

**TWENTY-SIX
LESSONS
ON LUKE
PART I**

Lynn Gardner

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The printed text of Luke and unidentified scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version, 2nd edition, 1971.

Abbreviations for Versions:

KJV — King James Version
ASV — American Standard Version
NASB — New American Standard Bible
NEB — New English Bible
NIV — New International Version
RSV — Revised Standard Version
TEV — Today's English Version

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*To BARBARA
Woman of God,
My wife and best
friend.*

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PREFACE

Living with the life of Christ as recorded in Luke's Gospel while writing this study guide has been a great source of spiritual strength and pleasure. It has been an exercise in filling my mind with great thoughts. Careful study of the Word of God yields great benefits.

The value of the book has been greatly enhanced by the suggestions and careful editing of Seth Wilson, dean emeritus and professor of New Testament at Ozark Christian College. He has taught the life of Christ for over fifty years. I want to express appreciation to Kenny Boles, an editor for College Press and also a professor at Ozark Christian College, for his editorial help. However I accept responsibility for any errors in the book.

I express my appreciation to my family for their patience and encouragement to me while I was working on this project.

In your study of the Gospel of Luke the text of the Gospel itself is the most important part of your study. My comments are meant to guide and help you understand the intended meaning of the text.

During the last forty-four years of my life I have been either a student or a teacher. Of all the subjects I have studied or taught, the most valuable subject of all has been the study of the life of Christ. Your life will be enriched as you get personally acquainted with Jesus — His

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mind, His heart, His life. In Christ “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3).

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Learn from Jesus

Jesus, the “teacher come from God” (John 3:2), invites us, “Come unto me, . . . learn from me” (Matt. 11:28-29). How often people bypass the precious privilege of listening and learning from the life and teaching of Christ. Paul says to us, “Remember what Christ taught and let His words enrich your lives and make you wise” (Col. 3:16, *The Living Bible*).

Jesus Christ must be lifted up and listened to if man is to find rest and peace. The early church presented with power and reality Jesus Christ as the only Savior of man. That pattern must be followed today so men may come to know Him personally.

Christ made us and knows what is best for us (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16). He loves us and died to save us from the power and penalty of sin and to restore us to fellowship with God. He came from God and as a man lived a perfect life (Hebrews 4:15).

Truth

Pilate’s cynical question, “What is truth?” has echoed through the

centuries. One may search for the truth in philosophy, history, science, literature, and in the religions of the world. In these areas one can find some facts and truths. But they do not bring us to the final truth about God, man, and the world.

A great sin of our day is one of saying there is no certain truth in religion. We hear that one religion is as good as another, providing you are sincere. If all religions are equally true even when they contradict one another, then they are all equally false.

Truth remains truth whether men accept it or not. Either Jesus is God in the flesh or He is not. Either the Bible is the authoritative Word of God or it is not. The root reason for the confusion and frustration of contemporary man lies in his refusal to build his life on the truth of God. Christians must lift up their voices and state clearly and forcefully their confidence in the truth of Christianity.

Jesus is the best starting point for one who wants to know the truth.

In Jesus we have the clearest and fullest disclosure of the truth and reality of God. The apostle John tells us, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has explained Him" (John 1:18, New American Standard Bible). Jesus pointed out, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col. 2:9).

In Christ's perfect manhood we can see what God intended man to be.

One can not accept Christ and reject His Word or His church. True acceptance of Jesus as Lord included acceptance of His testimony to the authoritative and infallible Word of God (John 10:35; 16:13; Mark 7:8,13). Submission to Christ means surrender to His rule as King and Head of His church. The church must be continually reforming itself in the light of the authoritative word of Christ, the New Testament.

When one accepts the truth in Christ, he has a perspective for evaluating and integrating the knowledge he acquires from any other area.

Purpose

Thoughtful persons must answer life's most basic questions: Who am I? Why am I on the earth? What is my purpose in life?

Many artists and novelists are saying life is meaningless. Grab

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what thrills you while you have a chance, they advise, in this world of anything goes. Others who would not accept this view of life still manifest confusion as to their purpose in life.

God did not create man to be driftwood shaped by current opinion and physical thrills. Aimless living is unworthy of man. Knowing the Christ who is portrayed in the New Testament and surrendering to Him as Lord and God is the most important step toward finding one's true purpose in life. The most worthwhile life is the life that honors God by doing His will.

Study of the life and teaching of Christ helps one to see what is important and what is secondary in life. Our values, standards, and goals must be in harmony with those of Jesus. One must have a clear idea of where he is going if he achieves his objective in life.

In the study of the life of Jesus observe His allegiance to the Word and will of God. He made moral choices not on the basis of personal interest, but on the basis of what is right with God.

Life

Right after the question of the why of life comes the how of life. How to be right with God must be answered because God is the original source and ultimate judge of our lives. Christ and the apostles insisted on faith which implicitly trusts and completely surrenders to Christ as the Son of God. Heartfelt repentance and burial in baptism are essentials to becoming a new creature in Christ. When a Christian sins he finds God is willing to forgive when he truly repents. Christ gives us the only valid way of solving our guilt problem. Psychiatrists may describe it, but only God can solve it. Only Christ can redeem us from sin and restore us to fellowship and the favor of God.

Christianity gives a person self-respect because by it one learns he is not a worthless zero but is worthwhile, since he is made in the image of God. Thrilled by God's grace and purged by His pardon the Christian finds life a new and exciting adventure. We can find peace within ourselves only after we have made peace with God.

