he tells of many Gentiles who came to have faith in Jesus.

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No Need for the Funeral 11-17

There are three instances noted in the gospels where Jesus raised one from the dead. Jairus' daughter, (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56) the son of a widow, (Luke 7:11-17) and Lazarus. (John 11:1-44) These were not resurrections but a restoration to life, as they all died later. The power of Jesus over death in their lives pointed to His own resurrection. Jesus was raised from the dead to never die again. (Romans 6:9)

Jesus brought the widows son from death because He had compassion upon her. For a woman to become a widow is a desperate situation for any woman but in the days of Jesus a widow without a son to care for her was a very desperate situation. This widow had lost her son, her means of support, protection, and companionship. Her son was her hope for the future. She now would have no grandchildren and none to carry on the family line.

Guidance for a Perplexed Friend 18-35

John the Baptist had been put into prison because he boldly spoke God's truth. (Luke 3:19-20) The disciples of John kept him informed of all that Jesus was doing. John had a doubt and sent two of his disciples to question Jesus. **"Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?"**

It is puzzling how John could have asked such a question of Jesus. John spoke boldly of Jesus and even testified that He was the Messiah. Now John is asking if they should look for another. There are times that faith is expressed with boldness and other times it is expressed in a question that reveals the perplexities of doubt. The question is not the same as a skeptic whose approach to life is cynical unbelief. The question that John asked was to Jesus. His perplexity was that of a believer struggling to match a part of his experience in an affirmation of his faith.

We must keep in mind that the faith of a human at best is immature. Today we see through the glass darkly because we walk through faith and not by sight. As Paul also observed, **"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known."** (1 Corinthians 13:12) John was thinking of the Messiah's work in this world as a work of judgment upon evil. (Luke 3:9; 16-17) This view was primarily what the view of the Jewish nation was the Messiah would be a conqueror and His Kingdom will reign forever. (2 Samuel 7:16) John was perplexed because Jesus was not acting as expected.

The answer that Jesus gave John supports this interpretation of John's perplexity. The mystery of Jesus was that of help and healing in the presence of John's disciples. Jesus gave this answer to John through his disciples. **"Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them."**

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Jesus' answer was similar to Luke 4:18-19. John was familiar to the Old Testament Scriptures that spoke of a Messiah that was moved with compassion to help people with their deepest needs. John's perplexity was because of his incomplete understanding of what the Messiah was to do.

After John's disciple had left Jesus delivered a powerful and lyrical tribute to John the Baptist. John was a bold and powerful prophet. Outside forces had never determined his direction as the wind does a reed. (Verse 34) John did not have the power of wealth or royalty, but the power of truth. John was "more than a prophet." John was the messenger prophesied by the prophet Malachi as the one who prepared the way for the Lord. (Malachi 3:1)

In verse 28 we see the most enigmatic part of this passage. How could Jesus say, "***I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John.***" And then add, "***yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.***" John the Baptist was of the old order and not of the new. He was the bold prophet that prepared the way for the Messiah, but he was not privileged to stand in the full light of God's new day. Only in one respect is least of the Kingdom "greater" than John. There is none judged greater than John in the light of opportunity and understanding, John stood in the last of the lingering darkness and prophesied the coming dawn. But John did not understand all that the coming light would reveal. It is we who are privileged to stand in the full light that John had prophesied.

The common people of the day and even those who were despised the tax collectors had accepted the mission of God's work through John the Baptist. Not so for the scribes and the Pharisees as they had rejected him and his message. Jesus now tells a parable comparing the scribes and Pharisees to children at play. In the parable we see two groups of children who refused to play the games of the opposing group. John the Baptist lived a life of isolation from the rest of society and the opposing group call him demon possessed. God the Father sent His Son Jesus who associated with the people and the same people who rejected John for being distant rejected Jesus for being with the people. They went so far as to say that Jesus was a sinner because of the people He associated with. But there were some who saw the work of God in John the Baptist and in Jesus.

A friend to the Social Outcast 36-50

Only in the Gospel of Luke do we find this story which also reinforces one of the major themes of Luke in his gospel. Jesus had great compassion towards the sinners. This was a great contrast to the attitude of the Pharisees and their attitude towards the sinners. (Luke 5:27-28; Luke 19:1-10)

Just as Jesus had dined with the tax collectors and other sinners He also ate with the Pharisees. (Luke 11:37; Luke 14:1) Jesus did not show partiality towards any group of people. Jesus offered His friendship to all people. A Pharisee named Simon had invited Jesus to dine with him and Jesus had accepted the invitation.

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It was not an uncommon thing for people to come in from the street and observe such festivities. Even so it was shocking for Simon the Pharisee to see this known sinful woman to come into his house and anoint the feet of Jesus.

From the act of this woman which Simon was seeing he formed two conclusions. If Jesus was a prophet, then He should have an insight into the person who was anointing His feet. And if Jesus was a prophet He would not have permitted a sinful woman to anoint His feet. Because of this Simon decided that Jesus was no prophet.

Because Jesus was a divine prophet He was able to know the thoughts of Simon and responded with a parable of two debtors. The main point of the parable is obvious by the words of Jesus in verses 44-47. But there is a more subtle point that Jesus was making that Simon may have missed.

Both of the debtors had a debt that they could not repay and the creditor forgave the debt of each of them. Each one should have been grateful to the creditor for what he had been forgiven and not in comparison to the debt of others.

In regards to our own sin we have been forgiven a debt that we cannot pay. Our love and gratitude depends upon the estimate of how much debt we have been forgiven for which is a measure of the grace that God has shown to us. If it be a large debt or a small debt still it is a debt that we cannot pay. Our appreciation of the grace and love of God should be the same no matter the size we feel that our debt is. Small or large the price that God had to pay for our forgiveness is the same.

Jesus expressed this point by the contrast of the woman's expressions of love toward Him and Simon's lack of courtesy as a good host. We must observe one more point in that the woman was not forgiven for her love but for her faith in Jesus. ***"Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*** It is our faith that saves us and our love is an expression of our appreciation of what God has done for us.

Chapter 8

Liberating Women 1-3

Along with His twelve disciples Jesus was also accompanied by some women. These women had been healed from various afflictions and freed of evil spirits. The women were contributing their own resources to support the ministry of Jesus. In the gospels of Matthew and Mark while describing the crucifixion these women are mentioned. (Matthew 27:55; Mark 15:41) In Luke's gospel he often emphasized the role that women played in the work of Jesus. In the midst of Jesus' ministry in Galilee Luke gives us a significant reference to the women who were with Jesus.

It is said that this is a man's world but here Luke elevates the women to a higher plain than most give to them. Only men were allowed to participate in the Synagogue services. But Jesus treated women as persons in their own right. Jesus had not only liberated them from their afflictions but included them as His followers. Jesus was not only a help to them but they were a help to Jesus and to others.

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Parable of the Soil 4-18

In the parable of the sower there are three groups of people mentioned. One of the groups was the religious leaders with their hardening opposition towards Jesus. There was the disciples of Jesus, not only the twelve but the larger number that were following Him. The last group were the crowds in general.

This parable is often call the parable of the sower but a more accurate name would be the parable of the soil. The difference between the groups is not the sower but the soil that the seed falls into. During the telling of this parable Jesus would call out, "**He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**" The parables that Jesus spoke were signs of the Kingdom and so were the miracles that He performed. The parables were for the ears and the miracles were for the eyes.

Jesus taught in parables so that the people would have the best opportunity to respond to His Word. Jesus went about teaching as a sower that all His seed would bear good fruit. But as in the case of the first group the seed fell upon hard ground. These were the people who were the enemies of Jesus who had closed their eyes to the light and their ears to the truth. Some of the seed of the sower, Jesus, fell unto shallow soil who were superficial followers, people whose enthusiasm would fade over time when they faced trouble in their lives. Other seed fell in amongst the weeds as sympathetic hearers that never bore fruit because they were caught in the pleasures of this world. Then there was the seed that fell onto good soil and gave forth much fruit. Some of those who followed Jesus were genuine in their faith and testified to the truths that Jesus was teaching.

In a way the parables of Jesus separated the true followers from the crowds who were just curious bystanders. All who were there heard the same teaching from Jesus but only some of them grabbed ahold with faith and commitment.

Some even missed the point of this parable and continued to be ineffectual in their walk with Jesus. Even the twelve disciples did not fully understand everything that Jesus was teaching. But they persisted in seeking the truth from Him.

There was another advantage to the use of the parable story form. Many a listener remembered the story even if they did not fully grasp the point. There was the hope that someday they would see the moral and spiritual truths of the parable and their minds and their hearts would light up with His divine truth.

The word secret in verse 17 does not mean that Jesus wants to hide the truth from the people. In the New Testament the word of truth is to be made know by divine revelation. The ultimate intent of God is to reveal His truth, not hide it.

The parable of the lamp are found in three other places in the Gospel of Luke. (Luke 11:33; Luke 12:2; Luke 19:26) Their context here reinforces that the message of the parable of the soil. Those who have the words of Jesus in faith and commitment will have the light. We are to share this light with others that they may see the truth of God's word. It is important then that we hear the Word of God as He intended. In these passages we

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learn that there are two responsibilities we have in hearing God's Word. Hearing and sharing the light.

The Christian Family 19-21

These verses further reinforce Jesus' teaching about hearing. The members of Jesus' larger family are, **"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."**

This occasion happened when His mother and brothers had come to see Him. In the Gospel of Mark we learn that His mother and brothers had come to take Him home because they had thought he was losing His mind. (Mark 3:21, 31-35) This is in accordance with what John wrote in his gospel. **"For not even His brothers were believing in Him."** (John 7:5) Jesus was everything that a son should be to His mother and He was everything that He should be to His brothers. But when they had come and posed a threat to His mission He put the will of His Father first. (Luke 2:48-51) The positive point of this incident is that we all can be a part of the family of God. We all can be His family.

Faith and Fear 8:22-56

In this larger passage we see four miracles of Jesus, the stilling of the storm, the deliverance of the demoniac, the healing of a woman who had a flow of blood, and the restoration of the life of Jairus' daughter. As we have said the parables were for the ear so the miracles were for the eyes. Both were signs of the Kingdom of divine grace and power. We see in these four miracles a show of God's grace and power in four areas which threaten life and welfare. Nature's destructive force, the enslaving power of Satan, the pain and suffering from illness, and the fear of death.

Over each of these areas we see that Jesus has divine power. It is also a demonstration that God will eventually remove and destroy each of these threats. The final deliverance is the coming of His Kingdom. The power and grace of Jesus show God's grace and power are already at work in and through His Son.

Fear mixed with Faith 22-25

Of this incident on the sea at the heart of it is Jesus' question to His disciples. **"Where is your faith?"** This was a rebuke to His disciples for not trusting God to watch over them as they were about doing His will. God does not always shield us from the destruction of the storms in life but He can always be trusted. The disciples showed their lack of trust when they woke Jesus with their cries of fear.

The fear of the storm was replaced with a different fear. After Jesus demonstrated His power over the storm they felt the fear of amazement in their presence of one who could command obedience from the winds and the water.

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Fear that Rejects Jesus 26-39

As Jesus and the disciples were approaching the shoreline of Gentile territory. The place where they were about to land was a cemetery. When they stepped on land a wild man came out from the tombs and ran towards them.

The man was under the power of evil forces that he had no control over. Society had chained the man in an effort to restrain him, but he had broken the chains and fled to the desert. The man had no home except the tombs. The demonic powers that had taken control of him were so many that he called himself Legion, a name associated with a Roman army unit numbering six thousand men. The man was drawn to Jesus but the demons knew that Jesus was their enemy.

It has been difficult to explain why Jesus allowed the demons to enter into the swine. One reason may be that Jesus wanted the man to know that the evil powers had departed him.

With the loss of the swine the people of the area asked Jesus to leave. Many of the people knew of the man and that he was demon possessed. They came out to see what had happened to him and found him sitting at the feet of Jesus. He was no longer naked and was in his right mind. They could have had any one of many reactions to this incident. They could have been grateful and happy for the man. Instead they were afraid. Luke tells us that it was their fear that they asked Jesus to leave. The superstitions of people will cause a rejection of Jesus and the help that He can offer.

The man himself wanted to go with Jesus. He may have felt fearful in trying to reenter society in a land where the people knew what he had been. But Jesus told him not to go with Him but to return to his home and tell the people what He had done for him. This man who was a Gentile was the first Gentile witness for Christ in a Gentile territory. This is a sign of what was to come after the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the Book of Acts Luke tells us the story of the gospel spreading to the Gentiles.

Faith In Spite of Fear 40-48

Jesus then returned to Galilee and found the people were waiting on Him. Jairus came to Him and fell at His feet. Jairus wanted Jesus to come to his house and help his only daughter. But along the way a woman who had a flow of blood that could not be healed for twelve years put her into a pitiful plight.

Her illness of flowing blood made her permanently unclean by the Jewish people. Therefore, she was treated much the same way as a leper. To make her situation worse the people assumed that her illness was the result of immoral behavior.

The crowd was pressing close to Jesus but she entered in and touched the hem of His garment. Jesus immediately asked who had touched Him. Peter noted that nearly everyone in the crowd had touched Him. Jesus replied that He had felt the power go out from Him at someone's touch.

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The woman became terrified and wondering what the people would do if they found out what she had done. She was an unclean and an untouchable person and had dared to touch Jesus. In spite of her fear she came to the feet of Jesus and confessed what she had done and told the people why she had touched Jesus and testified that she had been healed.

Jesus then said to this woman the same as He had said to the woman in Luke 7:50 that her faith has made her well.

A Faith that Casts Out Fear 49-56

Jairus had heard the word of the woman's testimony. And when the news came that Jairus' daughter had died Jesus built on the experience. Those who brought the news effectively said that death has spoken the last word. They told Jairus not to bother the teacher anymore for her life had passed. Jesus replied to Jairus, "**Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she will be made well.**" Jairus had just seen the woman healed by her faith in Jesus. And now Jesus challenges Jairus to have the same faith. With Jairus' faith Jesus could save his daughter from the clutch of death.

Many a person died who Jesus did not bring back to life. They probably loved their departed ones as much as Jairus loved his daughter. And some of them had as much faith as Jairus. The raising of the widows son, Jairus' daughter and Lazarus were exceptional miracles. They each showed the authority of Jesus over death. What they experienced points to the hope of the Christian faith, the final victory over death, this is the promise of Jesus' resurrection. The mourners laughed at Jesus when He said she was not dead but sleeping. They laughed at Jesus because death always has the last word. They were wrong that day as Jesus proved that He has the last word.

Chapter 9

The Shadow of the Cross 9:1-50

Luke presents here the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry. At the heart of this passage is Jesus' prediction of His death on the cross. He also issues a call of His followers to follow Him in the way of the cross. Jesus opens with a mission statement to the twelve disciples. We also learn of the feeding of the five thousand which provides a background for the theme. For additional background information read Mark 6:45-8:27. Jesus made His death on the cross known as a result of Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah. In this passage Peter, James and John join Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration which gives further emphasis to the theme. This chapter ends with two episodes of how far the disciples had to go before they would fully practice the way of the cross.

Joining the Master's Mission 1-9

For most of Jesus' Galilean ministry the disciples had been with Him. Now it was time for the disciples to go out on their own to see how they would handle the ministry that they had been called into. It was their purpose to proclaim the reality of God's reign and to demonstrate its truth by acts of compassion. This was a training mission that they would be capable to carry on when they received the power of the Holy Spirit.

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This outing into Galilee was a short term mission trip. They did not need to spend time in preparation of provisions for their journey. They were told to just go. They were to accept hospitality from wherever they could find it and they were to quickly depart where they did not receive welcome. This they did as Jesus had instructed them.

Herod Antipas was the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. (3:18-20) He had heard reports of what Jesus and His disciples were doing in Galilee. Herod was also aware of the three explanations of who Jesus was. Some said that He was John the Baptist risen from the dead while others thought that He was the Prophet Elijah, and some said that He was an ancient prophet who had been brought back from the dead.

It was the report that He was John the Baptist risen from the dead that bothered Herod the most as it was he that ordered the beheading of John the Baptist. The beheading of John the Baptist was not something that Herod wanted to do and perhaps he had feelings of guilt that remained. Therefore, Herod wanted to see Jesus to assure himself that it was not John the Baptist. In Luke chapter 23 we see the full truth of Herod when he finally meets Jesus.

Breaking Bread 10-17

The disciples returned from their mission and reported all that had happened to them. Jesus then took His disciples and they withdrew from the people. The crowd heard of where they were going and followed them. Jesus did not respond to the intrusion of the crowd harshly but welcomed them and began to teach and heal them of their distresses.

Recorded in all four of the gospels is the feeding of the five thousand. It was an act of compassion that Jesus had for the people. It was also to be viewed as a sign of God's reign. In the Gospel of John chapter six we gain insight into the aftermath of this miracle. The purpose of Jesus was for the people to see Him as the bread of life. That He was offering Himself for them but the people insisted on seeing Him and their King who could fill their empty stomachs.

A Different King 18-22

All of the Synoptic Gospels record the confession of Peter, (Matthew 16:13-23; Mark 8:27-33) but only Luke places it in the context of Jesus' prayer life, "**And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the people say that I am?"**"

In general the people did not think of Jesus as the coming Messiah. The people thought of Jesus as John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the old prophets. The confession of Peter was all the more significant because of this. Peter declared that Jesus was the Messiah of God. The word Messiah means the anointed one. The ancient kings were anointed. God had promised King David that his throne would be established forever. (2 Samuel 7) When Judah fell and the dynasty of David was at an end the Jewish people looked for a son of David to reestablish the throne.

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Peter was right in his confession that Jesus was the Messiah. (Matthew 16:17-19) But Jesus told them to tell no one that He was the Messiah, why? The people were looking for a different Messiah than Jesus was coming to be. Jesus had not come to conquer with the sword but to overcome evil with good. Jesus had come to be a different kind of King. The people were looking for a king that would deliver them from Roman rule and restore Israel to a powerful nation. Many of the Jewish people had come to expect that everything would be set right when their Messiah came.

If the disciples had spread the word that Jesus was the Messiah what would have happened? Many would have reacted to Jesus in the way that they believed He should be according to their misconceptions. They would have tried to make Him the King they thought He should be and not the King that He had come to be.

So Jesus did not refer to Himself as the Messiah. Jesus spoke of Himself as the Son of man. By not using the title of Messiah He could become the Messiah He had come to be. As the Messiah that God had sent He must suffer, be rejected, killed, and be raised from the dead. There are two Old Testament ideas here that Jesus has combined. One idea is the suffering servant of Isaiah chapter 53. The other is that He will be vindicated as the triumphant Son of man in Daniel chapter 7.

His disciples were not expecting Jesus to be raised from the dead. (24:11) If Jesus had predicted His resurrection then why were the disciples surprised by it? Jesus had told them but they were not listening. They became caught up by His suffering and death that they did not hear the words of His resurrection. In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark Peter rebuked the Lord for His prediction of death and resurrection. Jesus in return rebuked Peter. (Mark 8:32-33) Luke does not record this but he did show the disciples misunderstanding and how they missed the point about cross bearing. (9:45-46) The disciples had confessed Jesus as the Messiah but not the Messiah Jesus would be but that of popular understanding.

The Cross a Way of Life 23-27

Jesus follows His prediction of the cross by explaining that anyone who follows Him will have to take up a cross. In Jesus' day that meant in taking their cross and carrying it to the point of their execution. A follower of Jesus must be willing to die for Him and with Him. The meaning of this lies in the background of His words about saving one's life and being ashamed of Jesus. However, the use of the word daily shows that Jesus meant more than a willingness to endure martyrdom for His sake. The follower of Christ must be willing to live a cross-way-of-life on a daily bases.

The meaning of this is more than what is often meant by cross bearing. It is more than enduring some burden or trial for which we have no control. This is part of the Christian life, but it is not cross bearing. It is a voluntary commitment to live by the principle of self-giving love.

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. "For what is a man profited if

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he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?" These verses present the paradox of this way of life. A cautious life is not life at all. On the other hand one who risks all for God and others find life. One who goes through life grasping everything for themselves end up losing everything.

Verse 32 is a difficult verse to practice and 27 is a difficult verse to understand. What does seeking the Kingdom of God refer to in this verse? Some say the Kingdom of God was already there if people had the eyes to see it. (27:20-21) Others believe that Jesus was referring to events of the near future. Others believe that Jesus was speaking of events of the future. The transfiguration, resurrection, ascension, Pentecost, the spread of the gospel in Acts, and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

A Voice from Heaven 28-36

At the Baptism of Jesus a voice came from Heaven and said ***"Thou art my beloved Son; with whom I am well pleased."*** (3:22) The voice was to confirm the mission of Jesus. Now at the transfiguration a voice came from Heaven and spoke to Peter, James, and John, ***"This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"***

Jesus was strengthened and reassured on His commitment on His way to the cross. It was also to challenge Peter, James, and John to accept what Jesus was telling them about the way of the cross.

The transfiguration is recorded in each of the synoptic gospels. (Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8) Only in Luke does it say this took place while Jesus was praying. And only in Luke is it recorded what Jesus, Moses, and Elijah were talking about, ***"were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."***

The Greek word for departure is Exodus. Moses led God people in a triumphant Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land. Elijah had a triumphant exit from earth to Heaven. Moses and Elijah also represented the Old Testament Prophets, which Jesus had come to fulfill. Jesus was about to make a triumphant Exodus through death and resurrection from earth to heaven. God had sent Moses and Elijah to reassure Jesus on His mission.

Peter, James, and John had been awakened when this was taking place. Peter being bold as he usually was offered to make three tabernacles for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Peter's suggestion was inappropriate as Jesus was now set on His mission and could not be accomplished by camping on the mount. Jesus now needed to come down from the mount and set His face toward Jerusalem. The voice from Heaven confirmed that Peter, James and John were to listen to Jesus when He told them of the events ahead of them.

A Great Need and Weak Faith 37-45

From the glory of the mount they came down and were faced with the desperate need of humanity. From the crowds that met them there came a father and his only son in desperation. The father expressed the helplessness of the disciples to aid him and his son.

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Jesus replied to their anxiety with these words, "**You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.**" These words of Jesus were probably directed to the crowds and to the disciples. It may have been that there were some in the crowd who were trying to embarrass Jesus and His disciples. Jesus healed the boy and the crowd was astonished.

Failure of Understanding the Cross 43-45

From the mount the voice from heaven had told the disciples to listen to Jesus. Now Jesus told them to, "**Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.**" But the disciples still lacked understanding. From verse 45 we might see that something or someone was causing the meaning to be hidden from them. But it may have been their preconceived ideas were so strong that they could not understand what Jesus was telling them about His death.

The Making of a Great Person 46-50

This passage starts off by showing us how far the disciples were from understanding and commitment to the way of the cross. They fell into an argument as to which of them was the greatest.

Jesus often used a child to teach His disciples. In Luke 18:17 He uses a child to demonstrate the kind of humble trust needed to receive the Kingdom. A humility and trust that children have. This may have been the purpose of Jesus in verses 47-48. The child was least and he was willing to be the least. Jesus emphasized the humble service of receiving a child in His name. His point is that whoever takes the time to love and help a child is great in His Kingdom.

In Luke 11:23 we learn that a person is either with Christ or against Him. When compared to verse 50 it implies that this is a judgment that is made by the person himself and not a judgment about others. Here in verse 50- Jesus is talking about judgements that we make about others.

The disciples were critical because the exorcist was not following Jesus. He wasn't a part of their group. The point that Jesus is making is that not everyone is a part of the same group of believers. This was not an issue for the disciples to discern. It was an issue that was between the other group and Jesus. The issue for the disciples is to have a tolerant and glad spirit to all those who strive to serve Jesus.

On to Jerusalem 9:51-19:27

This is the longest section in the Gospel of Luke. The theme of this section is captured in 9:51. "**When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem.**"

This theme does not mean that Jesus headed to Jerusalem directly by the shortest route. The theme has to do with the commitment of Jesus to go to Jerusalem. The point of this is that every action of Jesus was pointed towards the climax of His mission. Toward the end of His ministry in Galilee Jesus had clearly told His disciples what awaited Him in

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Jerusalem. At the mount of transfiguration the Prophets Moses and Elijah had come to speak with Jesus and to reassure Him about this very thing.

Jesus would face rejection and crucifixion ahead of Him, but also resurrection. From this point on the shadow of the cross lay across the path of Jesus. Jesus would suffer much in the coming days but the resurrection and ascension lay beyond the cross.

Handling Rejection 51-56

For the first time in the Gospel of Luke the Samaritans are mentioned. The people of a Samaritan village refused to welcome Jesus because He was a Jew and on His way to Jerusalem. James and John wanted to call fire down from heaven because of the Samaritans rejection of Jesus. But Jesus rebuked them. Earlier in the gospel account Jesus had taught His disciples to love their enemies. (6:27)

Would be Followers 57-62

Those who desire to follow Jesus must follow Him on the way to the cross. In this passage we see three that expressed an interest in following Jesus but did not have the commitment that is required. The way that Jesus dealt with them may sound as if He was trying to discourage them. Actually it was a challenge to cause them to truly follow Him.

To the first man Jesus tried to help the man saw the cost of following Him. The man had told Jesus that he would follow Him wherever He went. But Jesus made it known that following Him was a way of sacrifice and self-giving.

The other two wanted to follow Jesus but had other things to do first. We are not sure if the man's father had died or if he wanted to stay with his father until he had died. But Jesus stressed to Him the greater importance and the absolute priority of following Him.

Family is important for all of us but even that does not take precedence over our commitment to following Jesus. People can always find a reason to not totally commit to something. If one is to follow Jesus, then he must follow completely committed.

James, Son of Zebedee

James, son of Zebedee and brother of John, was one of the twelve Apostles, and he was among one of the first to be killed as a follower of Jesus. His mother, Salome, was possibly the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, which would make him Jesus' cousin. (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; Mark 16:1; John 19:25) His name usually occurs before that of John, which may suggest that James was the older of the two. He should not be confused with James, the son of Alphaeus, (Luke 6:15) or James, the brother of Jesus.

Originally fishermen like their father, (Matthew 4:21; Mark 1:19) James and John fished with Peter and Andrew, another pair of brothers who became disciples. (Luke 5:10) They were among the first Jesus called to be His disciples, and they left everything, including their father, to follow Him. (Luke 5:11; Matthew 4:22; Mark 1:20) Jesus called them "sons of thunder," (Mark 3:17) which might imply that they had vehement personalities, (Luke 9:54) but the exact connotation is unclear.

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James and his brother John were among those closest to Jesus. With Peter, they formed an inner circle of trusted disciples who accompanied Jesus on special occasions, as when He healed Jairus' daughter, (Luke 8:51; Mark 5:37) conversed with Elijah and Moses on the mountain, (Luke 9:28; Matthew 17:1-3; Mark 9:2) and agonized in prayer in the garden. (Matthew 26:37; Mark 14:33) At one point, the two brothers evoked the indignation of the other disciples by asking for special positions of privilege in the coming Kingdom. (Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45; Luke 22:24-27)

Perhaps because of James prominence among the disciples, Herod Agrippa had him killed soon after Jesus' death, which pleased the Jewish leaders, (Acts 12:2-3) and fulfilled Jesus' prediction about him drinking the bitter cup that Jesus drank. (Matthew 20:23; Mark 10:39)

James was an ordinary working person that Jesus called to be His disciple. His willingness to leave everything he knew, work, family, and home, to follow Jesus in simple trust, and eventually die for Him, makes him a model of committed discipleship.

Chapter 10

Training for Missionary Service 1-16

This appointment of the seventy foreshadows the time when the followers of Jesus would be sent forth to all the nations. (Acts 1:8) There were seventy Gentile nations mentioned in the book of Genesis. (Genesis 10) The instructions of this passage apply to the seventy that Jesus sent out, but the principles apply to all missionary work.

One principle is that they must trust God. The missionary is to first pray for the laborers and the harvest will be in the hands of the Lord. It is essential to rely upon the Lord as missionaries will face hostility. They were to take no provisions and this would cause them to trust the Lord completely for their care. Jesus' ambassadors of peace were to stay where they were welcomed and to accept whatever hospitality and provision they were given. Their mission was to declare the Kingdom of God by word and deed.

Shaking dust from one's feet was a Jewish practice after leaving Gentile territory. In Jesus' instructions He used this as a symbol of judgment to those places that rejected the Kingdom. Jesus mentioned the Galilean cities that had rejected Him and stated that if the Gentile cities of the past had the opportunity that they had they would have repented. Here we see the implication that the Gentile cities will have the opportunity to respond to the Gospel.

Rejoicing 17-24

The seventy missionaries returned with joy in their hearts because of the success of their mission. Jesus shared in their joy and reminded them to also rejoice. They were to rejoice not only because God had empowered them for their service but primarily because they had been saved by God's grace. Jesus rejoiced that the message of God had been accepted. Many of the important people who did not feel the need for God's salvation missed the message, but the ordinary people accepted God's revelation of Himself in

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Jesus. To the twelve disciples Jesus told them that they had been privileged to see and hear what the kings and prophets of old yearned to see and hear.

Part of the joy that Jesus had was because He had seen Satan's defeat. In the name of Jesus the demons had been subjected and this was an incarnate victory over Satan. (Hebrews 2:14) Jesus also promised His servants that the power of Satan would not be able to harm them. Jesus assured them with this expression, "**Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.**" Satan could cause them much harm and even bring them to the point of death but he could not really hurt them. "**But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all because of My name. Yet not a hair of your head will perish.**" (Luke 21:16-18)

Service and Prayer 10:25-11:13

Service and prayer go together. Our service without prayer would lack the proper motivation, direction, and power. On the other hand prayer without service is sterile and self-centered. The example of Jesus and His teaching linked the two in bond. Luke places the parable of the Good Samaritan in context with the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus along with what Jesus taught about prayer.

A Big Neighborhood 25-37

The lawyer had a proper concern for inheriting eternal life and gave the correct answer to Jesus' question. On another occasion Jesus commended a scribe for recognizing a wholehearted love for God and a love for his neighbors. And Jesus told him that this summarized the heart of the law. (Mark 12:28-34) The lawyer's question however shows that he had a limited view of love.

The lawyer's question gave him away in that he had trouble with the command unless he could choose who his neighbor was. He probably did not see that all people were his neighbor. None the less he wanted his answer as to who was his neighbor to be adequate.

To the Jewish community this story of the Good Samaritan was a difficult one to be taken in. The Jews despised the Samaritan who was the hero of the story. While the priest and the Levite of the story were more respectable people they also had the same limited view of their neighbor as the lawyer. We do not know the race or nationality of the victim in this story but the assumption is that he was a Jew. The Samaritan did not see him as a Jew but as a fellow human being.

The priest and the Levite saw the victim only from the distance of the other side of the road to avoid having to give assistance. They could have rationalized their behavior in many ways. The man was unclean. They could be risking their lives if the robbers came back. They were on important missions that could not have been delayed. Someone else would help the man.

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The Samaritan showed what love is by his actions. He brought his love into reality by his actions of compassion in his help for the man. Christian love is taking action for the good of others, whoever they are, wherever they are, whatever the cost, and however we may feel.

We also see that the lawyer had asked the wrong question to Jesus. He should have asked “whose neighbor can I be?” His concern was to protect his narrow view of the love commandment. His real question was who must I treat as my neighbor and who can I ignore? Jesus was trying to help the lawyer see that he should take the initiative and recognize everyone as his neighbor. We are to respond to the needs of everyone as our neighbor. The lawyer seems to not have really received the message, as he could not bring himself to admit that the Samaritan acted with true love for his neighbor greater than that of the priest and the Levite. He did not recognize the Samaritan but only answered, ***“The one who showed mercy toward him.”***

Choosing the Best 38-42

The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us the importance of our service to others. Now we are to learn that we must receive from Jesus in order to adequately give of ourselves in service to others.

In the Gospel of John chapters 11 and 12 we are told that Mary and Martha lived in the town of Bethany and had a brother named Lazarus. The tone of Luke suggests that Jesus was not a stranger to Mary and Martha.

Martha’s service was a proper service and is commendable in many ways. However she was rebuked by Jesus because of her anxiety and distraction by her rebuke of her sister Mary. In this passage the word anxious is the same word that Jesus uses in warning against worry that results from not trusting God. (Luke 12:22-31; Matthew 6:25-34)

Martha was anxious about many things but Jesus told her that only one thing was needed. Jesus was saying that the good portion was that Mary chose to receive from the words of Jesus. Our service to Christ grows out of receiving His words of life. If we are to be as the Good Samaritan, we must follow Mary’s example to sit at Jesus’ feet. A life of good service is rooted in prayer, worship, and study of the Scriptures.

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus

The sisters Mary and Martha lived with their brother Lazarus in Bethany, near Jerusalem; Jesus loved and visited this family. They are mentioned only on the Gospel of Luke and John.

Luke’s account focuses on the contrast between Martha and Mary. When Jesus visited their home, Martha was busy in the kitchen and became upset with her sister for not helping her prepare the meal. Jesus defended Mary’s desire to simply sit and learn from Him as the most important thing.

John’s stories focus on Jesus’ act of raising Lazarus from the dead. (John 11:1-44; Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9) When Jesus arrived in Bethany, four days after Lazarus

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had died, the sisters expressed their dismay that Jesus had not come in time to heal their sick brother. Jesus deeply moved by the weeping of Lazarus' friends, went to the tomb and ordered Lazarus to come out. To everyone's astonishment, he did so, bound in the cloths he had been buried in. This amazing miracle exemplifies Jesus as the giver of eternal life. (John 11:25-26) Ironically, this act of restoring Lazarus' life also galvanized the Jewish leaders to bring about Jesus' death because so many people were responding to Jesus' miracles. (John 11:47-53; John 12:10-11)

Soon thereafter, when the family invited Jesus for a celebration meal, Mary poured a bottle of extremely expensive perfume on Jesus as an expression of her gratitude. When people criticized her for what they considered an extravagant waste, Jesus defended her action, saying that it anticipated His coming death. (John 12:1-8)

Chapter 11

Teach Us to Pray 1-13

Luke in his gospel stresses the prayer life of Jesus. The disciples noticed this and asked Jesus to teach them to pray. The answer that Jesus gave them was a model of prayer.

In the Gospel of Matthew this prayer is longer and is more familiar. The setting is also different as it was in the Sermon of the Mount. (Matthew 6:9-15) The disciples had asked Jesus to teach them to pray and He gave them a model for prayer. It is the model that we are to follow and not to recite in ritual.

Jesus begins with the paradox of a God who is our Heavenly Father who is close to us and intimate in relationship. On the other hand God is a holy God and His name is hallowed above all things.

The first petition that we are to make in prayer is for the coming of His Kingdom. We are longing for the completion of what God is done, is doing, and will do through Jesus Christ. Our petitions have a range from the coming of God's Kingdom to the provision for our daily need for bread.

Our prayers should include our confession of the sins in our life. We must also have the commitment to forgive others of their sins against us as God has forgiven ours against Him.

In our prayers we acknowledge our dependence upon God for our strength and guidance. God does allow us to be tested which serves to build up our strength. But His intent is not that we should ever fall into temptation. The prayer in Luke is the opposite of a spirit of self-confidence that we can handle every situation in our own strength in our life.

Jesus not only taught His disciples how to pray but also the need to pray. He does this by a parable of a friend in need during the night. The key to knowing how to pray is to know the need to pray. We learn to pray by praying. When we pray out of a sense of need we will truly learn how to pray.

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In the parable the man's need was great. Hospitality was a sacred duty in the Jewish culture. This host had nothing to set before the hungry traveler who had come to visit him in the night. The host need was so great that he went to his friend's house in the middle of the night to seek help. He shamelessly knocked on the door of his friend seeking his help.

Just as the host deep need for help from his friend drove him to his house in the middle of the night so should our deep need drive us to prayer with the Father. When it does we can be assured that God will receive us.

This parable is in common with the parable of the unjust judge in Luke 18:1-8. Each teach us the need to pray continually. Each is told in a way that implies that God needs to be persuaded to answer our prayers. But this misses the true point. The need for persistence in prayer is our need, not God's.

The point is not that God must be persuaded to hear our prayers by our persistence. In the parable the man was persistent because his need was desperate and his relationship with his friend was good. Our prayer is persistent for the same two reasons. When the need is real no one needs to tell us to keep praying about it. Because we know that God loves us, we continue to pray to Him even when the specific requests do not seem to be answered.

The verses of 5-8 and 11-13 are how much more parables. If a friend inconvenienced himself to help us because we were persistent in our cries for help, then how much more will our Heavenly Father give us what we need? If we as a parent respond to our child who is hungry how much more will our Heavenly Father be willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

God is the giver of every good and perfect gift. He gives us many gifts without prayer, but our deepest needs must be met through prayer. The greatest gift that God gives is His presence with us. The gift of His Spirit's presence which gives us power in our lives and that is the best answer to prayer. The gift of His Spirit is continually given to us even when other request seem to be unanswered.

Our needs may change from day to day but a persistent communion with God is an unchanging characteristic of a life of faith. No matter how urgent our petitions the daily communion with God must remain constant.

The Danger of Closed Minds 14-54

A closed mind is deadly to any form of growth. The opposition to the ministry of Jesus by this time had become hardened. In these passages we see that the enemies of Jesus had made up their minds to reject Him. It was charged against Him that He cast out demons by the power of Satan. Luke also record Jesus' response to their demands for signs and wonders. Luke also records a list of charges that Jesus made against the scribes and Pharisees.

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Who's on the Lord's Side 14-28

In verses 14-16 we see three responses to Jesus casting out a demon. First the people marveled at what Jesus had done but did nothing more. Second the Pharisees, (Matthew 12:24) accused Jesus of casting out the demon by Beelzebul. And third others demanded that Jesus show them a sign from heaven.

These responses show the danger of closed minds. They had already had made up their minds and therefore made ridiculous charges and demands against Jesus. They would not believe that the exorcisms were the work of God. In the following verses Jesus responds to each of these groups.

Jesus pointed out the ridiculousness of the charge that Satan gave Him the power to cast out a demon. If that were true Satan would be waging war upon his own troops. Jesus also made note that there were other Jewish exorcist and no one had accused them of working through Satan.