Christian principles provide the most practical and useful guidelines for human relationships in the home, church, and society. Notice how Jesus deals with each person as an individual. He cuts to the heart of the matter when dealing with sins such as pride, self-righteousness, greed, and hatred. Jesus' teaching on social relationships refresh and revitalize life when they are practiced in one's daily living.

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Study of the life of Christ is a priority. Humble submission to the Word of God will greatly enrich your life. Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world knows what life is and how best to live. He came that we might have life in its fullness (John 10:10). Learn from Him who said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

1

TRUTHFUL HISTORY *LUKE 1:1-4*

The Gospel of Luke

An American student asked James Denney, a Scottish scholar, to recommend a good book on the life of Christ. Professor Denney responded, "Have you ever tried that one Luke wrote?"

The Gospel of Luke is one of the most beautiful books in the world. Its superb stories — some told by the Master Storyteller, others recorded by a masterful writer — make it a captivating book to read. Apparently Luke did not know history is supposed to be dull. Luke told the story of what Jesus did and said it with disarming freshness and compelling human interest.

The book of Luke is the longest of the four gospels, in fact, the longest book in the New Testament. Luke's two volumes, Luke and Acts, constitute the most comprehensive first-century history we have of the origins of Christianity. His history recorded facts concerning Jesus and the early church from the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist through Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

The Beloved Physician

Paul described Luke as "the beloved physician" (Col. 4:14). William Hobart has argued effectively that Luke made accurate use of first-century medical terms. Luke traveled extensively with Paul in his missionary tours. The Gospel of Luke was written before or near the first of Paul's imprisonments in Rome. It was written about 60 A.D. while Paul was held at Caesarea. Near the end of Paul's first imprisonment, two or three years later, Luke wrote his second volume, the Acts of the Apostles.

Strong, united testimony exists in second century Christian writers to identify Luke as the author of the third Gospel. No writers from that period expressed doubts or alternatives. We can affirm with confidence that Luke, the traveling companion and physician with Paul, was the author of the Gospel which bears his name.

Luke is the only Gentile writer of a New Testament book. He addressed his Gospel to Theophilus, likely a Gentile convert. Luke does not assume the reader has a knowledge of the Old Testament. Hebrew words are given in the Greek equivalent. The Hebrew *rabbi* never appears in his Gospel, rather the Greek word for master is used. William Barclay said, "There is nothing in the gospel that a Gentile could not grasp and understand . . . Luke is the easiest of all the gospels to read. He was writing, not for Jews, but for people very like ourselves" (*Luke*, p. xv).

Luke the Historian

Luke made every effort to give an accurate historical record so that his readers might know for certain the truth concerning Jesus. Luke's books, Luke and Acts, have both been attacked by negative critics. Archaeological research has confirmed their trustworthiness. William Ramsay, who began his research from a skeptical position, was convinced by his research of Luke's reliability as an historian. In his writings Ramsay has shown that Luke was correct in his political, geographical and nautical statements in both Luke and Acts.

The preface to the third Gospel is a formal introduction similar to those found in the Greek historical works. Judging from the book and the preface we can conclude that Luke was a well-educated, cultured and careful author.

Luke was no mere chronicler of facts. He showed the spiritual importance and meaning of the events he narrated. In the preface Luke

identified his sources and stated the method and purpose for his Gospel.

Luke 1:1-4

1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, ²just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, ³it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed.

1:1. Luke was acquainted with some short reports of facts concerning Jesus. He does not reject them as inaccurate but rather views them as incomplete. The “things which have been accomplished among us” underscores the fact that in Christ God’s promised redeemer came and ushered in a new era in God’s relation to man.

1:2. Through the apostles the Holy Spirit authoritatively taught and guided the church as it spread the good news about Jesus throughout the world. As the church expanded and the apostles began to pass from the scene, the need for written records of the gospel became more urgent.

In helping to meet this need Luke received his information from the best sources — eyewitnesses and ministers of the word — especially the apostles (Acts 6:4). In his travels with Paul, Luke availed himself of the excellent opportunities to gather information for his history. Luke’s account of the birth of Christ is from Mary’s point of view. Perhaps Luke interviewed her when he was with Paul in Caesarea, not far from Nazareth.

Luke lists both secondary sources (short accounts) and primary sources (eyewitnesses). Luke wrote with inspiration by the Holy Spirit, but that did not keep him from gaining some of his information in a normal fashion. God guided the writers of scripture by His Spirit so that they wrote the truth He wanted written. They were supernaturally guided in the use of sources so that they did not fall into error in what they wrote.

1:3. Through careful investigation and diligent research Luke had become accurately informed so he could make his Gospel as complete and comprehensive as possible. The word translated “having followed all things” conveys the idea of careful research. The word translated

“closely” means accurately. Careful with the facts, Luke wrote only what was true. “For some time past” would be better translated “from the beginning.” Luke had investigated the story of Christ from the very first, from the beginning of the story. Luke organized his book well. The *New American Standard Bible* perhaps overtranslates “in consecutive order.” Much of Luke is arranged in chronological order, but part of it seems to have been arranged topically.

Historian Earle E. Cairns, after teaching history and historical method for over twenty years, said that Luke summarized in a few verses the best ideas of modern experts on historical method. He saw Luke “as a careful practitioner of the finest historical methods.”

Theophilus may have been an important public official as the address “most excellent” indicates. See Acts 23:16; 24:3; 26:25. Ancient books were commonly dedicated to important persons thus insuring a wider reading. Theophilus may have financed the publication of the books of Luke and Acts. Theophilus means “lover of God” so some take it as a symbol of the people of God. More likely Theophilus was an actual person who had received some teaching about Christ but was eager for more.

1:4. Oral preaching of the gospel needed more permanent written expression. Luke wrote to substantiate what Theophilus had learned about Jesus. Luke promised official, complete knowledge that would give Theophilus certainty. These four verses constitute one Greek sentence which climaxed with the word “certainty.”

The purpose of Luke’s Gospel is to provide a true account about Jesus so that his readers can have confident assurance concerning the historical truthfulness of the gospel facts.

Special Characteristics of Luke’s Gospel

Luke’s Gospel has an emphasis on the universal implications of the gospel of salvation. When Simeon blessed the child Jesus, he spoke of “a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel” (2:32). The prophet Isaiah is quoted as saying, “All flesh shall see the salvation of God” (3:6). Samaritans are persons cared for by God — 9:54; 10:33; 17:16. God’s favor on non-Jews in the Old Testament is mentioned (4:25-27). In a parable on the kingdom Jesus tells of a banquet where those on the highway and the hedges are invited to come (14:21-23). The commission was to preach forgiveness of sin to all nations (24:27). The message of Luke is not different from the other Gospels but “the universality of Christ’s promises are more

distinctly marked; the invitations to the careless, to the wanderer, to the forsaken of man . . . are more marked, more definite, more urgent" (Spence, p. 14).

Surely Luke was interested in people. He sketched pictures of many unforgettable characters — Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Mary and Martha, Zacchaeus, Cleopas and his companion. Luke's Gospel showed Jesus' concern for social outcasts — the immoral woman (7:36ff), Zacchaeus, the tax collector (19:8ff), the robber on the cross (23:39ff), the prodigal son (15:11-24), a publican at prayer (18:9-14), Samaritans (10:33; 17:16). Luke mentioned thirteen women not mentioned in the other Gospels. Women are prominent in the birth narratives (1,2), at the cross (23:49) and in the resurrection narrative (23:55-24:11). Luke told of several times Jesus dined with Pharisees (7:36-50; 11:37-44; 14:1-4) and ate in the home of Mary and Martha (10:38-42), in Zacchaeus' house (19:1-10) and in Cleopas' home (24:13-32).

Luke gave more attention to the prayer life of Jesus than do the other Gospel writers. He recorded nine prayers of Jesus (only two of these are listed elsewhere). Jesus prayed in connection with the following events: baptism (3:21), after performing miracles (5:15-16), before choosing the apostles (6:12), before foretelling His death (9:18-22), at His transfiguration (9:29), when the seventy returned (10:17-21), before teaching the disciples how to pray (11:1), in the Garden of Gethsemane (22:39-46) and on the cross (23:34,46).

Jesus withdrew to pray (6:12). He prayed for Peter (22:31-32). He encouraged the disciples to pray (22:40). He prayed for Himself (22:41) and for His enemies (23:34). Of the parables listed only in Luke's Gospel, three deal with prayer — the Friends at Midnight (11:5), the Unrighteous Judge (18:1-8) and the Pharisee and the Publican (18:9-17).

Savior and Lord

The angel announced to the shepherds the birth of "a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (2:11). The aged Simeon declared "for mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (2:30). Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (5:32). Jesus told Zacchaeus "today salvation has come to this house . . . For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (19:9-10). Cleopas and his friend said, "We had hoped that he [Jesus] was the one to redeem Israel" (24:21). Indeed He was. Jesus commissioned the disciples "that repen-

tance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (24:47). The theme of Luke's Gospel is *Jesus — Savior and Lord*.

The Gospel of Luke may be briefly outlined as follows:

Jesus — Savior and Lord

- I. Preface (1:1-4)
- II. Birth and Childhood (1:5-2:52)
- III. Preparation for Ministry (3:1-4:13)
- IV. Ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50)
- V. From Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27)
- VI. Final Week in Jerusalem (19:28-23:56)
- VII. Resurrection Appearances (24:1-53)

Select List of Commentaries

Butler, Paul. *Bible Study Textbook: The Gospel of Luke*. Joplin: College Press Publishing Company, 1981. Basic explanation of the text, includes several special studies.

Morris, Leon. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel According to Luke*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1974. Concise and valuable. One of the best shorter commentaries.

Goldenhuis, Norval. *New International Commentary on the New Testament: Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1951. Thorough introduction. Both general explanation and technical notes on the text. Includes special studies.

Hendriksen, William. *New Testament Commentary: The Gospel of Luke*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978. Thorough exegesis and exposition by a Calvinist scholar.

Plummer, Alfred. *The International Critical Commentary: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*; 10th edition. Classic commentary on the Greek text. Outstanding commentary but not recommended for those unfamiliar with Greek.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How important are Luke's writings to our historical knowledge of first-century Christianity?

TRUTHFUL HISTORY, LUKE 1:1-4

2. What do we know of Luke's background?
3. Who was the skeptical scholar whose research convinced him of Luke's reliability as an historian?
4. What three things do we learn from Luke 1:1-4 about Luke's writing of his gospel?
5. Whom does Luke list as sources of information?
6. Did Holy Spirit inspiration keep biblical writers from also learning things through natural sources?
7. What was historian Earle Cairns' assessment of Luke as an historian?
8. Who was Theophilus?
9. Show evidence of Luke's emphasis on the universal implications of the gospel.
10. Which Gospel writer gives the most attention to Jesus' prayer life?
11. Cite four statements in Luke's Gospel that point to Jesus' role as Savior.

*ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE
COMING SAVIOR
LUKE 1:5-80*

Luke's purpose was to provide a comprehensive narrative of the life of Jesus. He began his story with the very helpful background of the angel's announcements to Zechariah and Mary of the coming births of John the Baptist and Jesus. This chapter reminds us that God keeps His promises.

The Announcement to Zechariah — Luke 1:5-25

⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. ⁷But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

⁸Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on

the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. ¹³But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness,

and many will rejoice at his birth;

¹⁵for he will be great before the Lord,

and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink,

and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit,

even from his mother’s womb.

¹⁶And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God,

¹⁷and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah,

to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,

and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,

to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

¹⁸And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.” ¹⁹And the angel answered him “I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. ²⁰And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.” ²¹And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered at his delay in the temple. ²²And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he made signs to them and remained dumb. ²³And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

²⁴After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, ²⁵“Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.”

1:5-7. Herod the Great had built the magnificent temple and many other impressive buildings. His insane jealousy and cruelty led him to kill many, including some of his family. He died in March, 4 B.C., unmourned.

The priests were organized into orders. Zechariah was a member of the order of Abijah. He had a special privilege of being married to a descendant of Aaron, Elizabeth. Zechariah means “the Lord remembers” (His covenant) and Elizabeth means “God is the faithful one.” They represent the best in Jewish faith and devotion toward

God and moral piety. They were "righteous" and "blameless."

Elizabeth was childless. No doubt they had frequently prayed that God would remove their reproach. "They had waited together these many years, till in the evening of life the flower of hope had closed its fragrant cup" (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 137). They faced the twilight of their years in contentment and not in bitterness. The superintending priest was one in his mature years (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 137).

1:8-10. Of the thousands of priests only a few were on duty at the temple at a given time. The duties of the day were chosen by lot. The burning of the incense was a once-in-a-lifetime privilege and a solemn experience. Zechariah entered the Holy Place and offered the incense on the altar. The people prayed in the court, outside the Holy Place, while he was inside.

1:11-13. As Zechariah attended the altar suddenly an angel of God appeared and stood on the right side of the altar. Zechariah was afraid — the usual response of those in Scripture who received a supernatural visit. The angel told him not to be afraid because their prayer was heard and they would have a child named John. What prayer? For a son or for the redemption of Israel through the Messiah? Zechariah no doubt had prayed for both. The prayer he prayed that day would be probably for the coming Messiah. Their son would have a key role in the coming of the Messiah. They would not need to deliberate about a name for the son, because the angel said, "You shall call his name John" (1:13). The name John means "The Lord is merciful."

1:14-17. The presence of a baby in the formerly quiet, childless home would bring them "joy and gladness." God had not spoken through a prophet for centuries. Many will rejoice with renewed expectations at his birth. He would be great in importance and in goodness. Jesus said of John, "Among those born of woman there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11). The text does not say John would be a Nazarite but he shared the common quality of refraining from wine and strong drink. The Holy Spirit would not come upon him periodically but would abide with him permanently from his beginning of life. John as a prophet would declare God's truth and challenge many of his people to turn to God to obey His truth.

Malachi had predicted, "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before me . . . Behold, I am going to send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers

to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse” (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6, NASB). Later Jesus said of John, “If you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come” (Matt. 11:14. See also Matt. 17:10-13). John shared in common with Elijah a strength of character, empowerment by the spirit, and a message of divine judgment. John’s preaching would challenge men to moral renewal and arouse an expectancy for the coming Kingdom.

1:18-20. This promise of a baby son was more than Zechariah could believe. He did not deny it but he asked for some kind of evidence or proof. He knew enough biology to know Elizabeth was past her child-bearing years. It did not seem humanly possible. “How shall I know this?” (1:18).

To establish his authority and authenticity the angel responds with directness, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news” (1:19). Zechariah had looked at the matter from a human, earthly point of view. Gabriel made it clear he brought his message of good news directly from God. Zechariah did not receive the kind of sign he imagined. Because he did not trust the word of the angel, he would not be able to speak until the promise was fulfilled. No doubt he was reminded of his lack of faith many times a day for the next nine months whenever he wanted to say something to his wife or to others.

1:21-23. The people outside grew concerned at Zechariah’s prolonged stay inside the Holy Place. When he came out and was unable to speak, they concluded he had seen some kind of a vision. Zechariah stayed in Jerusalem until his order of priests was off duty. Then he went to his home which was in the hill country of Judea. Tradition identifies the town as Juttah.

1:24-25. After Elizabeth conceived she kept herself out of public society for five months. It would have been difficult to convince her neighbors that her good news was true. Even if those early months were lonely, she had the great satisfaction that God had taken away her reproach of barrenness.

The Announcement to Mary, Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Hail, O favored one, the Lord

is with you!"²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be.³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?"

³⁵And the angel said to her,

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

³⁶And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible."³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

1:26-27. In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy Gabriel visited Mary in Nazareth. In the central mountainous area of southern Galilee is nestled the small town of Nazareth. It was one of the most unlikely places for the Messiah to be raised from the viewpoint of the leading Jews in Jerusalem. They viewed with contempt the unlettered country people from Galilee. But God had a different estimate of Mary, a young virgin who was legally engaged to be married to Joseph, a carpenter and a descendant of David.