Then Jesus turned the argument around and placed it upon His accusers. They had conceded that Jesus had cast out a demon. The question then became if Satan did not help Him, then who did? Jesus used language found in Exodus. (Exodus 8:19) Jesus said that He cast out demons by the "finger of God" which seems to mean the power of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 12:28) God was using the casting out of demons to show His sovereign claims on those who saw the signs.

In the battle of good and evil everyone is on one side or the other. We are either a friend of God or an enemy of God. (James 4:4) There is no neutral ground. Those who try to remain uncommitted actually provide aid and comfort to the side of evil. Here Jesus may have been addressing those who were amazed but making no commitment to one side or the other.

When a demon leaves a body a void is left in its place. That empty spot will be filled. If evil is cast out then that spot must be filled with the presence and power of God. The power of evil is very deceptive and never ceases to seek to destroy. If that space in life is left empty Satan will seep back into the vacancy.

A woman in the crowd was impressed by Jesus and blessed His mother. Jesus did not question the truth of the woman's blessing but did point out that she had missed the point. The woman's intent was to pay tribute to Jesus and His mother but Jesus focused in on the real issue. The ones who are truly with Jesus are those who are fully committed to Him because they have heard and obey the Word of God.

Missing the Obvious 29-36

The people had demanded a sign from heaven. Jesus called them an evil generation for demanding signs. In their evil they desired not to know the truth and had become blind to the obvious. They had completely missed that God was at work through Jesus.

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Jesus premised that He would give them the sign of Jonah. That He was to this generation what Jonah was to Nineveh. That it was He who was the sign that calls people to repentance.

Some people claim that they will believe God if He would only give them a sign. Faith is not the product of special proofs. If people will not respond to the clear call of God through His word, then they would not believe even if they were given special signs.

Judgment is according to the light of opportunity. Some people stand in the full light of God's revelation through Jesus Christ and turn away from it. Because of this rejection they will be held more accountable on the Day of Judgment than people with less opportunity. Jesus referenced the Queen of Sheba who traveled many miles to hear the Wisdom of Solomon. But in this day the people were rejecting the truth of Jesus the Son of God. Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, but the people of Jesus' day did not respond to God's call in Christ.

A lamp is lit to provide light in the darkness. Jesus said the eye is the lamp of the body. A good eye illumines the body and a bad eye distorts and darkens the body. In the area of spiritual perception the tragedy of life is spiritual blindness. A spiritually blind man is a darkened man. When the eyes of the soul reflect the light of God's truth everything is illuminated.

The sign seekers wanted more light so that they could see. Their problem was not bad light but poor eye sight. They had closed their eyes to the light and more light will not overcome that.

When Religion is Sinful 37-54

The Pharisees had many rituals included into their religion. One ritual was the washing of their hands before eating a meal. It was not for hygiene but for ceremonial cleanness. When Jesus was invited to eat with one of the Pharisees Jesus did not observe the ritual of washing His hands. All were astonished that a teacher like Jesus would not observe this ritual. Jesus tried to show them that the external things had nothing to do with cleanliness on the inside. Sin is too rooted to be cleaned by a simple act of washing hands. To cleanse one from the burden of sin it must be done from the inside.

In this section we see three woes towards the Pharisees and three woes towards the lawyers. Woe in this context is not a curse towards the Pharisees and lawyers but a deep regret. Jesus was trying to expose the Pharisees and the lawyers in order to help them and the people that they influenced.

The Pharisees tithed beyond that which was required, but they had missed the point. Tithing is an expression of total commitment and not to be used as an expression of that commitment. The Pharisees paid their tithes but neglected justice toward the people and love for God.

The way that the Pharisees practiced their religion fed the basic human sin, pride. In spite of being filled with inner sin and neglecting things that mattered they based their

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confidence in their rituals. They felt that they were true because of their washing of hands and their tithing. They garnered much coveted attention from the people by their righteous behavior and religious devotion.

To touch a dead person or even walk across their grave was defiling to a person. Jesus said that the Pharisees were like unmarked graves. Unsuspecting people would themselves become defiled by being in contact with these people who were supposed to be righteous. In truth the Pharisees were guilty of the worst sins.

The lawyers there, or scribes, were professional experts of the law of God. Many of the lawyers were themselves Pharisees. Jesus spoke three woes to the lawyers as well.

Religion is supposed to lift the burdens off the people and make them easier to bear. (Psalm 55:22; Galatians 6:2) But the Lawyers loaded the people down with even more burdens and did nothing to lighten any burden. It was the lawyers that interpreted the law and the intricate system of traditions. For the people who took their religion seriously this religious legalism was a heavy burden.

It was the lawyers who built the tombs for the ancient prophets but they were no different from their fathers who had killed the prophets. For them honoring the dead prophets was much easier than responding to the truth presented by living prophets. Jesus told them they would kill their own share of prophets. Abel and Zachariah (2 Chronicles 24:21) represent the first and last martyrs in the Old Testament. Because this generation ignored the truth for which the prophets died they would be held accountable. These people also killed the prophets of their own day.

The lawyers also robbed the people of the opportunity of knowing God and His will. They had turned religion into a maze of rituals and impossible laws. The Scriptures should point to God but they had been distorted and misapplied.

The lawyers and Pharisees showed the truth of what Jesus was saying to them, as they did their best to lay a trap for Him.

Jesus' Prayers

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus prayed at critical events in His life: His baptism, (Luke 3:21) before calling the twelve, (Luke 6:12) at the transfiguration, (Luke 9:28) for Peter before his denial, (Luke 22:32) and for His murderers at the cross. (Luke 23:34) He also taught the disciples to pray (Luke 11:1-4) and told parables about the need for persistent prayer. (Luke 11:5-13; Luke 18:1-8)

Jesus' prayers are part of Luke's emphasis on the intimacy between the Father and the Son. Jesus lived in communion with the Father, followed the Father's purpose, and remained faithful to the Father's will. In Gethsemane, Jesus agonized over the suffering that lay ahead, but He prayed, **"I want your will to be done not mine."** (Luke 22:42) On the cross, He expressed total dependence on the Father, uttering His last words, **"Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!"** (Luke 23:46) Jesus modeled for us a life of trust and dependence on our Heavenly Father.

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Requirements for Disciples

This chapter of Luke primarily is the teachings of Jesus addressed to His disciples. The three main themes are courageous confession, proper perspective on possessions, and faithful stewardship.

Chapter 12

Courageous Confession 1-12

Those who are hypocrites try to hide the truth by pretending to be something they are not. Jesus charged the Pharisees with hypocrisy because they tried to hide what they really were behind masks of outward religious practices. Jesus warned the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy? Was Jesus warning the disciples of against the danger of their opposition or was He warning them against becoming a hypocrite? In the former Jesus would be warning the disciples that the Pharisees would be those who tried to silence the truth by persecuting the believers. If the latter, then Jesus was warning against the danger of religious pretense.

The day will come when all truth will be revealed. Some believe this verse means that eventually all will face judgment and the truth will be made known. Others believe that these verses mean the need for courageous proclamation of the truth in the face of persecution. (Matthew 10:26-27)

The warning that Jesus is giving the disciples is that they will be tempted to hide the truth about themselves and what they believe. This too is a form of hypocrisy because it tries to hide the truth. The truth will come out and all believers should speak the truth.

The disciple of Jesus will be persecuted and they may be tempted to fear their persecutors. Why would we fear them when all they can do is kill us? Rather fear God. People have all kinds of fears. The Scripture consistently teaches that we have only one fear that is justified. If people fear God, then they have no need to fear anything else.

Jesus did not mean a cringing fear. Jesus' emphasis is a trust in God who cares for us. If God is aware of a tiny sparrow, how much more is He aware of us?

Christians must be on guard against denying Jesus. Many times a Christian is tempted to fail to confess Christ. We are always to profess Him by our words and deeds. Denial is not an unforgivable sin as Jesus can and does forgive those who repent of this sin. Consider Peter as an example who denied Jesus three times before the cock crowed.

Jesus tells us here of a sin that is unforgivable. The person who stands persistently in rejecting the light and truth is in danger of becoming hardened that he attributes the work of the spirit to Satan. It is more than a personal affront to Jesus. The heart becomes so hardened against every attempt of God's Spirit to bring in mercy, grace, and truth. Only those who refuse to accept forgiveness are unforgivable.

When a believer goes on trial for his faith in Jesus he need not worry about what he is to say. In times like these the Spirit will make us equal to the task. Some people quote there

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are those who quote this Scripture to justify their failure to prepare for preaching or teaching opportunities. This not only makes a lie of God's Word and promise, it is a poor excuse for laziness and ignorance.

Covetousness 13-15

The man wanted Jesus to cause his brother to divide the family inheritance. Jesus refused to be the judge over a family dispute over an inheritance. This does not mean that the man had an unimportant case against his brother. Jesus pointed to a more important issue than the inheritance itself. Jesus' attention focused on the moral issue in the dispute. Jesus spoke to the man about covetousness. Covetousness is a combination of greed and envy. It is a never ending desire to have more of something and is usually something that someone else has.

Jesus brought out a very relevant point in verse 15 that is a hidden truth from the people of this world. Jesus attacked a basic premise of the philosophy that many in this world have. People believe that the good life is guaranteed by the amount of possessions they have. Jesus is warning the man and those who were listening that wealth does not bring the good life. Jesus knows that the covetousness people have is a never ending thirst that will destroy what makes life worth living. Having right relationships and an inner peace are of greater value than an abundance of possessions.

The Rich Fool 16-21

Jesus brings His point to light by telling a parable. There was a farmer who had an abundance of possessions, but he missed the good life. We are to believe that the farmer was an honest hardworking man. These are commendable qualities. What was the problem that caused the farmer to miss the good life? It was his assumption that abundant possessions produced an abundant life. But his life was filled by seeking more and more possession.

One night he made his plans for a pleasant retirement. But, that night he died. His preoccupation of gathering possessions had robbed him of life. While he had life he spent all his time gathering and made no provision for death and judgment.

He had lived as an immortal god who had no need for the true and living God. The farmer had spent all his time gathering more and more to gain the possessions that slipped from his grasp when his heart stopped beating. One night he spoke of "my crops" "my barns" and "my goods." After that night all his possessions were no longer his.

Do Not Be Anxious 22-31

Whether one is poor or rich the preoccupation of obtaining possessions can rob a person of their life. We have looked at covetousness in the previous verses and learned that covetousness can preoccupy us. In these verses we learn of another form of preoccupation, that of anxiety. Covetousness is the desire for more and more and never getting enough. Anxiety is the crippling fear that there may not be enough. For the poor, anxiety is focused on having enough for survival. For the others anxiety is the concern they have to maintain a standard of living.

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Jesus is now warning against anxiety that people have for food and clothing. Earlier we learned that life does not consist of abundant possessions and now we are to see that life does not consist of food and clothing. Food and clothing are the most basic of possessions.

Anxiety, like covetousness, robs one of life. Anxiety cannot add any time to one's life. And studies have shown that anxiety actually shortens one's life. Another thing that anxiety does is that it shows a lack of faith in God. It is the way that unbelieving pagans respond to life. Being anxious is not the way a person of faith in the Lord God should be.

Jesus here give the antidote to worldly anxiety. The real life is knowing and serving God. God feeds the birds and He clothes the flowers of the field. Surely God can be trusted to care for those who are in His Kingdom.

This passage is not a denial that believers should work and make their plans for the future. We find a thin line between planning for the future and being anxious about the outcome. Seeking the Kingdom of God gives one the proper perspective. People of the faith do what they can and leave the outcome to God.

Wealth 32-34

Jesus opens this passage with a beautiful word of assurance. God is the shepherd of the flock and He is our Heavenly Father. His desire is to give us the Kingdom. Those who seek His Kingdom are sure to find it. Finding the Kingdom is where you will find life and true riches.

Seeking God's Kingdom puts a proper perspective on possessions. People of the Kingdom are trustees and have the privilege of sharing the Kingdom with others. This is a wonderful contrast between the rich fool and a generous person. The fool tightly grasped for more and more and made them his own, giving no thought to God or others.

The ones who share with others are making an investment that time and circumstance cannot destroy. Their purses do not grow old or wear out. Theirs is the treasure that is beyond the hands of a thief. It is a crucial issue how people use their possessions, it is a moral and spiritual issue. The way that we use our possessions shows clearly where our real priorities and commitments lie.

Ready for the Master's Coming 35-40

We are to have proper stewardship of our possessions but most of the rest of this chapter deals with our stewardship of our life and service. We are always to be ready for the Lord's coming. He is coming and that is a true fact but the time of His coming is a mystery.

Jesus uses two analogies to illustrate the need for His followers to be ready for His coming. The first analogy are like the servants of a master who is away at a marriage feast. Since the servants do not know when he will return they must be always on the ready.

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Girding ones loins meant to tuck their long robes into their belts so they could move quickly. The Jews divided the night into three watches. Jesus stresses that even if the master returned in the second or third watch they were to be ready.

It was customary that when the master returned that the servants would feed him. Jesus used the masters returning to demonstrate when He would return. He told His disciples that when He the Master returned that He would gird Himself and serve those who had waited faithfully for Him. His Kingdom would be different from the kingdoms of the world. Humble service is the greater measure of success. (John 13:12-15)

Jesus' second analogy concerns a homeowner who does not know when the thief will come. Jesus used this analogy only to show the uncertainty of the time of His coming.

Judgment According to Opportunity 41-48

Jesus left Peter's question unanswered. Jesus asked a question of His own instead. The teaching on stewardship has special application to the disciples as well as others. But Jesus did not want to restrict the lesson to only them.

All during the verses 35-48 Jesus used the word servant. The only exception to this is in verse 42 where He used the word steward. Verses 42-48 give insight to the duties of the steward, the steward was a servant who was in charge of his master's household. When the master was away the steward was expected to handle the household according to the master's instructions. When the master returned the steward would be the one held accountable.

Verses 42-44 describe the faithful steward and his reward. His reward is a larger responsibility in the master's service.

Verses 45-48 describe the unfaithful steward and his punishment. He had forgotten that he was the master's servant and steward, and proceeded to lord it over the other servants and to act in ways that was not becoming to the master. Christians can easily see that these verses apply especially to persons in positions of leadership.

Some commentaries distinguish between the punishment in verse 46 and the verses of 47-48. They see that the servant in verse 46 as so unfaithful that he was treated as not a servant at all. By contrast, the servants of verses 47-48 were punished, but they were still servants.

The contrast we see here is that the one servant knew the will of his master and was punished more severely than the others. Here we are being taught the principle of judgment according to opportunity.

Christ the Divider 49-53

When John the Baptist used similar words to what Jesus is saying here he used the word fire. Fire means judgment. What did Jesus mean?

Jesus had not come to judge as John had expected. Jesus had come on a mission of service and redemption. Jesus was seeing the outcome of His mission as one that would

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cause division and judgment. Jesus also knew that He would pass through a baptism of suffering, rejection, and death. The Old Testament speaks of passing through the fire of testing and the sea of troubles. (Psalm 66:12; Psalm 69:2-3; Isaiah 42:2) There must have been mixed feeling for Jesus about this. On the one hand, He wanted His mission to be successful, and on the other hand He was burdened with the thought of how His mission was to be accomplished.

Jesus had come to bring peace, but it was not the easy peace and prosperity anticipated by many of their messianic hopes. The cross was a crisis that Jesus had to face, His followers face the crisis of commitment on the way to the cross. Jesus faced rejection from the people He had come to save, and so it would involve misunderstanding and rejection for His followers. His ultimate intent was not to bring the kind of division of verses 51-53, but that kind of division was certain when some would choose to follow Christ and others to reject Him. This path that Jesus was on would set up strong conflicts, even in families.

The Urgency of Ultimate Issues

From Luke 12:54-13:35 are recorded incidents in which Jesus spoke primarily to persons other than His followers. Jesus was responsive to what some people or groups said. He responded to tragedy, (13:1) criticism of His action, (13:14) a question, (13:23) and a warning. (13:31)

The teachings of Jesus and His responses focus on the urgency of ultimate issues. Human tragedy and the need for repentance, (12:54-13:9) human need, (13:10-17) and entering the Kingdom. (13:18-30) All of these events happened on His last trip to Jerusalem and the fulfillment of His mission. This added to the sense of His urgency.

A Time for Decision 54-59

At this time Jesus was speaking primarily to the multitudes. These people had a lack of knowing what was going on around them. They could read the signs of nature but they could not read the signs of the times they were living in.

For these people was the most of opportunity. They were witnessing what the prophets of old had longed for. Why then could they not recognize this opportunity? Jesus uses of the word hypocrite may be that they were only pretending to be blind to the times. If they were blind it could only be because they refused to see.

By their rejection of Christ they set themselves on a path to inevitable judgment. Many of the people of that day were choosing a path that would ultimately led to war with Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem. The signs of the violent end were already clear to those who would see.

Jesus uses another analogy to show that it was not too late to change. The people still had enough moral sensitivity to know the right thing to do. They were as a guilty man about to be dragged into court by his accuser. He still had time to settle out of court but if he delayed much longer he would lose that opportunity. If he was taken to court, then he

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would be convicted and placed into prison. To the people Jesus was saying that there was still time for them to repent.

Chapter 13

A Lesson from Tragedy 1-5

Some Galileans reported that a group of Galileans were slain at Pilate's orders. It is probable that these Galileans were revolutionaries against Roman rule. Why was this report brought to Jesus? By the response of Jesus we see that the reporters felt that the Galileans had received more than they deserved. The smug self-righteousness of the reporters caused them to draw the wrong conclusion. Jesus told them the only correct conclusion. The tragedy reminds us of our own sin and the need for repentance.

Jesus brought to their mind a tragedy of a different kind. It was an accident in Jerusalem that killed eighteen people. The first century historian Josephus recorded that Pilate financed an aqueduct to Jerusalem using funds from the Temple. This was an unpopular action on Pilate's part and the accident may have occurred during the construction project. If that was the case, the pious Jews would have thought the accident was a divine judgment on the workers who were paid with sacred money.

Jesus was enlarging His point with a tragedy that was more of an accident than an execution by Pilate. Popular theology of the day assumed that such accidents were divine judgments on sinners. Many in the Jewish community would have reached this conclusion.

Jesus denied this argument. He did not deny that the workers were sinners, nor did He deny that a person's sin could result in death. What Jesus did do was to focus the issue on the listeners who would pass quick judgment on others while ignoring their own sin.

When tragedy comes upon people, the only lesson to be learned is our own need for a right relationship with God. We should not be so busy passing judgment on others as we are tending to our own spiritual needs.

Judgment on Fruitlessness 6-9

Jesus tells a parable that compliments the verses we have just read. Man has two choices either repent or face judgment. The opportunity for repentance is near over. Then the judgment will come.

The owner of the fig tree had every reason to expect fruit on the tree after three years. So he ordered it to be cut down because it was useless and used up the soil. The vineyard keeper ask the owner to allow one more year and the owner allowed this grace. The vineyard keeper took every action to encourage the tree to bear fruit.

The point of this parable is that God is patient and forbearing. When people refuse to repent they are bound for doom. (2 Peter 3:8-10) The immediate application was to the Israel people. (Isaiah 5:1-7) During the time of John the Baptist and Jesus was a time of

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great opportunity. This opportunity was not yet past, but it soon would be, and then it would be too late.

Even as the immediate application was to the Israelite people the principles apply to people and groups of every generation. No issue is more urgent than the need to repent, as the alternative is judgment.

Is This an Emergency? 10-17

This is the last time that Jesus taught in the synagogue in the Gospel of Luke. In Luke 6:6-11 Jesus is healing a man on the Sabbath. Jewish tradition allowed the treatment of people who were in life threatening situations on the Sabbath. But Jesus was healing people whom the Jewish leaders did not consider life threatening.

This explains why the ruler of the synagogue was angry. He believed that the fourth commandment had been broken. The ruler was angry with Jesus but he addressed himself to the people. He accused the people of coming to the synagogue for healing on the Sabbath. Jesus sought out a woman and healed her.

The view point of the ruler was pure hypocrisy. The traditional interpretation of the fourth commandment was that none could be cared for on the Sabbath. The Sabbath regulations even allow a person to draw water as long as they did not carry the water to the animal.

Jesus had forced them to face this question. Are animals better than humans? For eighteen years the woman had been bound by a crippling disease. If the animal could be loosed its bonds on the Sabbath, why not a human being?

Jesus and the ruler were standing on what they thought were the moral obligations for the Sabbath. But Jesus had restored its original intent. God had given the Sabbath as a sign of liberation. (Deuteronomy 5:16; Mark 2:27) It is not only lawful to do good on the Sabbath it is a moral obligation to do so.

The case of the woman was an emergency. Not because it could wait for another day but because Jesus saw it as an emergency. The woman had been bound for eighteen years and He had an opportunity to lift that burden off of her. This on the day of God's sign of liberating grace and power. It is no wonder that the people were thrilled and His adversaries were shamed.

God's Kingdom Will Come 18-21

Jesus tells two parables, one of the mustard seed, (18-19) and of the leaven, (20-21) to affirm the certainty of God's purpose.

The mustard seed grows into a tree large enough to nest many birds. The Kingdom will extend like the mustard tree and influence many. The birds may include the inclusion of the Gentiles.

Only a tiny amount of leaven is needed for a large amount of dough. Even so will the influence of God's work permeate many human lives and society.

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The Number of the Saved 22-27

The question in verse 23 is a popular one for those who consider themselves to be saved. By the answer that Jesus gave we can speculate this was the situation here.

As Jesus often did He refocused the issue from the future to the present, and from others to self. Without answering their question Jesus has another question, are you among the saved?

The door of salvation is open to any who would enter. "Strive" and "narrow" in verse 24 do not refer to a works salvation. Jesus is positioning the difficulties faced in being willing to make the commitment to the way of the cross. The difficulty that people have is entering from the human side, not from God's side.

Jesus says nothing about those who strive failing to enter. The many who will not be able to enter are those who wait until the door is closed before they try to enter. There is no amount of effort or any excuse that will avail once the door is closed.

Who's Coming to Dinner? 28-30

Jesus' reference too many might seem to imply that few will be saved. On the other hand verses 28-30 refer to the many who will be saved. The point is that many who expected to be inside will find themselves on the outside. Their places will be taken by those many whom the former group never expected.

God's Kingdom, as Himself, is bigger than people can imagine. Jesus is here warning that a twofold shock awaits many in regard to future salvation. Many who expect to be saved will not and many who were not expected will be saved.

In verse 28 we learn that Israel cannot rely on their heritage as Abraham's children to be saved. The Patriarchs and prophets will be on the inside but many of the other Israelites will not. The verses of Isaiah 45:6 and 49:12 are used to describe the inclusion of the Gentiles in the future feast in God's Kingdom. Those who had assumed they would be first will be last, while the last became first.

A Death Threat 31-33

Most of Jesus' ministry was in Galilee and Perea, an area that was under the control of Herod. Jerusalem was in Judea, where Pontus Pilate was the governor.

We are not given explanation as to why the Pharisees delivered the death threat from Herod. Jesus replied to the Pharisees with words directed to Herod. This means Jesus accepted the report as accurate. The Pharisees may have wanted Jesus to go to Judea. There their power and influence was greater than Herod's.

Jesus called Herod "that fox." He may have been making a reference to the cunning of a fox in regards to Herod. If this is true, then Jesus was discounting Herod's death threat as a strategy to try and frighten Jesus away.

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“Fox” also in that day an insignificant person in comparison to a “lion,” a person of true greatness. Jesus had little liking for Herod. When the two did meet Jesus did not even answer his questions.

By Jesus’ reply He showed that He would not be manipulated. Jesus would continue His ministry according to His time schedule. Jesus was bound for Jerusalem but He would get there in His own time not Herod’s. Jerusalem was the traditional place the prophets were killed.

Rejected Love 34-35

There is no greater tragedy than for people to reject God’s love. Jesus said **“How often would I ... and you would not.”** It was the intent of the Lord to gather His people unto Himself. What had thwarted that divine plan? God willed it, but they did not! Some of God’s will is absolute and unconditional. However, His will to draw people unto Himself is always conditioned on the people’s response. Love and relationship cannot be forced. Love can only be given freely. Love and freedom go together. Love can be accepted and it can also be rejected.

God then reluctantly gives the people what they want, to be left alone. The use of the word “house” may mean the Temple or the nation. The outward trapping of religion would be present but God would not.

The last part of verse has been interpreted in a number of ways. The royal entry, the resurrection, the fall of Jerusalem, and the second coming.

Although many reject God’s love and He allows them to do so, His work will continue to its completion. People can refuse God’s Kingdom but they cannot stop it. His Kingdom shall come and His will shall be done.

The Messianic Banquet

Jesus through His teaching and miracles He had announced that God’s messianic banquet was about to be served. All may come and feast at the table of salvation in God’s Kingdom.

Jesus’ description of His ministry was a wedding feast. Jesus Himself was the groom and the Kingdom of God as a great banquet. All were invited, but many would refuse to come. Jesus is often portrayed as eating with diverse people, from the despised tax collectors to pious Pharisees. Jesus also used imagery of feasting and banquets in His teaching and parables. He had fed huge multitudes with a few loaves and fish.

The Old Testament background of His imagery is Isaiah 25:6, where God’s final salvation is described as a great feast for all people.

Jesus’ public ministry marked the invitation to the banquet and its inauguration. Through His death and resurrection, He achieved salvation. All people can now come to God’s banquet table and receive the spiritual blessings of the Kingdom. At the same time, this banquet awaits its final consummation in the future Kingdom, when Jesus’ disciple will

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“eat and drink at my table in the Kingdom” and “will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Invitation to Discipleship

The general theme of chapter 14 is the invitation to the discipleship of Jesus. The words of verses 1-24 were spoken at a meal in the house of a Pharisee. Jesus was dealing with people whose pride caused them to presume that they were already destined for the Kingdom. Jesus' invitation was addressed to the crowds that had been following him, but had little or no idea of what was involved in becoming real followers.

Chapter 14

An Ox in the Ditch 1-6

This is one of the three healings of Jesus on the Sabbath recorded by Luke that provided Jesus with the opportunity to explain His actions.

Jesus was a guest of a Pharisee in his home and they were watching Him, apparently with the hope that He would do something wrong. It is possible that the Pharisees were using the sick man to trap Jesus; but it is more likely that the man came on His own. In this healing Jesus combined the points of the two previous healings on the Sabbath. It is lawful to help people of the Sabbath. If animals can be helped on the Sabbath then man can also be helped.

The debate of who could be helped on the Sabbath was an academic exercise for the Pharisees. But if the one needing healing was a close person to the Pharisees then that would have been a different situation. Especially if the sick person was a son of a Pharisee. In this case the Pharisee would declare that this would have been an emergency. The implication of Jesus was is it not the same thing if the son was someone else's?

Seeking the Chief Place 7-11

These verses are a parable and not a lesson on social etiquette. Greater than any social embarrassment would be the shame of being excluded from the feast in the coming Kingdom of God. In the pride of the Pharisees they would have expected the chief seats at the feast. But their pride will exclude them, and their places will be taken by the humble who make no claims for themselves. The one who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

The point of this parable of Jesus is that a self-seeking pride is contrary to God's order of things. The irony of this is that the Pharisees were supposed to be God's most faithful servants, yet they acted no better than the pagans scrambling for the place of honor. There were other occasions when Jesus accused them of using religion to seek to satisfy their hunger for praise and special honor. (Matthew 6:1-6, 16:18) More times than not the arrogant self-assertion gains the chief seats, but faith believes that the meek ultimately will inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)

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This is not a lesson on who will gain the seat of honor, as genuine humility is not a strategy to get what we want. Humility is an approach to life that sees one's self in proper relations to God and others. Humility is the opposite of self-seeking pride.

Making the Guest List 12-14

Although verses 12-14 seen as a parable they are not labeled as one. In the background of these verses are the teaching of Jesus about God accepting the unacceptable into His Kingdom excluding those who presume that they are. In the religion of the Pharisees the poor, maimed, lame, and blind were excluded from full participation in religious privileges. Jesus taught that God accepted such people into His Kingdom. Those who have been accepted by God have been accepted by God's grace, whether they are rich and healthy or poor and sick. Those who have been accepted on this bases should be as open as God is towards all kind of people.

The social snobbishness of the Pharisees was no different than that of the pagans. This was the norm in society that the underprivileged was not acceptable in society, but the standards of the Kingdom challenge this norm and was a radically different way of treating others, the way of self-less love. This is the standard that God will ultimately judge our actions.

Come to the Feast 15-24

The Pharisees had missed the point as we see by their pious attitude. They understood enough of what Jesus said that it was about the feast of the coming Kingdom, but his attitude assumed that he would be breaking bread at the feast. Jesus then gave the parable of the great supper which was designed to challenge the Pharisee's pride.

Jesus viewed God's Kingdom as joyful in which God had offered a gracious invitation. Verse 16 was the initial invitation and verse 17 is the announcement that all is ready.

It is presumed that all had accepted the initial invitation but when the slave had announced the feast they all had excuses as to why they would not come. All three of the excuses are lame given by the entire group.

Their excuses are poor and have a sarcastic humor to them. Who would buy a field without first seeing it? Or buy an oxen without first examining it? The law allowed one year exemption from military service and business, but this exemption did not extend to social occasions to which one had already accepted an invitation? (Deuteronomy 24:5)

This was the invitation of God to His people, an invitation they had accepted when they accepted their covenant relationship with God. Jesus and John the Baptist had made the declaration of the feast with their announcement that the Kingdom of God was at hand. The excuse makers are those like the Pharisees who found various reasons to reject the invitation of John and Jesus.

Jesus now refers to the same groups of people as He had before. These were people that the Pharisees considered unworthy of the Kingdom. Some were physically maimed, some were tax collectors and sinners who did not keep the traditions as the Pharisees.

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The point that Jesus made is that as the Pharisees had excluded them and God invites them. The other side of the picture is that the Pharisees will be the ones excluded.

Those of the highways and hedges are those who live outside of the city. They would be the Gentiles who would eventually be welcomed in. The slave was to compel the others to come to the feast and this shows the urgency that the Kingdom is close at hand.

Count the Cost 25-35

Jesus still had large crowds following to hear Him speak and these words in in these verses were addressed to them. Although they followed Him they were not real followers. This may explain the harshness of His tone in these verses. Jesus was not trying to frighten them away but trying to challenge them to genuine commitment. For the most of them they had not faced up to what real commitment meant.

Jesus uses the word hate here to stress the point that He was making about commitment. Jesus makes the same point in Matthew but the writer uses a softer tone. (Matthew 10:37) The statement came when family commitment comes into conflict with our commitment to Jesus. (Matthew 10:34-36) The verse speaks to the man in verses 20 who could not come because of his wife, as well as the man in Luke 9:59 because he had to bury his father. The New Testament speaks about the need for family loyalty but even family loyalty must not stand between a person and his commitment to Jesus. Our loyalty to Jesus must be so strong that it appears that we have hate towards any distraction. This is also how some families react to a family member who chooses to follow Jesus against their wishes.

In that day to bear a cross meant they were willing to die a martyr's death. Jesus had used this same challenge on His disciples to deny self in total commitment to Him. In Verse 27 we see the same idea as in the last of verse 26. In the context of this passage hating one's life means a willingness to give one's life for Christ's sake.

We now see two more parables and their point is summed up in verse 33. Jesus wanted these superficial followers to become real followers of His. He did not want them to think that they were real followers just because they tagged along with Him, listened to what He taught, and said good things about Him.

The parable makes only one point and that is to count the cost before becoming a follower of Jesus. Being a disciple of Jesus is costly and one must be willing to pay that cost. Salvation is free, but it is not cheap. Salvation involves repentance, commitment, and renunciation of anything that stands in the way of the abundant life to which Christ calls. One must allow Christ to take center stage in their life.

The parables were not meant to teach that no one should become a follower of Jesus if there was the slightest chance of failing along the way. To interpret it that way would undercut the whole meaning of faith. Faith without risk is not faith. Part of the total commitment is the trust that Jesus would be sufficient for whatever the future may hold.

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In that day the salt was not pure. Therefore, it could lose its saltiness. The use of salt appears in several settings in Matthew 5:13 and Mark 9:50. The point here is that a disciple without total commitment is useless.

Chapter 15

God's Joy

We now begin chapter 15 and this chapter is one of the most famous in the Bible. This is the chapter in Luke that contains the Prodigal Son. But the parable of the Prodigal Son needs to be seen in the context of the whole chapter. In that way we better understand the reaction of the elder brother which is part of the parable along with the loving father.

Jesus was criticized by the scribes and Pharisees for receiving and eating with the sinners. In response Jesus told these three parables the good shepherd and the lost sheep, the diligent woman and the lost coin, and the loving father and his two sons. The theme of these parables is the joy that God has over the repentance of one sinner.

The Friend of Sinners 1-2

The first two verses of this chapter are key to what Jesus was teaching. This was not a new issue that Jesus was having with the scribes and Pharisees as they had clashed over it before. But here in chapter 15 we read the longest response that Jesus had for their charge that He was a friend to the sinners. The focus of this chapter is the sharp difference over the issue of being with sinners. The approach of Jesus was to be inclusive of all people and the Pharisees was to exclude certain groups of people. The Pharisees did teach repentance but they would not associate with sinners. And the thought of breaking bread with a sinner was beyond their approach. Their acceptance of a sinner was only after they had become penitents and had the proof of good works. Jesus' approach to sinners was to befriend them and then lead them to repentance. Jesus was demonstrating by His actions the desire of God to welcome repentant sinners.

A Shepherd and the Sheep 3-7

The focus of this parable is that the shepherd has lost one of his sheep. Because of his concern for the lost sheep he is diligent in his search for it. Once the lost sheep is found the shepherd is filled with great joy. Jesus was teaching that this is God's attitude and actions toward a sinner. The revelation of a God that seeks the sinners is not a new thought and is seen in the Old Testament. (Genesis 3:9) There is also great emphasis on the need of the sinner to seek the Lord. (Isaiah 55:6-7) The gospels are very clear that God takes the initiative in seeking the sinners. The whole point of Jesus' life and death was to save the sinners. As Jesus has said, "**For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.**" (Luke 19:10)

The ninety nine righteous who did not need repentance are those who are already found and safely in the fold. This may have been an irony pointed at the Pharisees as they felt that they did need to repent of anything. Our evangelical understanding of the Scripture is that all of us are lost sheep until we are found by the Good Shepherd. (Isaiah 53:6)

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The Lost Coin 8-11

It was not unusual for Jesus to use two parables to bring out the same message. This is true here with the lost coin. The woman had lost one of her coins and was very concerned over it. She set about the house searching for the lost coin. And when she had found it she rejoiced greatly. Jesus spelled out the lesson, "***In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.***" (Luke 15:10)

The Prodigal's Plight 11-16

We are to recognize from verses 11 that both sons are part of this parable. This parable represents God's reception of sinners. The elder brother represents the attitude of the Pharisees who were self-righteous. And the Pharisees were critical of Jesus' attitude toward the sinners.

An inheritance is ordinarily given after the death of the father. The father in this parable represents the Heavenly Father. In this context the action of the father displays the freedom that God gives to humanity. By the same token the prodigal's actions show what sin is and what it does.

From a human point of view the prodigal can be faulted for his lack of responsibility towards his father. This action also typifies man's actions towards the Heavenly Father. It shows the folly of man by misusing his God given freedom to seek freedom from a responsible relationship with God. The sinner squanders his God given gifts in a futile search for life and fulfillment on their own terms.

To the Jewish listeners of this parable of Jesus they could find no worse plight than the prodigals. The prodigal was feeding the swine and contemplating eating their food. Also the fact that he was fed nothing shows the disdain the Gentiles had for the Jews that they would value the animals over the Jew.

A Prodigal's Decision 17-19

We find here a point in this parable that the previous two did not have. The first two parables focused on the seeking love of God but they did not show the sinners response to that love. When a shepherd finds his lost sheep he needs only to pick it up. The same is true for the lost coin. But there is a difference when the lost is a person. When a person is lost they must choose to receive God's forgiving love. The father did not go to the far country to search for his lost son. The lost son had to decide to return to his father's house.

Jesus said that the prodigal came to his senses. It was as one who awoke from a dream and came to grips with reality. He saw himself as he really was and remembered from where he had come. He did not expect to be fully restored to his sonship. He only dared to hope that his father would hire him as a servant. His father treated his servants much better than the way he was being treated in the far country.

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The Father's Welcome 20-24

Every loving father would have responded as this father did. The point of Jesus is that His Heavenly Father always responds in this way. Just as the shepherd and the woman rejoiced over finding what they had lost the father rejoiced over finding his lost son.

The Heavenly Father seeks repenting sinners, but they must respond to Him. The story of the prodigal uses a family scene to show how God responds to the repentance of one sinner. The waiting father rushed to welcome his son. Even before the prodigal could finish his rehearsed confession the father gave orders for a welcome-home celebration.

The Complaining Elder Brother 25-30

The way in which the elder brother complained to his father about the special treatment that his younger brother was receiving is much the same as the Pharisees. The Pharisees complained about the way that Jesus welcomed the sinners. The sketch that Jesus has presented with this parable was a portrait of the Pharisaic religion.

The elder brother stayed home and did all that his father had commanded him but he was lost to his father as his younger brother had been. The elder had not shared in his father's anguish over the younger going away, and, he did not share in his father's joy when the younger had returned. He even refused to acknowledge his younger brother. When speaking of him to his father he had called the younger "this son of yours." Paul when remembering his days as a Pharisee considered himself as a blameless person as the Pharisees did. (Philippians 3:6)

We may also see a bit of envy in the elder son by his charge to the father that the younger had "devoured your living with harlots." It is possible that he had but nothing in the parable said that he spent time with harlots.

The Father's Response 31-32

The father displayed grace towards his elder son in his response to him. The proud son had complained that he had been reduced to a slave. His father replied that this had been his own choice. He had maintained the rights of sonship even if he had not recognized it. Then the father asked the elder to come and share in the joy of his younger brother returning home.