1:28-33. The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary near the village spring, according to tradition. He greeted her, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" This does not mean that Mary is full of divine favor so that she can grant that favor to others, but it means she has received God's favor as Gabriel explained in 1:30. Bengel observed that Mary's favor was "not as the mother of grace, but as the daughter of grace." Mary was apprehensive and curious about the angelic visit. Gabriel urged her not to be afraid because God had favored her, and she would conceive and bear a son. Several characteristics of the child are listed: named Jesus, will be great, called Son of the Most High, will restore the throne of David, will rule over

the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will never end.

1:34-35. This amazing news seemed incomprehensible to Mary but she did not doubt, nor did she ask for a sign. She merely asked about the manner in which this promise will be fulfilled. Instead of demanding proof she requested more information. She knew how babies started and she had had no sexual relations with a man. The angel explained that the origin of this child would be divine and not human. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you" and "the power of the Most High will overshadow you" restate the idea that God will supernaturally bring about the conception. Her child would be called holy because of his moral perfection, and the son of God because of His deity.

1:36-38. Mary asked for no proof but in a sense she received an objective confirmation — Elizabeth's pregnancy in her old age. The *King James Version* says Elizabeth was Mary's cousin. The Greek word is not that specific, *relative* or *kinswoman* would be a better translation. Elizabeth was in her sixth month of pregnancy. God is able to do whatever He wills to do.

Mary trusted the angel's word and submitted completely to the will of God, "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (1:38). Did she think of the social stigma and ridicule of those in the community? What would Joseph do when he learned she was pregnant? She left this matter in God's hands. He did not disappoint her. He informed Joseph of the facts (Matthew 1:18-25).

Mary Visits Elizabeth, Luke 1:39-56

³⁹In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

⁴⁶And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰And his mercy is on those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm,
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,

⁵²he has put down the mighty from their thrones,
and exalted those of low degree;

⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵as he spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his posterity for ever.”

⁵⁶And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.

1:39-45. The trip from Nazareth to the hill country of Judea would have been over 100 miles if Mary took the route on the east of the Jordan River bypassing Samaria, which was the route commonly taken by Jews of the first century. When Mary entered the house she greeted Elizabeth. The babe in Elizabeth’s womb made an unusual movement. The babe leaped for joy. Elizabeth’s response was spoken under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. She continued the theme voiced by Gabriel earlier. Mary is highly favored, greatly benefited and really well off in relationship to other women. Also the one born to her is highly favored. Expressing her feeling of unworthiness rather than asking for an answer, she said, “Why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (1:43). Those who have unduly elevated Mary have said she is the mother of God. She was the mother of the Lord Jesus in his earthly sojourn but to say she is the mother of God is misleading. Elizabeth was happy to acknowledge the greater honor afforded to her relative. With no sign of jealousy Elizabeth put herself in the background and honored Mary. Zechariah was daily reminded of his unbelief. Elizabeth blessed Mary for believing the angel’s promise would be fulfilled. Nothing in this text encourages us to worship Mary but we should all follow her example in implicitly trusting the Word of God.

1:46-50. Mary’s beautiful, lyrical hymn of praise is often called the Magnificat from the first word in the Latin Vulgate version. It weaves together many Old Testament quotations including thirty words or

phrases from the Old Testament (Butler, p. 16). It is an exalted expression of worship. "My soul" and "my spirit" (1:46-47) are used synonymously. Mary "wholeheartedly and from the depths of her being magnifies and glorifies God" (N. Geldenhuys, p. 88). Compare Mary's praise with that offered by Hannah at the birth of Samuel (I Sam. 2:1-10).

Mary expressed worship and gratitude because God so highly favored her, a simple Galilean peasant girl. She knew future generations of believers would call her "blessed" because of her role in the coming of the Messiah. The one "who is mighty" would bring about this supernatural conception in this young virgin girl. She praised God for His holiness of character and for His mercy on those who in godly fear respect and honor Him throughout the generations.

1:51-55. She continued the theme of God's power and His favor to the humble. God shatters the dreams and imagined greatness of the proud and arrogant. Those who trust in earthly power will be brought low. Those who are humble and hungry for God will be filled with good things. Those who consider themselves rich, with no need of God, He sends away empty of the things that really matter. She concluded the hymn with mention of God's help to His people Israel, and His faithful speaking to the fathers, to Abraham and his descendants. She expressed a calm trust in the promises of God.

1:56. Mary spent three months with Elizabeth. What a wonderful visit they must have had together. No one else in all the world would have had the sympathetic understanding they had for each other because of sharing in common their similar secrets. Perhaps Mary returned home in Nazareth just before the birth of John thus avoiding the crowd that that event would bring.

The Birth of John the Baptist 1:57-80

⁵⁷Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, ⁶⁰but his mother said, "Not so; and he shall be called John."⁶¹And they said to her, "None of your kindred is called by this name."⁶²And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. ⁶³And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." And they all marveled. ⁶⁴And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. ⁶⁵And fear came on all their neighbors. And all

these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; ⁶⁶and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

⁶⁷And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,

⁶⁸"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

for he has visited and redeemed his people,

⁶⁹and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David,

⁷⁰as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

⁷¹that we should be saved from our enemies,
and from the hand of all who hate us;

⁷²to perform the mercy promised to our fathers,
and to remember his holy covenant,

⁷³the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, ⁷⁴to grant us
that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
might serve him without fear,

⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

⁷⁶And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

⁷⁷to give knowledge of salvation to his people
in the forgiveness of their sins,

⁷⁸through the tender mercy of our God,
when the day shall dawn upon us from on high

⁷⁹to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of
death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace."