The parable ends without us hearing the response of the elder brother to his father. This was probably deliberate as Jesus hoped that some of the Pharisees would respond to the Heavenly Father's call to them, but the choice was theirs.

The Pharisees were not far from the Kingdom of God. They knew the Scriptures and they wanted to be pleasing to God. The Pharisees took their responsibilities seriously. But in other ways the Pharisees were far from the Kingdom of God. Even farther than the out and out sinner or irreligious person. They were separated by their self-centered goodness. Others often responded more quickly to God's loving call.

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Chapter 16

Money – Bridge or Barrier? 1-31

Money is a theme in the Gospel of Luke and chapter 16 is devoted to the proper use of money. This chapter begins with the parable of the dishonest steward and several lessons about stewardship. The Pharisees scoffed about the teaching of money by Jesus and Jesus accused them of justifying themselves. Jesus followed up on the subject with the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

The general idea is that money can build bridges or set up barriers. Our use of money is a temporary thing but the way we use it has eternal consequences. If we use our money rightly, then it can create an eternal fellowship. If our money is used wrongly, then it separates us here and hereafter.

The Shrewd Scoundrel 1-8

This is a difficult parable to grasp. Part of the problem is the uncertainty of some of the circumstances in the parable. The question we must ask is in what sense did Jesus intend the dishonest steward to be an example for His followers?

The steward was the manager for his master's estate. The steward was accused for wasting his master's possessions. This may have been because of his dishonesty or incompetence, or maybe both. His master wanted to see the records of the estate as part of his removal of being the manager.

Knowing that he was soon to be unemployed he began to plan for his future. He ruled out doing manual labor and was too proud to beg. The steward thought of a scheme to use his present position to make friends that they may care for him when the bad times came upon him.

The steward called everyone that owed his master and one by one recorded their debt. Whether this was a legal thing for him to do is not clear in this parable. He may have still had the power of attorney. If this was the case, then on the surface it appeared to be legal, but still it was done behind the back of his master. If this was a legal action, then there was nothing that the master could do.

There is another factor that may have been involved. The law forbade an Israelite from charging interest to another. (Deuteronomy 23:19-20) Most people got around this law by applying it only to the poor. (Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:35-36) Most likely the master probably charged interest to his debtors which showed they themselves were well to do.

The steward may have only reduced the payments by what interest they had been charged. This may be the reason that the master did not undertake to recoup his losses. The debtors must have thought that the master had authorized this reduction in the money owed. They may have thought that the master was putting religious scruples above profit. This thought would have enhanced the reputation of the master by him placing principle above property.

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In this spirit the master commended the steward for his shrewdness. The steward had managed to secure his future by his clever manipulation of his master's wealth.

A Lesson for the Sons of Light 8-9

In the second half of verses 8 Jesus begins His observations about the parable. The rich man had commended the steward and Jesus' observation is that the sons of light can learn a lesson from this son of darkness. Jesus was not commending the steward's dishonesty, but He did point to his initiative in planning for his future.

In verse 9 points to the lesson that should be learned from this parable. Someday money and possessions will fail us. This sometimes will happen in life, but Jesus is here speaking about death. After death wealth and possessions will be useless. On the other hand, money can now be used in ways that create eternal fellowship.

The steward is an example for us only in an indirect way. Jesus was not talking about using money to buy friends, but He was talking about using money to advance God's Kingdom by meeting human needs. Money fails but God's Kingdom is eternal. When our life comes to an end the wisdom of lasting investments will become clear. God and His people will welcome us to the eternal abode of the family of God. Money will not be there, but money makes possible what is there.

Money is the Acid Test 10-12

A wealthy father may entrust his son with a small amount of responsibility before he comes of age. The son's faithfulness shows he also will be faithful over all that ultimately will be entrusted to him.

We are trustees of what God has given us, as it all belongs to God. If we are faithful in using what God has given us, then we show that we are fit for even larger responsibilities and ultimately the full inheritance as children of God.

Money, Possession or Possessor 13

If we are not careful we can be possessed by our possessions. A person can serve only one God. If a person's attitudes and actions are preoccupied by money, then mammon is that person's master.

Like all false gods, trust in mammon is a deceptive and destructive thing. Nothing is more tragic than a person who makes that discovery too late.

A Contrasting View about Money 14-15

The first 13 verses were spoken to the disciples of Jesus but the Pharisees were listening. They were scoffing about Jesus' lesson on money. The Pharisees had a different view about money. They saw money as evidence of God's favor, not a false god that would take God's place.

Jesus said that the Pharisees justified themselves before men. They in their self-righteousness never considered the possibility that they were wrong. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican was directed to this fault of the Pharisees. (Luke 18:9-14)

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Jesus said, "**For that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.**" In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is illustrated the teaching of verse 15. The rich man was exalted in human society but faced divine judgment in the grave.

Danger of Self-Justification 16-18

John the Baptist was the end of the Old Testament prophets and was the line between the old era and the new. From the time of John the Baptist and throughout the Church age the good news of the Kingdom is being preached.

The last of verses 16 is an accusation against those who would try to force the Kingdom to fit their own selfish plans. It is also a graphic description of the earnestness of those who were responding to the good news and entering the Kingdom. But not many of the Pharisees were pressing their way into the Kingdom.

The Pharisees prided themselves on their careful observance of the law and often accused Jesus for disregarding the law. In verse 17 Jesus affirmed the lasting importance of the moral truth in the law. In verse 18 Jesus attacked the moral game that the Pharisees played with the moral truth in regards to divorce.

The law realized the frailty of human nature and did make provision for divorce. (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) Jesus had on another occasion showed that the divorce law was clearly set in the context of a revelation that affirmed the idea of a lasting marriage. (Mark 12:2-12); Matthew 19:4-9) The Pharisees allowed men to divorce on trivial grounds which included a man finding a woman that he liked better.

The point that Jesus was making is that such a divorce is a legal fiction. A game people play to justify themselves. Such a divorce may be legal in the eyes of men, but it is not hidden from the eyes of God what is still adulterous relationships. Man cannot justify himself into a conformity to God's law.

Rich Man ... Poor Man 19-21

In just a few words Jesus paints a contrast between a rich man and a poor man. The rich man had everything that money could buy and the poor man had none of the things that money could buy. The poor man, Lazarus, was helpless, hungry, sick, and was reduced to begging. He wanted even the scraps from the rich man's table. His only friends were the dogs of the streets.

Beyond the Grave 22-26

The name "Lazarus" means "God helps" represented the beggars trust in God. When Lazarus died he was taken away by the angels. While on earth Lazarus was excluded from the feast of the rich man. But beyond death he shared in the feast like fellowship with Abraham and other people of faith.

The rich man died and was buried with a lavish funeral and had many eloquent eulogies. But no ministering angels came to bear him to heaven. Instead he found himself in the torment of hades.

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In his conversation with Abraham we see he was basically unchanged by his experience. He still saw Lazarus as an inferior person whose role was to serve him.

Abraham's reply does not teach that eternity is an exact reversal of a person's lot on earth. Rather the point is that nothing is allowed to intrude on Lazarus' bliss.

We learn from verse 26 that there is a great chasm between where Lazarus was and the rich man. During his life the rich man had separated himself from Lazarus and others like him. He looked at his wealth and said to himself, "all this is mine to use to please myself and to dispose of as I please." The rich man was not accused of being dishonest but he had made an idol of mammon. He had separated himself from God and others.

According to the popular view of the day the rich man was considered righteous and religious. He saw his wealth as a reward from God. likewise he may have seen people like Lazarus as getting what they deserved.

Jesus taught that money and possessions were gifts and trust from God. God loans us these things with expectations that we will use them to help others. When we do we are drawn closer to God and to those whom we have helped. This closeness extends beyond death into eternity.

In contrast hades is a place of separation and alienation from God and others. The barriers of separation have been built by pride, selfishness, greed, and indifference. They have hardened into an eternal destiny. The rich man could have be welcomed into the same eternal habitation as Lazarus if he had loved God and others. But the rich man doomed himself by grasping onto his possessions. By doing this he had separated himself from others and unknowingly separated himself from God.

There are those who see verses 27-28 as a change of heart for the rich man. Another way to look at his words is that he may be justifying himself by thinking that he had not been warned of the consequences of his life. So therefore he would not be in hell if he had been told and adequately warned.

The response of Abraham shows that the man could have known the truth through the Scriptures. The rich man's reply shows that he felt the words of the prophets was not sufficient and his brothers would need a miraculous sign such as a visit from the dead. And then his brothers would repent.

The truth is that God's Word is sufficient to call people to repentance. People who refuse the Word of God would neither be persuaded by miraculous signs. When people who see signs the first thing they do is explain them away.

This truth was seen when another Lazarus was restored to life by Jesus. Some believed but many hardened their hearts. (John 11:45-53) when Jesus was resurrected from the dead many continued on in life unchanged and unrepentant. (Matthew 28:11-15)

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Chapter 17

Faith and Faithfulness

This next block of Scripture contains the teaching of Jesus about what He expects from His followers, (Luke 17:1-10) the healing of the ten lepers and that only one returned to express gratitude, (Luke 17:11-19) the coming of His Kingdom, (Luke 17:20-37) and the parable of the unjust judge. (Luke 18:1-8) There is no strong relationship between these blocks of Scripture and faith is mentioned several times.

Beware of Leading Others Astray 1-2

Jesus is warning His disciples that leading one into sin is a very dangerous thing. Little ones does not mean the children only but the believers that are immature in their faith. Christians who are bad examples of the Christian faith, especially Christian leaders, had a disastrous impact on those who are looking for an example of how to live the Christian life.

When a Brother or Sister Sins Against You 3-4

If a brother or sister in the Christian faith offends you or is not living the righteous Christian life, then they are to be rebuked or set straight. If they repent from their wrong doing then we are to forgive them. God offers His forgiveness an unlimited amount of times and we should be willing to forgive in the same way.

Many New Testament teaching collaborate on this subject. (Matthew 18:15-35; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:32; James 5:16) We are to rebuke in the motivation of love and the goal of our rebuke is to restore our brother or sister to righteous living. Our spirit should not be haughty or judgmental. We all have experienced the forgiving grace of God so we should deal with one another as God has dealt with us.

Jesus took the pain and agony of our sins on the cross, He offers us forgiveness and reconciliation. Sometimes we must also take the pain and suffering for what another has done and remain willing to forgive and bring reconciliation. Repentance should always lead to a willingness to forgive. A forgiving spirit makes that repentance possible. A forgiving spirit should always be there even when repentance is not

Increase Our Faith 5-6.

Jesus is making great demands upon His disciples. Who among us has never led one astray and who among us always has a spirit of forgiveness? The disciple realized that to accomplish this attitude they would need divine help. The demands upon them were great and they asked Jesus to increase their faith.

Jesus gives His disciples an answer that does not show the need for more faith but a truer faith. Jesus explains that even a faith as small as a mustard seed is enough to release the power of God. Jesus explains that tress could be placed in the sea and in Matthew we see that mountains can be moved. (Matthew 17:20) The point Jesus is making is that faith, even a small faith, can channel God's unlimited grace and power.

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Pride 7-10

Pride is the one of the greatest dangers that we face. Pride can and does destroy even the most effectual servant of God. We so often think how great we are when in truth is how great God is.

Jesus is not degrading our service in verse 10 but making the point that our service is expected from us. We have been called by God and equipped by Him for service in His Kingdom. In our service to God we are only doing that which we have been called to do. When we complete the mission that we have been called to fill we should not expect an obligation from God or others for what we have done.

We should not read more into this parable that what is here. The parable leaves much unsaid about Christian service. It does not show us the role of grace in service. God expects much from His servants but He does not expect more than what He has already given us. Our service to God is like our life, it is a gift from God.

Gratitude and Faith 11-19

We are reminded again by Luke that these events happened while Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. In the event of the healing of the ten lepers we see a capsule of His ministry and a prophecy of what lay ahead of Him.

Jesus saw ten lepers and felt compassion upon them. Jesus healed them but only one returned to give thanks for what Jesus had done. This thanklessness was becoming typical in this part of His ministry. Many people were now coming to Jesus to be healed only and not for the deeper needs that He had come to satisfy.

The positive response of the one healed leper showed that not everyone had missed what Jesus had come to do. The healed leper was a Samaritan which is a signal that many in the future who would respond to Jesus would be Gentiles. This is the theme of Luke's second book the book of Acts.

All the lepers had faith as they all obeyed what Jesus told them to do on faith in His word. They all were healed by their faith. In verse 19 we see that only one of the lepers had the kind of faith that actually saves and makes a person truly whole.

This should be a sobering lesson for all of us. People can accept the many gracious gifts of God and miss the purpose that they are given. God gives us gifts that He would give Himself to us and that we would give ourselves to Him. Our expression of gratitude is one way that we show that we understand the point of God's grace towards us.

The Kingdom Has Come 20-21

The Pharisees and probably most Jews were very interested in what time the Kingdom would come. The Pharisees had no understanding of the nature of the Kingdom and therefore missed the present reality of it. They were expecting it to be an earthly place and clearly visible. Jesus denied that the Kingdom would have outward signs to be seen or that it was to have a definite place. Jesus did tell them that the Kingdom was already in their midst.

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The word Jesus used in this passage could have been translated as “within” or “among.” Jesus would have most likely told the Pharisees that the Kingdom was within them. The point being that they had been too blind to see the Kingdom among them. Jesus Himself was the Kingdom that was among them by what He said and did. This is the same point that Jesus had made in Luke 11:20. ***“But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”***

The Kingdom is Coming 22:24

The usage of the word Kingdom by Jesus means reign and not realm. It is the reign of God as King. God has always been sovereign but people have not always accepted Him as Lord. With the coming of Jesus the sovereignty of God has been declared in a new and powerful way. People for the most part do not acknowledge God as King. But the New Testament speaks of the coming of the Kingdom as a future event and also as a present reality. Verses 20-21 refer to the present and verses 22-37 refer to the future coming of the Kingdom. There are several passage in Luke where Jesus teaches about the coming Kingdom. (Luke 12:35-38; Luke 19:11-27; Luke 21:5-36)

In Luke’s accounts of Jesus’ teaching of the coming Kingdom there are some things in common. Jesus taught that His future coming will be as clear as a flash of lightning across the night sky. Jesus said this to His disciples as an encouragement for the dark times that lay ahead of them. They would be anxious for His return and Jesus did not want them to be led astray by those who would say He had come in secret and the time had passed.

The Cross First 25

The cross is indispensable to God’s redemption plan. The cross is the very heart of God’s purpose and the key to His Kingdom

The Time of His Coming 26-30

Jesus teaches the certainty of His second coming but that the time is known by only the Father. Jesus compares the uncertainty of the time as it was in the days of Noah or as the days of Sodom. People were going about their normal activity when the judgment came, ***“It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.”***

The Effect on Present Actions 31-33

The hope the Christian has on the future coming of the Lord should have an effect on present day activity. When the time of Jesus’ return comes we should not be involved with the worldly values and priorities. Jesus reminds us of Lot’s wife who looked back to see once again because of her attachment to worldly possessions. (Genesis 19:26) The people of God should live by His values and not that of the world.

Coming Judgment 34-37

When Jesus returns it will be a time of judgment. Verses 34-35 refer to the separation of people with close earthly ties but with different allegiances.

Verses 37 is interpreted as a sign of coming judgment. The disciples wanted to know where this was going to take place. But Jesus did not give them an answer to those

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questions. Instead He used the birds of the air to say that they would be drawn to the dead bodies meaning that sin would draw judgment.

Chapter 18

Keep on Praying 1-8

As in the parable of the friend at midnight Jesus gives another parable about the need for persistent prayer. The unjust judge was everything that a judge was not supposed to be. (Exodus 23:6-8; Deuteronomy 16:18-20) The judge did not fear God and had no care for people.

In the society of that day a widow did not have a means of support and were helpless. A judge was supposed to be one that would help a person such as this widow. But the widow was not a person of power and she had no money, so the judge was not interested in her. But this widow was not one to give up in her quest. The judge had refused to hear her case but this did not cause her to stop making her request.

Finally the judge agreed to vindicate her against her adversary. The judge did this because the widow had worn him down by her persistence. The widow continued to annoy the judge until he agreed to grant her the request.

We must not misunderstand the point Jesus is making in this parable. Jesus is not saying that God is like the unjust judge who must be worn down by our persistent praying. On the contrary, God is a loving Father who is sensitive to our needs. (Matthew 6:7-8)

The point that Jesus is making is that all real request are persistent. The widow's need was desperate and she would not give up.

In the Scriptures God is referred to as a righteous judge. (2 Timothy 4:8) If an unjust judge will hear the request of a widow then how much more will the righteous judge hear and answer his people? The point is that God our Father who knows our needs is willing to give supply to them.

The application of this parable was for the disciples during the difficult times during their wait for His return. There would be times of persecution, times when evil people would run roughshod over the righteous. It is in times as those that believers may wonder why God would allow such evil to go unpunished. Their prayers would be for the Lord to come and deliver them, but their prayers may seem to go unanswered. In times like these believers need to be reminded of the need to pray and not lose heart. Vindication may seem to come very slowly but when the time for judgment comes it will be quick.

The parable ends with a question. There is no question about the faithfulness of God but there is a question about the faithfulness of humans. Jesus had already said that the time of His coming would be as the days of Noah. Those were times of general unbelief but not of total unbelief. So His question in verse 8 does not mean that there will be no faith when He returns. The intent of this question was not to raise doubt but to challenge His followers to persevere in their faith in the difficult times that are ahead.

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Receiving the Kingdom

The Kingdom of God is mentioned several times in Luke 18:9 to 19:27. Jesus spoke of receiving the Kingdom, (18:16-17) entering the Kingdom, (18:25) and forsaking all for the sake of the Kingdom. (18:29) Luke also records a parable Jesus told to those who “supposed that the Kingdom of God was to appear immediately.”

Luke 18:9 to 19:27 highlights a series of contrasts between right and wrong responses to the Kingdom. The Proud Pharisee is contrasted not only with the repentant tax collector but also with the trusting children. The rich ruler is contrasted with the blind man and Zacchaeus. The fearful slave in the parable of the pounds is contrasted with the faithful slaves.

Separated from God by Goodness 9-14

In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector shows us three fatal flaws of the self-righteous. A pompous unrealistic view of one's self, harshly judgmental of others, and it separates from God. The prayer of the Pharisee was a review of what was wrong with others and a hymn of self-congratulation. His pride was not only fed with the assurance that he was not a sinner but also a recognition that he was better than most people. Only one fast a year was required by the law and that was on the Day of Atonement, but the Pharisee fasted twice a week. The law required a tithe of certain agricultural products, but the Pharisee went beyond what was required.

There is nothing wrong with giving more than what is required, as this is a quality of true dedication. But the Pharisee was crediting himself, not the grace of God. The self-righteous often feel that God is in debt to them and not vice versa. The self-righteous think they have accumulated more merit by going beyond what was required, therefore, he feels this extra merit can be bargained into special favors from God.

The tax collector brought only himself and his need to God. He did not compare himself to any other. He stood in the presence of God and saw himself as he was. He was in godly sorrow for his sins but he believed that God would be merciful to him even as he was a sinner.