⁸⁰And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

1:57-61. Elizabeth gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives joined in unrestrained rejoicing because God showed mercy to her by giving her a son. The eighth day was the usual day for the circumcising and naming of a Jewish boy. The neighbors thought he should be named Zechariah, after his father. Elizabeth objected and stated with definiteness, "Not so; he shall be called John" (1:60). They argued with her that none of their relatives were named John.

1:62-64. By making hand signs they asked Zechariah's opinion on the baby's name. Gabriel had not told him he would be deaf as well as unable to speak. We wonder why they had to communicate with signs if he could hear. Zechariah asked for a writing tablet, probably a flat

piece of wood covered with wax upon which one made marks with a stylus. The matter was not open to debate. "His name is John" (1:63). God had spoken through the angel and Zechariah was glad to accept. The people were genuinely surprised at this. At the moment of his believing obedience to the angel's word, Zechariah's ability to speak was given back. He first used his tongue to praise God.

1:65-66. These amazing events brought godly fear into the hearts of their friends. Conversation about them was heard throughout the hill country of Judea. As they considered these things they wondered what God had planned for this boy because they had seen the power of God active in the events surrounding John's birth.

1:67-69. Zechariah expressed his worship in a great hymn of praise spoken prophetically by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It has been called the *Benedictus*.

Zechariah praised God for His redemptive plan which centered in the Savior. "Blessed be the Lord" expresses praise and honor to God. As in the Old Testament prophecies, future events are spoken in past tense: "has visited and redeemed." The birth of Jesus, then a few weeks away, was the fulfillment of Zechariah's words. After all those silent centuries God now was sending the Messiah to save His people. *Horn* symbolizes power. God's saving power is found in the son born to that daughter of David, Mary of Nazareth.

1:70-71. The promises of God pointing toward the Messiah pervade the Old Testament, beginning in Genesis 3:15 and continuing through the book of Malachi. God spoke these prophecies through His inspired spokesmen, the prophets. Zechariah has more in mind than the political overthrow of enemy nations. The real role of the Savior was to bring victory over the spiritual adversaries.

1:72-73. Jesus expressed the lovingkindness and tender mercy of God toward those who accepted Him. God had not forgotten the plight nor the prayers of His people. He kept His part of the covenant made with Abraham when God promised that in Abraham all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3). God later restated this promise to Abraham and to his descendants.

1:74-75. The Savior brought spiritual freedom from the fear of men. Thus men can obey and serve God with a singleminded devotion to please God; can seek to be like Him in character and conduct; can be in a right relationship with Him. The fullest salvation includes serving the Lord "all the days of our life."

1:76. While verses 68-75 praise God for the Savior, verses 76-79 speak of John, the forerunner of Jesus. Zechariah now spoke of the

role his son would play in God's plan. Jesus later said that John was more than a prophet. He identified John as the forerunner predicted by the Old Testament prophets. He asserted that no one born of woman before the kingdom was greater than John the Baptist (Luke 7:25-28). John was not the redeemer but was to announce the coming of the Redeemer. His work was to prepare the people to expect and anticipate the soon arrival of the Messiah.

1:77-79. Since most Jews of Jesus' day looked for a political King, John needed to stress the spiritual aspect, forgiveness of man's sins, as the true nature of the Redeemer's work.

The promise of verse 77 was possible because of God's tender mercy. The "dayspring" is promised in Isaiah 9:2; 60:1; Malachi 4:2.

Those outside of God's will are in the darkness of confusion and the dread of death. Christ points the way to light and to peace with God.

1:80. John grew and matured physically and spiritually. He spent much time in the wilderness before he began his public preaching. The word "desert" in some translations here means uninhabited area.

Trusting the Promises of God

The living God will always keep His word. In the Old Testament and in this chapter God made many predictions about the coming Redeemer. The theme of promise and fulfillment in God's dealings with man in the drama of human history thrills the heart. Our Redeemer has brought hope to the hopeless, peace to the troubled, forgiveness to the guilty, purpose to the drifting. Let us "Praise Him." "To God be the glory. Great things He hath done!"

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Luke began his Gospel with the stories of what two angelic announcements?
2. Identify the Herod in 1:5.
3. Describe Zechariah and Elizabeth.
4. What prayer of Zechariah was heard?
5. Malachi and Jesus identified John the Baptist as what Old Testament prophet?
6. What happened to Zechariah because he did not believe the word of the angel?
7. Name the angel who appeared to Zechariah and to Mary.

TWENTY-SIX LESSONS ON LUKE

8. Did Mary doubt the word of the angel?
9. How far was the trip from Nazareth to the home of Elizabeth?
10. What should be our attitude today toward Mary, the mother of Jesus?
11. What made the visit of Mary with Elizabeth such a blessing to each?
12. Why and when did Zechariah regain his ability to speak?
13. Zechariah in his hymn of praise speaks mainly of what two persons?
14. What does it mean to your life to know that God always keeps His word?

3

THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS *LUKE 2:1-52*

A Joyless, Restless World

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son” (Gal. 4:4). When the time was right God dispatched His Son to earth on the mission of rescuing man from sin. Luke and other New Testament writers assert that God entered history at a particular time and place in Jesus.