Only one of them emerged from the Temple in a right relationship with God. Only one had sought forgiveness and a right standing with God. The Pharisee may not have committed the same kind of sin as the tax collector but his goodness became his worst sin. It had made him pompous and judgmental and it separated him from God.

Receiving from God 15-17

This event is recorded in all three synoptic Gospels. It is explicit in Luke the theme of the larger passage, receiving the Kingdom. This incident of Jesus and the children reinforces the point of the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector and it also prepares the way for what follows.

The disciple who had a false sense of adult importance would have turned away the parents and their children. They had forgotten the lesson of Jesus earlier about the

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importance of receiving children. (Luke 9:46-48) Jesus then used this occasion to teach a complementary lesson, the necessity of receiving the Kingdom like a child. Jesus did not explain the qualities that the children had but He may have meant those qualities seen in the tax collector (18:13), the blind man (18:35-63), and Zacchaeus. (19:1-10) Children have less pride and are quicker to let it be known their needs to God than others. They are not as aware of the difficulties and are more persistent in prayers of faith. They have a quickness to respond to the call of Christ with less care of what others may say and little knowledge of the difficulties that the future may bring. Children are the epitome of true faith with their openness and trust in the Heavenly Father.

Rich and Poor

Throughout Luke's Gospel, a reversal of worldly fortunes characterizes entrance into, or exclusion from, the Kingdom of God. Mary announced that God would lift up the poor and humble and bring down the rich and powerful (1:52-53) Jesus at Nazareth announced that the Gospel is "good news for the poor." (4:18) He pronounced blessings on the poor and hungry and woes against the rich and satisfied. (6:20-25) This was a reversal of the conversational wisdom, which held that God had blessed the rich and cursed the poor.

A number of Jesus' parables severely warn against the dangers of riches. "The Parable of the Rich Fool" (12:13-21) reveals the consequence of storing up treasures on earth instead of having a rich relationship with God. "The Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus" (16:19-31) shows the eternal cost of ignoring the poor and helpless while enjoying the good things in life. The rich man who had asked Jesus the way to eternal life was devastated when Jesus said he must sell all that he had and give to the poor. (18:18-30)

Who are the poor in Luke's Gospel? Are they the physically poor or those that are poor in spirit? Almost certainly it is both. The physically poor, who have very little, are naturally dependent on God for their needs. The rich and powerful are likely to be self-sufficient, forgetting their need for God. It is impossible for rich men to enter God's Kingdom as long as they trust in their riches to get them there. (16:25-26) God accepts those who put their faith in Him alone.

The Rich Young Ruler 18-23

All three Synoptic Gospels tell us this about the rich young ruler. Matthew tells us he was young. (Matthew 19:22) Luke calls him a ruler. (18) He wanted to know how to receive eternal life which means he wanted to enter into the Kingdom of God. He seemed to believe that he could receive eternal life by his goodness.

Verse 19 does not mean that Jesus was not good but that he was challenging the rich ruler to see his goodness as superficial. This rich ruler had the same kind of confidence in goodness as the Pharisees had.

Jesus knew that the rich ruler's life had been wrapped up in his prosperity. This was the source of his pride, the nourishment of his employment, and the bases for his security. His prosperity was his religion, it was his god. Jesus saw that a complete renunciation would free him to follow Jesus in the way of life abundant and eternal.

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Riches and the Kingdom 24-27

The ruler rejected the gospel of Jesus and gave occasion for Jesus' statement about the difficulty of a rich man entering the Kingdom. The analogy in verse 25 was to be taken seriously.

Jesus had shocked the disciples by what he had said. In the days theology wealth was the sign of God's favor. If the rich man could not be saved, then who could?

In Verse 27 we get to the heart of the issue of receiving the Kingdom. In the human perspective salvation is an impossibility not only for the rich but for any person. Salvation means rescue or deliverance. The plight from where we need to be saved is one that we cannot deliver ourselves. We cannot be righteous enough, religious enough, or rich enough to save ourselves individually or collectively. The only way that a person can be saved is by the grace and power of God.

Forsaking All for the Kingdom's Sake 28-30

Peter pointed out to Jesus that he and the other disciple had forsaken all to follow Him. Jesus then assured Peter and the others that any sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom would be more than repaid.

This is not a bargain that assures greater returns or that the motivation in following Jesus is what you will get out of it. It does mean that those who follow Jesus will gain more than they will sacrifice. (Philippians 3:7-8) This would be something that someone would see in retrospect or through the eyes of faith. If the rich ruler had seen this he certainly would not have clung to his worldly possessions rather than follow Jesus. In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus followed up with the statement that rewards are gifts of grace and not occasions for pride. (Matthew 20:1-16)

Jesus' Willingness to Forsake All 31-34

Jesus again told His disciples of the events that would happen in Jerusalem. The context of these verses teach that discipleship is not motivated by self-seeking but by self-giving according to the will of God and for the good of others.

The best example of one who forsook all is Jesus. This is the way of the cross that He had chosen and that He called others to follow. To receive the Kingdom you must receive the King. If you receive the King then you must follow Him on the way to the cross. This point was explained many times by Jesus but only later did they understand.

Faith that Will Not Give Up 35-43

According to Mark the blind man's name was Bartimaeus. (Mark 10:46) The blind man was a striking contrast to the rich young ruler. The rich young ruler wanted eternal life, but he was unwilling to forsake his possessions in faith and follow Jesus. The blind man saw more clearly than the rich ruler that he had nothing to lose but his blindness. He would not let anything keep him from Jesus. Jesus heard him and answered his prayer. He not only received his sight but he followed Jesus.

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The blind man called Jesus the “Son of David” a common Jewish name for the Messiah. Ordinarily Jesus would not accept such a title. Still he honored the man’s prayer. Only later would His disciples understand what He had been telling them. That He was the King that had come to suffer and die on behalf of others.

Chapter 19

Lost and Found 1-10

Though this story of Zacchaeus is not a parable of Jesus it had a lot in common with the parables of Jesus in chapter 15. Zacchaeus was a lost man but was saved by the seeking love of God in spite of the self-righteous who were condemning it.

Zacchaeus had some things in common with the rich young ruler in chapter 18:18-23. Both Zacchaeus and the rich young ruler were wealthy men. And the both sought to see Jesus. In other ways they were different, as the rich young ruler’s wealth was seen by the people as a mark of favor from God. But the people considered the wealth of Zacchaeus was gotten by ill gain. Respectable Jews of that day had no liking for other Jews who collected taxes for the Romans. It was bad enough that they collaborated with the Romans but the tax collectors also were guilty of extorting money for their own use. It is noted in this passage that Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector which may mean that he was in charge of an entire district.

The desire of Zacchaeus to see Jesus was more than curiosity. He had gone to great length to see Jesus. When Jesus called him down out of the tree he came down quickly and joyfully. Zacchaeus did not think of himself as a lost person. But his actions show him to be a person that knew that something was wrong and it was something that his money could not fix.

Jesus was on a mission for all people but many people excluded themselves from the lost that He had come to save. Jesus saw the hunger in Zacchaeus’ eyes and called him by his name, and went to his home. In much the same way as what had happened before, the so called respectable people criticized Jesus for associating with a lowly sinner as Zacchaeus.

Jesus or Zacchaeus were deterred by the critics of the crowd. Zacchaeus a man who loved his money as the rich young ruler, showed that he had made a conversion by the words of verse eight. ***“Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.”*** Zacchaeus would repay what he had taken from the people and with interest.

Zacchaeus had received the King and the Kingdom. Jesus stated it this way. ***“Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.”*** The teaching of that day tended to view salvation as a future event. The people were looking forward to the judgment in hope that they would be declared righteous and acceptable to God. Salvation in the New Testament is a grounded hope in the present

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reality. Christians today do not peer into the future hoping against hope that all may be well with us spiritually. Rather the Christian today believes that God has forgiven them by their faith in Jesus Christ and trust Him as their Lord and Savior.

Zacchaeus was a true son of Abraham. Zacchaeus like Abraham dared to trust himself and his future completely to God's hands. This is the child like faith that Jesus is searching for. (Luke 18:17) Many have a hard time believing as this, life can begin anew! The people of the crowd in Jericho did not believe it but Jesus and Zacchaeus did.

A Faithfulness Test 11-27

The followers of Jesus heard the words that Jesus had spoken to Zacchaeus, "**Today salvation has come.**" This probably added to their expectation that the Kingdom of God was about to appear. In spite of all that Jesus had said to them they still expected His trip to Jerusalem to result in a nationalistic kingdom with Jesus as the King. Jesus then told this parable to correct their delusion.

There is a difference between the expectation of a coming Kingdom and the present reality of His Kingdom. The experience of Zacchaeus is the beginning of a pilgrimage of faith. The conversion of Zacchaeus was an exciting event but it was only a beginning. To receive the Kingdom involves commitment and faith. Becoming a servant of the Kingdom means patience and faithfulness over the long haul.

Jesus' disciple expected an immediate Kingdom but Jesus was teaching that the servants of the King must remain faithful as they waited for the future coming of the King. When the King returns they will be held accountable for their stewardship. A second theme in this parable is the rejection of the King. (Verses 14 and 27) This serves as a warning against total rejection of the King.

This parable teaches a basic aspect of Christian stewardship.

All that the Christian has belongs to God. The faithful servants recognized this and referred to the minas as "your pound" when reporting to the King.

A gift from God is given as a trust. The servants were instructed to conduct business with what they were given while he was away.

A good servant is faithful with what he has received. This was the basis of the commendations given to two of the servants.

Unfaithfulness is the result of having no faith. The unfaithful servant did not lose the minas but he did not invest it either. He expressed that he was afraid of his master's harshness. Faith involves taking risks, and only those who have faith in God's grace and help are willing to take the risk.

The reward of faith is opportunity and responsibility. The minas of the unfaithful servant was taken away from him and given to the faithful servant. This act puzzled the bystanders. (Verse 25) Jesus answer their puzzlement in verses 26, "**I tell you that to**

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everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away."

Final Ministry in Jerusalem

This is the last major section in Luke's Gospel. It tells the story of the culmination of Jesus' mission in Jerusalem. Much earlier Jesus had "***set His face to go to Jerusalem.***" (Luke 9:51) The larger section of Luke's Gospel (9:51–19:27) frequently mentions that Jesus was journeying toward Jerusalem. The last major section recounts what happened during His last days in and around Jerusalem.

Jesus' final ministry in Jerusalem is described in three blocks of material. Following His entry Jesus spent some time teaching in the Temple. The events connected with His crucifixion are described. Chapter 24 focuses on Jesus' appearances after His resurrection.

The Prince of Peace

These verses tell what happened as Jesus drew near to Jerusalem and entered the Temple. Thus in one sense is the last part of the journey to Jerusalem and in another sense the beginning of the final ministry in the city.

Peace is a strong theme. Jesus approached the city as the prophesied King who would bring peace to the nations. (Zechariah 9:9-10) Peace was on the lips of those who welcomed Him. Jesus wept at the tragedy of Jerusalem's rejection of the way of peace He offered them.

Preparing to Enter Jerusalem 28-35

During the ministry of Jesus He avoided calling attention to Himself as the Messiah. The question now becomes why did He enter Jerusalem at the Passover season when excitement about the Messiah was at its peak? And, why did Jesus make an entry that was bound to stir up this excitement?

The Prophet Zachariah spoke of the King riding in on a colt and bringing peace to the nations. (Zachariah 9:9-10) Jesus presented Himself in fulfillment of that prophecy. (Matthew 21:5; John 12:15) Jesus entered Jerusalem as the Messiah, but not as the Messiah that the people were seeking. The people were looking for a military leader who would restore their nation. Jesus came as the Prince of Peace for all the people.

Some Welcomed Him 36-38

Those following Jesus grew as He came nearer to Jerusalem. Jesus probably had a group of people with Him as He came from Jericho. It is very likely that word of His coming had reached Jerusalem and many had come out from the city to join Him. As they came into view of the city the disciples began to shout out, "***the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen.***" This was not just the twelve but the whole company of His disciples. They had witnessed the miracles that He had performed and now they praised God for what they had seen.

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The disciples then quoted Scripture from Psalm 118:26 to praise God for Jesus, the King who had come to fulfill their hopes. **"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord."** Peace is already a reality in the Kingdom of Heaven and now this same peace is offered by Jesus.

Criticized by Others 39-40

The Pharisees referred to Jesus as teacher and not King. This is why they asked him to rebuke His followers. The Pharisees did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

In verse 40 we see more understanding as to why Jesus entered Jerusalem as He did. If Jesus was not the Messiah, then He should have made His disciples to be quiet. But, since He was the Messiah, He was the fulfillment of the centuries old prophecies. The mission of Jesus in Jerusalem was the decisive event in God's great plan of the ages. Someone must herald such an event. If the voices of the humans were silent, then the rocks would shout praises to the Messiah.

Ultimate Tragedy 41-44

Jesus knew the outcome of His ministry in Jerusalem. Jesus had predicted His rejection and death on many occasions. (Luke 9:22, Luke 44: 13:33-34; Luke 18:31-34) The praise of His followers as He approached Jerusalem did not change His mind. Others were shouting joyful words of praise, but Jesus was weeping. Jesus had expressed His desire to gather His people as a hen gathers her chicks but the people would not let Him. In two other ways Jesus had described this tragedy. Jesus had come as the Prince of Peace but they did not recognize Him. God had come to visit His blessings of salvation upon them but they did not know it.

Jesus prophesied of events that would happen in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. Verse 43 describes the siege and verse 44 the final ruin of Jerusalem.

Cleansing the Temple 45-46

Jesus in fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi went into the Temple and drove out the money changers. This was not a sudden burst of righteous indignation. This does not mean that He didn't act with emotion but it does mean that He had a larger purpose than driving out the money changers. It was He, Jesus, not the priestly exploiters of the Temple, who was the real Lord of the House of God.

The High Priest and his assistants were the robbers of the poor, sincere worshippers who came to the Temple. The High Priest claimed to be providing a service for the people by the selling of the animals for sacrifice. But the people had to have the animals approved before they could be sacrificed and the animals sold in the Temple court had already been approved. The worshippers did not need to transport their own animals or risk them not being approved.

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Jesus knew that this service was used to exploit the people. The High Priest controlled the inspectors and the sellers of the animals. He could charge fees for inspecting the animals and overcharge for the animals sold.

After the Cleansing 47-48

Jesus not only disrupted the work of the High Priest but He used the Temple court as a place for His daily teaching. At this time the High Priest was not a devout man and was more as a corrupt political boss. From the High Priest point of view Jesus driving out the money changers and taking over the court for teaching was a brazen power play. The High Priest reaction was predictable. No one was better at power plays than he and he formed a powerful coalition and began to make plans to destroy Jesus.

Chapter 20

The City of Jerusalem

The City of Jerusalem plays a crucial but ambivalent role throughout Luke and Acts. On the one hand, Jerusalem was the city of God, the great King --- His presence dwelt there in His Temple. God would accomplish salvation in Jerusalem and the Good News would go out from there. At the same time Jerusalem symbolically represented God's rebellious people Israel, who had persecuted God's Prophets in the past and were now rejecting His Son, the Messiah. This rejection would result in judgment against Jerusalem and its utter destruction by the Romans in AD 70.

Jerusalem plays a key geographical role in the structure of Luke-Acts. The Gospel narrative begins in the Temple at the heart of Jerusalem, the most sacred place in the world, and Jesus' ministry culminated with His death and resurrection in Jerusalem. All this confirms that salvation emerged from Israel, fulfilling the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament. The Church then moved outward, taking the message of salvation from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

Questions and Answers

The Temple was the setting for crucial events in the early days of Jesus' life. The Temple was also the setting for important events of His last days. After cleansing the Temple, Jesus ***“was teaching daily in the Temple,”*** Luke 20:1 to Luke 21:38 records some of the teaching He did in the Temple. There were a variety of subjects including the destruction of the Temple.

Most of the teaching is in the form of questions and answers. The enemies of Jesus tried to trap Him with a series of questions. He answered them, in some cases with questions of His own.

Who Gave You the Right 1-8

Jesus was not only teaching in the Temple but He was preaching the Good News of His Kingdom. While Jesus was doing this the scribes and Pharisees asked Him by what authority He was doing this. This question was part of their plan to destroy Him. They had

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hoped that His answer would get Him into trouble with the Roman authorities. If Jesus had stated that He was the Messiah they could accuse Him of revolutionary activities.

Jesus did not take the bait. Instead He asked them a question, "**Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?**" The scribes and Pharisees immediately found themselves on the defensive. If they answered to please the crowd that John the Baptist was from God, the people would have asked why then they did not believe him when he was alive. If they had spoken what they believed that John was not a true prophet of God the people might have stoned the scribes and Pharisees. John the Baptist was very popular with the people. The scribes and Pharisees were forced to an embarrassing answer that they did not know if John was from God. As a result Jesus refused to answer their question.

Jesus was not avoiding the question as the people knew that He and John were close in relationship. It was Jesus that had acclaimed John to be a prophet of God to set into motion the ministry of Jesus. Therefore, the people knew that Jesus and John believed that they acted upon the divine authority of God. By Jesus asking His question to the scribes and Pharisees about John, Jesus was indirectly answering their question about the authority that He taught under. When they had refused to acknowledge the divine authority of John, they showed that they were not willing to listen to an honest answer to their question.

Parable of the Vine Growers 9-16

Jesus then turned to the people and told them this parable while the scribes and Pharisees were listening. In this parable Jesus spoke to two themes from the previous verses. Jesus was pointing to the Jewish leaders the end result of their refusal to recognize the work of God in their midst. And, Jesus also claimed the divine Sonship.

The parable itself is an allegory. The tenants in the parable are the people of Israel. God is the owner of the vineyard and the servants that He sent are the prophets. One after the other the servants were mistreated and sent away. Finally the owner of the vineyard sent his son but the tenants killed him. Jesus was saying to the people that He had come from God as had the prophets. Jesus was the divine Son of God. Jesus was also saying that the people would reject Him as their fathers had rejected the prophets. They would also treat Him worse than they had treated the prophets.

This parable does not make clear the point that the tenants believed that they would receive the inheritance if they killed the son. Perhaps they thought the father was dead or had given the vineyard to the son and they could claim squatter's rights to the vineyard.

The usage of the verbs come, destroy, and give show what the owner would do now that his son had been killed. The Father himself would come and bring judgment upon the tenants. But he would not destroy the vineyard but would give it to others.

This parable is found in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, (Mark 12:1-12; Matthew 21:33-46) Only Luke records the response of the people, "God forbid!" They understood the

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meaning of Jesus' parable. The death of the son was disturbing to the people. The Jewish leaders who were plotting to kill Jesus were disturbed that the vineyard would be given to others, the Gentiles.

A Rejected Stone 17-18

Jesus now quoted Scripture from Psalm 118:22. **"The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone."** Jesus is the rejected stone but God will make Him the keystone in a new building. In verse 18 we see the judgment that will come to those who reject the stone. Israel rejecting Jesus their Messiah was a tragic but it did not stop the purposes of God. God will build a new Israel with Jesus as the cornerstone.