Greek and Roman influences contributed to the conditions in the New Testament world which helped it to be the time for Jesus to come.

For centuries the Jews of Palestine had been dominated by foreign powers. They had the misfortune of being a buffer zone between Egypt and Syria for many years. After a short-lived period of independence, Palestine in the era of the New Testament was under Roman rule. Some of the Jews were happy with Roman rule but most deeply resented it and longed for a political Messiah to free them.

Greek philosophers tended to destroy the popular confidence in the pagan gods. Some of the Greek religions stressed mystical experience — indicating the hunger for spiritual reality. The worldliness

and widespread immorality of pagan culture cried for cleansing from the Holy One of God. Greek was an almost universal language; and Rome brought relative peace and justice to many lands. Both of these factors facilitated evangelizing the world.

Jewish leaders seemed more interested in financial gain or legalistic hair-splitting than in ministering to the needs of people. In spite of the wrong emphases in first-century Judaism, Christianity has its roots in the faith, Scriptures, ethics, and hope of Judaism.

To this joyless, restless world Jesus came.

The Birth of Jesus — Luke 2:1-7

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. ²This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be enrolled with Mary his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. ⁷And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

2:1-3. In his appeal to the Gentile mind Luke connects his story with Roman history. Augustus, as emperor, ruled the Roman Empire from 30 B.C. to 14 A.D. His wise administration brought peace to the empire during his forty-four year rule. He gave an official order that a census be taken of the Roman Empire (“all the world”). This order was given probably about 8 B.C. No direct evidence of this census decree is available outside this statement by Luke. It contradicts no known fact and harmonizes with Augustus’ reorganization plans for the empire. The purpose of the enrollment was for taxation. Such enrollments continued after this every fourteen years, for about two centuries.

Quirinius was the Syrian official’s Latin name. Historical evidence indicates he was governor of Syria during A.D. 6-9. A census mentioned in Acts 5:37 was taken at that time. Critics have accused Luke of error in this verse. Archaeological evidence has shown that Quirinius was an official in the Syrian government about 8-4 B.C. The word translated “was governor” was not limited to governors but indicated supervision and a place of authority. Luke said this is the first

or former census Quirinius conducted to distinguish from the second one about A.D. 6.

In Palestine the method of the census was that they went to their ancestral home to be registered. Evidence shows that this method of census-taking was followed in Egypt as well.

2:4-5. Bethlehem is located about eighty miles south of Nazareth and six miles south of Jerusalem. Even though they traveled south Luke said they went "up" because of Bethlehem's higher elevation. Joseph could trace his ancestry back to David who was born in Bethlehem. In I Samuel 20:6 Bethlehem is called "David's city." Apparently the angel's announcement to Joseph had already occurred (Matt. 1:18-24).

The Messiah's birth in Bethlehem was foretold in the eighth century B.C. by the prophet Micah (Micah 5:2). The scholars in Jerusalem directed the wise men to Bethlehem when they asked, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?" (Matt. 2:1-2).

Mary also was of the house of David (Luke 1:32, 69). Some have contended that by law she was not required to go to Bethlehem for the registration. Evidence from the census in Egypt suggests that both husband and wife presented themselves. Even if Mary were not required by law to go with Joseph, he did not want to leave her alone in Nazareth at that time to face the probable insults.

After Mary returned from visiting Elizabeth she and Joseph were married. Luke's use of the term *betrothed* or *espoused* (a legal engagement without sexual relations) pointed to Mary's continued virginity until after the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1:24-25).

This long ride (or walk) would have been a strenuous trip on Mary in the final days of her pregnancy.

2:6-7. No indication is given of how long they were in Bethlehem before the baby was born. Luke made it clear that the birth did occur in Bethlehem. Mary's conception was miraculous but the birth followed the term pregnancy in a normal fashion.

The New Testament does not give the exact date of the birth of Jesus. We know it was before March, 4 B.C., the date of the death of Herod the Great. It is ironic that Jesus was born a few years B.C. A mistake was made when the calendar was established. Perhaps He was born in 5 or 6 B.C. The date of December 25 was mentioned by Hippolytus after 200 A.D. December 25 as the birthdate can neither be proved nor disproved. However, if God had wanted us to know the date of Jesus' birth, He would have revealed the exact date.

Luke used simple words to describe this stupendous event.

Firstborn son indicated that more children followed in the family. Both Matthew and Luke used this expression. Mark 6:3 named four brothers of Jesus and also mentioned sisters. (See also Matt. 12:46-47; 13:55,56.) The doctrine that Mary remained ever a virgin is refuted by these passages.

The *swaddling clothes* refers to a square cloth folded around the baby and held in place by bands of cloth wound round and round him. No mention is made of anyone to assist Mary in the birth or in caring for the baby. The *manger* was a feeding trough for the animals. We conclude that Jesus was born in a place where animals were usually quartered because of the word manger. The *inn* could refer to a lodging place for travelers or even to a family's guest chamber.

What a contrast with modern well-equipped and staffed antiseptic delivery rooms! We may idealize the birth of Jesus but in reality He was born under very harsh and uncomfortable conditions. A fiction writer would not have thus portrayed the birth of a divine king.

The Visit of the Shepherds — Luke 2:8-20

⁸And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; ¹¹for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

2:8-9. Ordinary shepherds were despised by the orthodox because the shepherds did not strictly observe the regulations of the ceremonial law. A passage in the Jewish *Mishnah* indicated that special shepherds kept flocks of sheep near Bethlehem year-round for use in the temple sacrifices. It is an intriguing thought that perhaps those who looked after the sacrificial lambs were the first outside of Mary and Joseph to see the Lamb of God.