What About Taxes 19-26

The scribes and Pharisees knew that the parable was directed against them. They wanted to arrest Jesus on the spot but they feared the people as Jesus was too popular with them. So they decided to send spies to try and trap Jesus into saying something that was incriminating. The spies asked, **"Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"**

This question would cause much controversy. When the Romans had first levied a poll tax the Jews were very unhappy and continued to dislike living under the tax. One group of extremist, the Zealots, regarded paying this tax an infidelity to God. As a result they advocated an armed rebellion against Rome. Many of the people did not believe in armed rebellion but they still resented the tax. The enemies of Jesus hoped that He would express sympathy with this popular feeling. This would give the excuse to **"deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor."** Later when they did deliver Jesus this was one of the false charges against Him.

Jesus clearly rejected the position of the Zealots. Jesus affirmed the right of the government of Caesar to levy taxes. Someone in the crowd had a Roman coin with Caesar's image on it. The Jews believed that if the government had the right to issue coins they also had the right to rule. If Caesar performed that God-given role of government he had the right to levy taxes. (Romans 13:1-7)

Jesus affirmed the ultimate claim of God on what was His. As Caesar's image was on the coin God had placed His image on those whom He had created. We owe our taxes to the state and we owe our allegiance to God, we must be true to God.

A Question from the Sadducees 27-33

The Sadducees are mentioned several times in the book of Acts. (Acts 4:1; Acts 5:17; Acts 23:6-8) Here is their only mention in the Gospel of Luke. The Chief Priests were Sadducees. Politically they collaborated with Rome. Religiously, they differed from the Pharisees. For example, the Pharisees believed in a resurrection and the Sadducees did not.

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The concept of resurrection for the Pharisees was stated in earthly terms. Their expectation was that of eternal bliss which was a heightening of normal human functions. The question that they asked Jesus was probably the same as they had asked the Pharisees to confound them. The situation comes for a levirate law of marriage in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Levir means brother and a brother was commanded to marry the widow of his brother. The Sadducees were trying to make Jesus look as flustered as they had made the Pharisees with this question.

The nature of the Afterlife 34-36

The Sadducees had heard that Jesus believed in the resurrection. But their error was that they believed that Jesus had the same belief of a literalistic resurrection that the Pharisees had. Jesus affirmed of a resurrected life but that is was a different mode of existence from life here on earth. The resurrected life is an existence that has no death, so there is no need for procreation. Because of this the relationships of the resurrected life are formed upon a different bases than that of a husband and wife. Relationships in the resurrected life are like those of the angels. Their fellowship is with God and one another and is not formed on a biological bases.

The Resurrected Life is Eternal 37-28

Jesus gave a challenge to the Sadducees with Scripture from Moses. The Lord told Moses, **"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."** The patriarchs had been dead for centuries but God speaks of them in the present sense. Jesus drew from that point, **"Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him."**

The Old Testament is not as clear about resurrection as the New Testament. However, it is clearly taught in both Testaments, fellowship with the eternal God is eternal. Man was created to fellowship with God. If we live a life of fellowship with God, then we will continue to walk with Him beyond death.

Questions Silenced 39-40

The scribes, who were mostly Pharisees, were in an awkward position of commending Jesus for His answer. Jesus had avoided the traps that had been laid for Him by the Sadducees, the scribes, and the Pharisees. His questioners had the tables turned upon them and none of them dared to ask another question.

What About the Messiah 41-44

Jesus then asked them a question. It was a question to challenge their concept of the Messiah. One of the favorite titles of the Messiah was the Son of David. This was an accurate title for the Messiah as the Messiah was the anointed one of King David's line and who would establish the eternal Kingdom. The contemporaries of Jesus' day used the title to refer to one who would restore the glory of Israel at the expense of the Gentiles. Jesus was the true son of David, but He rejected the nationalistic concept of His mission.

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In His question Jesus quoted the Scripture from Psalm 110:1 to show that David referred to the Messiah as Lord. "**Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.**" Jesus was the son of David but He was also the Lord.

The Scribes Hypocrisy 45:47

These verses show us religion at its worse. The scribes used religion to advance their own personal ambitions and as a food source for their pride. They stood before the people and offered long prayers, but only for the effect.

They were the devourers of the widow's houses. Widows and orphans were the most helpless of the day. The Old Testament teaches that these groups of people are to be helped. (Deuteronomy 24:17, 20; Exodus 22:22-23; Psalm 146:9) In the book of James this is one of the marks of true religion. (James 1:27) As the religious leaders of the day the scribes were to set the example of caring for these groups of people. But the scribes did not help the widows but actually preyed upon them. They used their positions of trust to take advantage of the helpless.

Chapter 21

The Widows Commitment 1-4

The widow who came to the Temple showed the true picture of religion. Jesus praise her profusely as he had condemned the scribes and Pharisees. The scene was where the offerings were made in the Temple. The rich would pass by with their gifts and proudly place them in the treasury box. Jesus called the attention of the disciples to the poor widow. Jesus said of her, "**Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them.**" This may have shocked the disciples, as Jesus went on to explain. The amount of her gift was much less than that of the rich but the difference was what was left after she gave her gift. The rich had made large gifts, but they were still rich after they had left the Temple. They had given out of their abundance, and, as a result they did not even miss it. The widow had given all that she had.

The Impact of the Future

No passage is more difficult than Luke 21:5-36 and is paralleled in Mark 13 and Matthew 24. Part of the problem is that these passages use apocalyptic language – highly symbolic kind of language found in such books as Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation. The difficulty is the intertwining of two events. Although Jesus focused on the destruction of the Temple, He projected this as a sign of His future coming. The two events are woven in and out of the fabric of the passage. As a result, it is difficult always to distinguish which verses refer exclusively to one or the other event.

Both of these events were in the future. From our perspective, the Temples destruction is long past. Jesus was describing to the disciples what appeared to them to be like a distant mountain range. From our perspective, however, we know that He was describing two mountain ranges with considerable distance between them.

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We know what happened to Jerusalem and the Temple in the Jewish-Roman war of AD 66-70. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus left a vivid account. By contrast, none of us has experienced what will take place at the Lord's future coming. Considerable agreement exists among Christians about the fact of the Lord's coming, but much disagreement exists about the particulars. These differences of opinion are reflected in what teachers say and commentators write about this passage.

A Startling Prediction 5-6

Jeremiah had prophesied the destruction of Solomon's Temple, (Jeremiah 7) so Jesus foretold the destruction of Herod's Temple. Many of the people of Jeremiah's day and of Jesus' day assumed that God would never allow His Temple to be destroyed or His people judged.

The Babylonians destroyed Solomon's Temple in 587 BC. The Temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel in 515 BC. Herod the great began a third Temple in 20-19 BC, and work on this Temple was continuing in Jesus' day. (John 2:20) In 70 AD when the Romans had laid siege to Jerusalem the last defenders took refuge in the Temple. There they expected God to come to their rescue but the Romans overwhelmed them. The Romans then leveled the Temple just as Jesus had predicted.

Signs and Speculations 7-11

The disciples questioned Jesus as to how they would know when these events were to take place. In their minds this was to be at the time when the new order of God's Kingdom would be established. Jesus had tried to teach them that there would be a time of waiting and serving. (Luke 12:35-40' Luke 19:11-27) But they were still expecting Jesus to establish His Kingdom immediately. (Luke 19:11) The disciples even after the resurrection of Jesus speculated that God was about to restore the kingdom of Israel. (Acts 1:6) Jesus warned them about speculating the times and season. (Acts 1:7) Instead Jesus called them to their real task of telling the world the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The key to these verses is in verse 9, "**but the end does not follow immediately.**" Jesus warned that every event was a sign of the coming end and to be aware of those who came in His name to announce "**The time is at hand.**" Wars and rumors of wars are not a sign that the end is near. Neither are natural disasters as a sign of the end. Many of these events took place before 70 AD and many have happened since then.

A Time for Faithfull Witnessing 12-19

Jesus told them that there would be a time of great persecution before the Temple fell. Jesus challenged His followers to use this time of hostility not as a threat but as a time for bearing testimony. They were not to be anxious ahead of this time for what to say as they stood before their accusers. Jesus promised that they would be enabled to bear a powerful testimony.

Jesus encouraged them by stating that even as some would lose their lives for their testimony that not even a hair in their heads would perish. That they would be safe in the hand of their Lord.

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The use of the word endurance in verse 19 is another way to describe faithfulness. There are those who survive and manage to come through all kinds of trouble. But Jesus is not talking about survival but endurance. Endurance is facing life with faith, courage, and love. This may involve taking risks, even the risk of losing life. Jesus never promised survival but He does promise life. Those who set out to save themselves and survive without losing their life will lose their life. But those who lose their life for the sake of Jesus will find their life. Death is not able to destroy this kind of life.

The Judgment of Jerusalem 20-24

These verses refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and not the second coming of Jesus. Seeing the references to Jerusalem and Judea is a clear reference to what happened in 70 AD.

This is the answer to the disciples who asked about the destruction of the Temple. When the Roman armies encircle Jerusalem the destruction is near. Jesus gives a strong warning to His followers to flee. Jesus refused to associate with the nationalistic groups whose goal was to fight for independence from Rome. Neither did Jesus want His followers to become involved in such a revolution. Jesus was telling them to flee and not stay and fight. Eusebius writes that when the Romans came the Christians moved to Pella across the Jordan River.

The fall of Jerusalem was seen by Jesus as a judgment against Theos who had rejected God's purpose. The Old Covenant was over and the day of the New Covenant was about to be established. This would be accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. When Jesus died the veil of the Temple was torn in two. This was the sign of the end for the Old and the beginning of the New. The destruction of the Temple ended the institution the Old Covenant.

Under the Old Covenant Israel was commissioned as God's people in the world. It has always been God's plan to broaden His commission. The fall of Jerusalem was one sign that the New Covenant had begun, "***the times of the Gentiles.***" One of the themes of Luke-Acts is that the tragedy of the Jews rejection of their Messiah did not end God's work. Their rejection open the door for the Gentiles to have their opportunity to be involved in God's work in the world.

Coming of the Son of Man 25-28

The old order of creation is not giving away to the new order of Christ's Eternal Kingdom. Jesus did not place as much emphasis on the signs as to their effect upon humanity. A humanity that is unprepared for his coming.

Jesus makes reference to Scripture in the Book of Daniel 7:13-14, 27. Jesus referred to Himself as the "Son of man." Daniel describes how God will give the Son of man sovereignty over all things. This happened by the life, death, and resurrection. (Luke 22:69) In one sense the Kingdom is already a reality. (Luke 11:20; Luke 17:21) In another sense the present reality of the Kingdom is only seen through the eyes of faith. When

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Jesus returns the domination of godless nations will come to an end and all people will know the sovereignty of the Son of man. (Philippians 2:9-11)

Jesus does offer His follower's encouragement in these words, ***"But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*** In the Old Testament the ***"day of the Lord"*** was a day for judgment on persistently sinful people and a day of redemption for the faithful people of God. The New Testament presents the same theme. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can look forward to the future with a confident hope in God and His gracious purpose.

Readiness for the Temple's Ruin 29-33

This passage creates a controversy. The words ***"this generation"*** is the heart of the problem. The natural way to understand ***"this generation"*** is its obvious meaning of the people who were alive then. This controversy disappears if the meaning is the Temple's destruction and not the Lord's coming. It has been the main theme of this chapter that Jesus is explaining His prediction of the Temple's ruin. Verses 25-28 look beyond to Christ's coming, the final judgment and redemption, which the fall of Jerusalem must happen first. It would not be surprising then if Jesus came back to His main theme.

The parable of the fig tree then can be understood as the budding of the fig tree is as the sign of the gathering Roman armies around Jerusalem was a sign of the Temple's ruin.

Verse 31 reminds of the expectancy of Jesus' return. Many verses in the New Testament are used to heighten the sense of expectancy. (1 Corinthians 16:22; Philippians 4:5; James 5:8-9; Revelation 22:20) When Jerusalem fell it signified the new age had come in Christ. As a result, it increased the expectancy of His return in the near future.

In times of uncertainty Jesus is teaching where true security is found. Jesus knew that when Jerusalem fell and the Temple was destroyed that many of His followers would become distressed. But Jesus is teaching them to not be consumed by the temporal things and look to the eternal things. As someday heaven and earth will pass away, but our security is not rooted in our present existence.

Watch and Pray 34-36

The theme of these verses is the preparedness we are to have for His coming. The people involved are not the people who dwell in Jerusalem but ***"all those who dwell on the face of all the earth."***

Jesus had predicted and explained the Temple's ruin. Then He looked ahead to His coming. Then Jesus taught them for their preparedness for the former event and now for the readiness of the later.

The day of the Lord will be a day of judgment for the sinners and it will be a day of judgment for the believer, a day to be held accountable for their stewardship. (Luke 12:41-48; Luke 19:11-27; Romans 14:12) Christians are children of the light and not children of

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this world. Christians should not live as children of the world. Jesus warns His followers about being weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the cares of this life.

Teaching in the Temple 37-38

All of these verses from 19:45 to 21:38 took place in the Temple.

Chapter 22

In The Shadow of the Cross

In Luke 22:1 the scene shifts from Jesus' teaching in the Temple to the events just prior to the trials and crucifixion of Jesus. With the exception of verses 1-6, the passage describes what happened on the day and night before His crucifixion. His Last Supper with the disciples, His prayer about the cup, and the arrest.

The Plot against Jesus 1-6

From the cleansing of the Temple the enemies of Jesus had sought a way to destroy Jesus, but they had been afraid because of His popularity with the people. Luke 22:2 says that even as they were plotting to kill Jesus, still they were in fear of what the people might do.

The other Synoptic Gospels reveal to us that their plot against Jesus was to be carried out after the Passover Feast. (Mark 14:2; Matthew 26:5) The Passover Feast was the most important festival of the Jewish year. The feast began on the day of Passover on Nisan the 14th and included the seven-day feast of the Unleavened Bread, which began on the 15th. The city of Jerusalem was crowded throughout Passover with pilgrims from all over.

Then the unexpected happened that changed the plans of the conspirators to wait. Acting on his own Judas came to them and offered to betray Jesus. This solved their dilemma because Judas, as an insider, could lead them to Jesus at a time when there were no crowds.

Why Judas would do this is a mystery. Luke tells us that Judas opened his life to Satan, but this does not explain what Satan used to draw Judas into this terrible act. Some believe that Judas was trying to force Jesus' hand into declaring Himself and use His powers to set up His Kingdom. They use the evidence of Judas' remorse for his actions. (Matthew 27:3-10) Most Biblical evidence implies that Judas was a selfish man who was frustrated because following Jesus had not brought to Judas all that he wanted. Judas then decided to gain something out of the time he had spent with Jesus.

Sin is always an irrational decision. Even when we know the reasons it still does not make any sense. This was true in the Garden of Eden, it was true for Judas, and it is true today.

Preparation for the Passover Meal 7-13

The lambs for the Passover were slain in the afternoon of the 14th and the meal was eaten on that evening. This would have been the 15th as the day ended at sundown for the Jews. Jesus had sent Peter and John out to prepare the Passover meal.

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The place for the Passover Supper was not known to the disciples and Peter and John did not know until they had arrived at the place Jesus had sent them.

The Last Supper and the Lord's Supper 14-20

The Passover was observed because of the deliverance of the Israelite people from the hand of the Egyptians. Passover was also observed in expectation of God's coming Kingdom. This was the last meal that Jesus would have with His disciples and therefore He instituted the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper, like the Passover, celebrates a deliverance. The Lord's Supper also looks forward to the consummation of God's Kingdom.

Jesus knew that this would be the last meal with His disciples before His suffering and His death. But the words that Jesus spoke look forward to the future Kingdom.

Two cups are mentioned in Luke's account of the Lord's Supper. The other accounts in the gospels only mention one. The cup mentioned in verse 20 was taken after the supper. This may have been done to set apart the institution of the Lord's Supper. Luke along with other New Testament references to the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:12-26; Matthew 26:17-30; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34) show why Christians observe the Lord's Supper rather than Passover. The divine deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians foreshadow the deliverance from sin and death are made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus. The bread represents the body of Christ which was given to us. The Cup signifies the blood of Jesus that was shed for us. This sacrifice sealed the New Covenant of God with His people.

The Betrayer's Hand 21:23

This account from Luke shows two important points about the death of Jesus. The death of Jesus was God's plan for man's redemption. Those who were responsible for His death are held responsible for what they did. The Idea that Judas was a helpless pawn in a divine drama is not true. If he was the case, then Jesus would not have pronounced judgment on him for his betrayal.

A New Definition for Success 24-30

The disciples involved themselves in two discussions. Starting with who among them was the betrayer and ending with who was the greatest in the Kingdom. Having these discussions show how far out of touch they were with what Jesus was about to go through. The teachings of Jesus had magnified the way of self-giving love for God and others. In just a few hours Jesus would die because of His great love for man, yet they were arguing about who was the greatest.

We must marvel at the patience of Jesus. Jesus tried to explain again what He had often tried to teach them before. The great people of this world are those with the greatest power and honor. In that day the youngest of the family had the most menial work, but Jesus was telling His disciple to choose for themselves such service. By the standard of the world the person being served is the greater of the ones serving them. But God's standard is the reverse.

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Jesus spoke words of encouragement to His disciples because they had been with Him through many trials, He assured them they would share in the joys of the coming Kingdom. But Jesus did not place any of them in positions above the others. In the new Israel the twelve will occupy places comparable to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Satan's Sifting 31-34

Earlier Satan had entered into Judas and now we learn that Satan had asked to sift Peter like wheat. This reminds us of the time Satan wanted to test Job. The purpose of Satan was to strike at Jesus through Peter. Satan wanted to show that he was like useless chaff. God allowed this to show that the sifting might show that in the sifting the wheat would survive.

Jesus gave Peter words of encouragement that he would remember and from that he would take heart. Peter did seem to fail the test but Jesus had prayed for him that his faith would not fail. Therefore, Jesus was confident to say to Peter to strengthen his brothers after he was restored from his own failure. Unfortunately Peter was filled with too much self-confidence to heed the words of Jesus' warning.

Two Swords 35-38

Again the disciples failed to grasp what Jesus was trying to prepare them for. Jesus was trying to prepare them for the greatest crisis that they had ever faced during their three year ministry with Jesus. He was using symbolic language to help them to draw upon all available resources. Jesus was telling them to gird themselves for the spiritual battle that lay just ahead against the evil forces of Satan. The disciples took Him literally as He said to sell their mantles and buy swords. But their thoughts were upon armed conflict, as they thought the time was now to establish His Kingdom. They had two swords and Jesus said **"it is enough."** It is speculation as to what Jesus meant. Certainly if Jesus was to establish His Kingdom two swords would have been plenty, as what are they to the power of God? But this was not what was to happen on this morning. Another thought is that Jesus meant that is enough talk of weapons, as this was not the purpose of the day.

If Jesus was speaking literally and actually meant for them to arm themselves this would have caused real problems. Armed conflict would have been contrary to all that Jesus had been teaching. And armed conflict would not have advanced the purposes of God.

Not My Will, But Thine 39-46

The literal language of the Lord now changed in the Garden of Gethsemane to plain speaking. This is the weapon against all evil forces, prayer. Jesus earlier had told Peter that He would pray that his faith would be strengthened, now He was telling them to pray for themselves. Then Jesus went off by Himself to pray as he now faced His own crisis. In spite of all that Jesus had said to His disciples they still did not grasp the immediate crisis ahead of them. When Jesus returned from His prayers He found His disciples sleeping. Jesus woke them and again told them to pray.

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The Prayer of Jesus reveals several things about His coming death. It was the will of God, the cross was not forced upon Him, and the cross involved severe suffering and all of His inclinations was to avoid it.

Satan is not mentioned but he must have been tempting Jesus to avoid the cross. Since Cain killed Able Satan has been trying to thwart this very sacrifice to free men from the bondage of sin. Satan knew that if Jesus went to the cross it would be his defeat. Jesus had told His disciples to pray that they would not enter into temptation. This was certainly on His mind, as He knew what He was about to suffer and to be tempted to avoid it would have been the easiest way out.

Many a brave man has faced death willingly. Why would Jesus have shrunk from it? It is not that crucifixion was the most horrible way to die in that time. The Romans had perfected crucifixion to be the most agonizing and painful way to die. Many martyrs have faced slow agonizing deaths without a word. But the death of Jesus was so much more than a martyr's death. Jesus not only had to face physical death but also spiritual death, as this is the wage of sin. The cup represented the deep darkness that Jesus would descend into as He died for the sins of the world. That is a death that none of can ever know and comprehend, as we pray to never experience it. All the Synoptic Gospels record the prayer of Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane. (Mark 14:32-42; Matthew 26:36-46)

The Darkest Hour 47-53

No man tracked Jesus down and took Him against His will. He knew of Judas and the plot to betray Him. Yet Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, as was His custom, knowing that Judas would lead His enemies there. Jesus chose to drink that cup and turned Himself over to the power of darkness. The enemies of Jesus had for some time planned to seize Him but were afraid of the people. Now hiding in the darkness of night they came to take Jesus. In doing this, in the darkness of night, they showed their moral and spiritual darkness in the course of their action.

Mockery of Justice

Luke's account of the trials of Jesus is longer of the account of the crucifixion itself. The trials shed meaning on Jesus' death. Luke tells He was denied by Peter. How the Sanhedrin had condemned Him. The sentence of crucifixion by Pontus Pilate. The Gospels reveal to us the sinful self-interest of many people was involved. One of Jesus' own followers had betrayed Him and another had denied Him. Representatives of the best religious system and of the best judicial system sent the innocent Son of God to His death. This shows the universal cost of sin in the world.

A Tragedy of Denial 54-62

As they took Jesus to the house of the High Priest Peter followed behind at a distance. All of the other disciples with the exception of one had fled. (Mark 14:50; Matthew 26:56; John 18:15) When revolutionary leaders were taken the authorities would also capture and execute their followers. Peter in his loyalty followed Jesus right into the court yard of the High Priest.

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Why then did Peter deny his Lord? Earlier that night Peter told Jesus, "**Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!**" Peter meant what he had said. At the time Peter thought Jesus was going to set up His Kingdom. Peter was ready to fight and even die for Jesus and the Kingdom. When the armed guards came to arrest Jesus it was Peter who drew the sword and cut off the ear of the servant. (John 18:10-11) Peter did this knowing that their two swords were not enough to disarm the foes.

Peter was confused by Jesus not resisting His arrest. Instead Jesus meekly surrendered and placed Himself in the hands of His enemies. Peter followed Jesus but he was confused and disillusioned. Peter found himself morally and spiritually unprepared for the three accusations in the courtyard. Peter was a brave man when he had a sword in his hands but was unwilling to risk death for what seemed to be a lost cause.

Only in the Gospel of Luke do we see that Jesus turned and looked at Peter when the roster crowded. Peter was close enough to see the look in Jesus' eyes.

The Mocking 63-65

First Jesus was interrogated by Annas, who was the father-in-law of the High Priest. (John 18:12-24) After that Caiphas the High Priest and the Sanhedrin conducted an informal hearing. (Mark 14:53-65; Matthew 26:57-66) Jesus was kept under guard as they waited for the morning. It was then the Sanhedrin was to conduct a formal hearing. While the time was passing the guards filled their time by mocking Jesus.

Condemned 66-71

Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin, a council of 71 of the religious leads for the Jews. They had authority over the Jewish people in religious matters. They were under the supervision of the Roman authority but the Sanhedrin was able to influence the Romans from time to time. Roman procurators like Pontus Pilate were reluctant to resist a determined action by the Sanhedrin.

This official meeting of the Sanhedrin was to justify what they had already decided to do with Jesus. They tried to get Jesus to admit that He was the Messiah. This would give them the bases for accusing Him before Pilate. Jesus answered letting them know that He knew they had already made up their minds. This was not a trial that evidence would be presented. The verdict was already predetermined. Therefore, Jesus refused to answer their questions on their terms. This is why He used the title "the Son of man." By His answer Jesus was telling that no matter what they did He would live in glory and someday would be their judge. This answer and His admission to being the Son of God was enough for them to find Him guilty of blasphemy.

Chapter 23

False Charge 1-5

The entire Sanhedrin took Jesus and went before Pilate. Pilate was the chief Roman official in Judea from AD 26-36. The Sanhedrin had condemned Jesus for the sin of blasphemy. (Mark 14:64; Matthew 26:65) This charge was not a crime in the Roman

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government. The Sanhedrin then accused Jesus of being a revolutionary. In addition to the general charge of perverting the people, they accused Jesus of forbidding the people to pay taxes and they said He claimed to be the King. These were false charges. Jesus had taught that people should pay their taxes. (Luke 20:19-26) Jesus had refused to be a threat to the Roman government. (John 6:15) This explains Jesus' ambiguous answer to the question of Pilate. Jesus was the King of the Jews but not in the sense that Pilate would have understood. (John 18:33-38) Pilate believed Jesus and his verdict of verse 4 should have been the official verdict. **"I find no guilt in this man."** His charges should have been dismissed but the Sanhedrin were insistent and Pilate did not act decisively.

Before Herod 6-12

Pilate was in a dilemma and when learning that Jesus was from Galilee he sent Him to see Herod, as Galilee was in Herod's jurisdiction. Herod Antipas was the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He was the one who imprisoned John the Baptist and killed him. For a long time he was superstitious and curious about Jesus. Herod was wanting to see Jesus and have Him perform a sign. Jesus refused to speak to Herod and was treated cruelly and mocked. Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate and did not impose a sentence upon Him. Pilate thought this to mean that Herod had found Jesus to be innocent. Neither of these men had excuse for the shameful miscarriage of justice.

Sentenced by Pilate 13-25

Pilate tried another way to release Jesus. He stated that Jesus was innocent of a crime warranting death and offered to have Him chastised and then released. Roman law allowed a man to be beaten as a warning for future crimes. Pilate had hoped that this compromise would satisfy the accusers of Jesus.

It did not satisfy them and even made them more persistent. They called for the release of Barabbas, an insurrectionist and murderer, and send Jesus to be crucified. Pilate repeated his innocent verdict and his offer to have Jesus beaten. But the accusers became even louder crying out to have Him crucified. Finally Pilate gave into their demands. The irony here is that Jesus was condemned to die for the crimes that Barabbas had committed.

Why did Pilate give into the demands of the Jewish Leaders? Mark 15:15 says that he wanted to satisfy the Jewish crowds. John 19:12-13 says that the Jewish leaders threatened to report Pilate to Caesar. Pilate was not innocent, as he knew the Sanhedrin was using him to crucify an innocent man. Pilate had resisted not so much for a sense of justice as from his abhorrence of being controlled by the High Priest. Pilate knew that Tiberius Caesar was suspicious enough to have believed the false accusation against Jesus by the highest Jewish court in the land. Therefore, Pilate did what he had to do and sentenced Jesus to be crucified.

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Dying for Sinners

In the first century the cross was at the heart of the gospel message, (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) but the Christians encountered much prejudice against accepting a crucified person as the Savior of the world. (1 Corinthians 1:22-23) Luke wanted to show his readers that the crucifixion of Jesus was not what it appeared to be, a routine execution of a condemned revolutionary, rather the death of Jesus was a divine act of on behalf of sinners. On one hand, therefore, Luke stressed the fact that Jesus was completely innocent. This was the repeated verdict of Pilate. The penitent thief and the centurion recognized Jesus innocence. Luke focused on the real meaning of the cross in the three sayings of Jesus. Even the mockery of Jesus enemies points to the truth that Jesus refused to save Himself in order to save others.

Simon of Cyrene 26

Simon carried the cross behind Jesus. Jesus was on His way to the cross, but he had called others to follow Him on the way to the cross. The Romans forced Simon to do what the followers of Jesus should do voluntarily.

Women of Jerusalem 27-31

Only Luke records this incident and it points to the judgment coming to Jerusalem. Jesus calls out to the women of Jerusalem to weep about the coming ruin of their city. A barren woman was an object of pity, but during the throes of Jerusalem's death barren women will be glad they have no children to go through such suffering. It will be a time of such suffering that the people will pray for the mountains to fall upon them.

Two Criminals 32

“Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.” (Isaiah 53:12)

Prayer for Sinners 33-34

Crucifixion was a death that was designed to humiliate and torture the victim. None of the Gospels focus on the torment that Jesus had endured on the cross. Their focus is on the significance of His death. The Gospels record seven sayings that Jesus spoke on the cross. One in (Mark 15:34) and in (Matthew 27:46), three in Luke (Luke 23:34, 43, 46) and three in John. (John 19:26-27, 28, 30)

Two of the sayings in Luke are prayers. As Jesus was being crucified He kept praying, ***“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”*** Most during crucifixion screamed and cursed and some would pray for a quick death. But Jesus prayed for those who had crucified Him. This prayer included all who were involved in His crucifixion. (Acts 3:17; Acts 13:27; 1 Corinthians 2:8) Jesus died for the redemptive plan of the Father and His prayer must have been that all would experience divine forgiveness.

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Serving Self or Others 35-38

Luke records the responses of three groups. The people who watched, the Jewish leaders who scoffed, and the soldiers who mocked. The rulers were saying that if Jesus was the Messiah then He could save Himself. This is a prophetic truth as Jesus could have saved Himself. But Jesus knew that if He saved Himself He could not save others. For this reason, out of His love for mankind, He refused to save Himself. His enemies could not imagine or expect that God would allow His chosen One to suffer such a fate. But the Christian good news is, **“that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”** (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Today ... in Paradise 39-43

When looking at the two thieves the question becomes why some believe and some don't. The two thieves had seen the same sights and sounds. They knew of Jesus and the many marvelous things that He had done. But one thief mocked Him and the other believed. The penitent thief expressed an amazing faith. While to some of the followers of Jesus all seemed lost and this thief in his darkest hour believed in the Christ. He didn't know of the ministry of Jesus and probably did not understand what he did know of it. But He believed that Jesus was the Messiah and that His Kingdom was coming. This thief saw himself as he was, as sinner.

He asked Jesus to remember Him in His coming Kingdom. Jesus promised the thief that he would be with Him in paradise that very day. At death those who believe in Jesus depart the body to be with Jesus. (Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8)

Darkness and Death 44-49

The darkness that fell across the earth at Jesus' death has a cosmic significance. The cry recorded by Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34 show that the forces of darkness did their worst to Jesus during this time. The prayer of Jesus recorded by John **“it is finished”** shows that Jesus had won the final victory. (John 19:30)

The tearing of the curtain in the Temple showed that the death of Jesus opened the way for all people into the presence of God. No longer would man need a sacrificial system for the removal of sin, Jesus had paid that wage.

The Roman soldier's response is another ray of light. By what he had witnessed he is convinced that Jesus was innocent. As a result he praised God.

Joseph of Arimathea 50-53

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin who opposed their plans to crucify Jesus. In an act of faith and courage he provided a tomb for the body of Jesus.

The Women 54-56

These verses in Luke serve as a bridge between the death and resurrection of Jesus. The women had served Jesus during His ministry and they would do what they could for Him after He was dead.

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Chapter 24

The Lord Has Risen

None of the gospels record all of the resurrection appearances of Jesus. Each evangelist told of the resurrection in light of his distinctive purpose. Luke emphasized the reality of the resurrection and the difference it made in the lives of the disciples. Although Jesus' followers had heard Him predict His death and resurrection, they were not expecting Him to be raised from the dead. They believed only after they had seen the risen Lord for themselves. The Lord helped them see the cross as a triumph, not a tragedy. He commissioned His followers to be witnesses to all nations. Thus, although the disciples of Jesus had been in despair when He had left them earlier, they were able to live in confident joy after His ascension.

An Idle Tale 1-12

Many have tried to explain away the resurrection of Jesus. One theory is that the disciples saw someone they mistook for Jesus. This makes the assumption the disciples were waiting for the resurrection. But the New Testament shows that they were not expecting the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Luke 24:11 is clear on this fact, the women had seen the empty tomb and had heard the angels say that Jesus was alive. But when the women reported this to the disciples, **"these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them."** Some of the men went to the tomb and found it empty. Still they were not convinced. It was only later when they saw Jesus themselves did they believe.

The angels reminded the women that Jesus had predicted His death and resurrection. The disciples heard these predictions, why had they not been expecting Jesus to be risen from the dead? They heard what He said but they did not understand. The disciples had their own expectations of what the Messiah was to be and what He was to do, therefore, they only heard what they expected to hear.

The Cross as Tragedy 13-24

Only in Luke do we see this story of the followers on the road to Emmaus. They were speaking directly to Jesus but did not recognize Him. By their conversation we can learn how the followers of Jesus were feeling before they became aware of His resurrection. They had hoped that Jesus would deliver Israel but those hopes had been dashed by Jesus' condemnation and death. They knew of the women who went to the tomb and found it empty. Yet they were not willing to believe. They knew of the men who went to the tomb and had found it empty but these men had not seen Jesus. They thought if Jesus was alive surely He would have shown Himself.

They showed their feeling not only by the words they were speaking but also by the way they looked. Luke records, **"And they stood still, looking sad."**

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The Cross as Triumph 25-27

Many in Jesus' day were well versed in the Scriptures. But many did not know the central message of the Scriptures. Their focus was on the passages that presented the Messiah as a glorious King, but they missed the passages that spoke of Him as a suffering servant. Jesus, still unrecognized, shows how the Scriptures presented the whole story of the Messiah. Jesus showed them that the suffering on the cross was the way to triumph and not tragedy.

Jesus must have pointed to passages as in Isaiah 53, but He also showed them that this theme runs through the whole history of Israel. Jesus showed them how God had called His people not for privilege but for mission. The mission would involve suffering, sometimes innocent suffering. Jesus showed that the glorious King and the Suffering Servant are one in the same. Through His redemptive suffering, the King fulfills the will of God and enters into His glory.

Jesus had tried to teach His disciples the way of self-giving love is the way of God, but the earth bound disciples continued to measure success by the standards of the earth.

God raised Jesus from the dead to show that He was right. The way of love is the way of life. Those who chose to live in the way of the cross can be assured of the power of resurrection. (Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 3:1-4)

Recognizing Jesus 28-32

Why were these followers of Jesus not able to recognize Him? The same question can be asked about Mary Magdalene in John 20:14? One reason may be they were not expecting to see Jesus. Another reason may be that His appearance was different in some ways. But the main factor for these two was that the mystery of His revelation was temporarily hidden from them. But when they did recognize Him they were better able to understand and overcome of their earlier feelings. During the time that Jesus was speaking to them they were having strange feelings. Now they understood why their hearts had burned within them.

Enthusiastic Witness 33-35

The day was near over when they recognized Jesus but they began on the seven mile journey back to Jerusalem. It was unusual to travel at night in those days but these two immediately returned. What a difference from earlier when they were standing still and looking sad.

Before the Emmaus disciples could tell what had happened the Jerusalem disciples shared good news of their own. **"The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon."** The Apostle Paul made a reference to this and this is all we know of it. (1 Corinthians 15:7) With these two reports the disciples were beginning to believe Jesus was alive.

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Disbelieving for Joy 36-43

If the disciples had begun to believe that Jesus had risen why were they startled and frightened when Jesus appeared? Hearing the testimony of Peter was one thing, but seeing is another.

At first they thought He was a spirit. Jesus challenged them to look closely and even touch Him. Jesus even ate a piece of fish to show them that He was not a spirit. The exact nature of Jesus' resurrection body is a mystery to us. Jesus was not with them all the time. He appeared from time to time and usually suddenly. Jesus had a body that could be seen and touched and it was a body they could recognize. The resurrection of Jesus then means that more than His spirit was raised. The tomb was empty and there was not a body there. His body was also raised from the dead.

Even as Jesus was speaking to them they, "**could not believe it because of their joy.**" What they were experiencing was too good to be true. Thomas was not the only doubter. None of them was expecting Jesus to be raised from the dead. Each one of them had to see for themselves, and even after that they struggled with their natural doubt.

Commissioned as Witnesses 44-49

Jesus now opens up the Scriptures to all His disciples. So that they would know that the way of the cross is the way to victory. Jesus repeated His earlier lessons and then added that repentance and forgiveness is for all nations. It had always been the purpose of God to declare the good news of the Gospel of Christ and divine salvation to all the nations.

The Gospel of Luke is really a two volume set with the Book of Acts. In the Book of Acts we see that the Church was Spirit led to cross the many barriers and take the Gospel to many kinds of people. A worldwide mission was inherent to all that Jesus had spoken. These verses 44-49 forms a bridge between Luke's two books.

Sorrow Turned to Joy 50-53

This is a short account of Jesus' ascension. The ascension is also described in Acts. (Acts 1:9-11) Here Luke describes what the disciples did after Jesus had left them. "**They returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising God.**" They had been earlier demoralized when Jesus had been taken from them by death. But by His resurrection to life they were joyful even as He was again departing them. What would be a better testimony of their faith in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead?

The Promise of the Spirit

In the Old Testament the Spirit of God occasionally came upon individuals to empower them for God's service and prophecy. (Numbers 24:2; Judges 3:10; 1 Samuel 10:10; 1 Samuel 16:13; Ezekiel 11:5) In the Judaism of Jesus' day, there was a widespread belief that the Spirit of the prophecy had departed from Israel with the last of the Old Testament prophets. But the prophets had predicted that when God's salvation arrived, He would pour out His Spirit on all people. (Isaiah 32:15; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Joel 2:28-32)

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This prophecy finds its initial fulfillment in the birth narrative in Luke. The Holy Spirit inspired prophetic witness and guided the events of Jesus' birth. John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit even before he was born, and Zechariah broke forth in a Spirit filled hymn of praise to God. Mary conceived Jesus and prophesied through the power of the Spirit, and Simeon was led by the Spirit to the Temple to see the Messiah. Later in His life, Jesus was anointed by the Spirit at His baptism and empowered to accomplish His role as the Messiah.

Following His ascension, Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies by pouring out His Spirit on His disciples on the Day of Pentecost. Empowering them to take the Good News of salvation to the ends of the earth. Throughout Acts, the Church accomplished its mission through the guidance, power, and direction of the Holy Spirit. For Luke, the coming of the Spirit marks the beginning of God's salvation --- God's presence and power now reside with His people.

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