The angel came from God into their presence. The glory and majesty of the Lord was manifested in a radiating, brilliant splendor, perhaps as a bright light. Fear is the usual response when a supernatural being manifests himself to men.

2:10-12. The angel instructed them to stop being frightened. He announced joyful news that would dispel their fears. The hope of the centuries has now been fulfilled. This happy news would be available to all people without regard to social or national distinctions.

For the benefit of the shepherds and all men Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The shepherds were informed the very night of His birth. The angel emphasized His work as Savior, His role as Messiah, and His nature as Lord. *Savior* points to His work of seeking to save the lost (Matt. 1:21; 4:15-16; 12:21; 20:28; Luke 1:78-79; 19:10; 22:19-20; John 3:16-17; 4:10,14; 5:25; 6:50-51; 7:37-38). *Christ*, the Greek word for the Hebrew word *Messiah*, shows His office of being the promised anointed Prophet, Priest and King (Matt. 16:16; Luke 2:26; 3:15; 4:41; 9:20; 20:41; 22:67; 23:2,35,39; 24:26,46). *Lord* was an Old Testament title for God. It designates Jesus' divine nature (John 20:28).

The sign was to convince the shepherds that the word of the angel was true. It also assisted them in finding the babe. It was usual that a babe would be in swaddling clothes but the unusual part was that he would be in a manger.

2:13-14. Other angels joined the announcing angel and all joined in an out-pouring of praise to God. Whether they sang, chanted or merely spoke is difficult to establish.

Honor and praise is given to God in heaven because He has sent the Peacemaker to earth. The idea of the text speaks not of a general good will to all people but rather of that deep, spiritual peace that comes when the guilt of one's sins has been forgiven by God. This peace comes to those who are in God's favor and submit to His will.

The famous Roman peace did not bring peace to the hearts of men. Augustus brought peace to the empire; but only the Prince of Peace could bring peace to man's heart. Tension and strife characterize our age because men live outside His will. What a great

opportunity we have to tell them there is “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

2:15-20. After the angels had returned to heaven the shepherds repeatedly said to one another, “Let us at once go across to Bethlehem.” The original language expressed their urgency. “Go over to” or “go across” indicates that they were some distance from town. They fully realized that God had declared this truth to them and they hurried on their search. Whether they left the sheep unattended or under the care of someone we do not know.

The shepherds told Mary and Joseph as well as others in Bethlehem that the angels had informed them about this special child. People were astonished or amazed at the report given by the shepherds. Mary treasured these things, thoughtfully considering them in her mind. She kept pondering them in her mind meditating on them in the light of the angel’s announcements to Zachariah, herself and Joseph.

The shepherds returned as changed men. They gave glory and praise to God for what He had told them and what they had seen. They had seen the “Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (2:11).

The Circumcision and the Presentation in the Temple Luke 2:21-38

Mary and Joseph were God-fearing Jews who took seriously obedience to the Law of Moses. The baby Jesus was circumcised and named when eight days old. He was presented in the temple when forty days of age.

²¹And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

²²And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) ²⁴and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷And in-

spired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, ²⁹“Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; ³⁰for mine eyes have seen thy salvation ³¹which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel.”

³³And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him; ³⁴and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against

³⁵(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.”

³⁶And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, ³⁷and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

2:21. The account of the institution of the practice of circumcision is given in Genesis 17:10-14 and Leviticus 12:3 specified the eighth day (Luke 1:59; Phil. 3:5). Jesus was born “under the law” (Gal. 4:4) and circumcised according to the law. The Old Testament does not require the naming on the eighth day but it was apparently Jewish custom in the time of Christ.

Joseph and Mary were far from home. There were no rejoicing relatives and friends at this event as there were at the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:58-66).

The name Jesus means “Jehovah saves.” The angel Gabriel told Mary, “You shall call his name Jesus” (1:31). The angel told Joseph in a dream, “You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).

2:22-24. Because the law of Moses (Lev. 12) did not include the child in the purification and since the sinless Son of God did not need purification apparently some scribe substituted “his” for “their” in verse 22. This reading was followed by the *King James Version*. The manuscript evidence almost unanimously has the reading “their.”

To whom does “their” refer? Some hold that it refers to the purification of the Jews, others believe it refers to Mary and Joseph. Upon the birth of a son a woman was unclean for seven days. After remaining home for thirty-three more days, she made special offerings. The son was presented to the Lord, and the mother was purified. Since Luke described both events he may have referred to both by the phrase “their purification.”

No doubt this event in the temple occurred before the visit of the wise men and the trip to Egypt (Matt. 2:1-14). Jerusalem is six miles north of Bethlehem.

Verse 23 concerns the offering for the redemption of the first born son (Ex. 13:2,12; 22:29; 34:19; Num. 3:12; 18:15ff). The quotation is a combination of Exodus 13:2 and 12. Every first-born son had to be redeemed from service in the sanctuary by an offering (Num. 18:15,16).

Luke 2:24 deals with the offering for Mary’s purification. The law instructed the mother to bring for her purification “a lamb a year old for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or turtle dove for a sin offering And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtle doves or two young pigeons”(Lev. 12:6,8). Since Joseph and Mary were not well-to-do they did not offer an expensive lamb.

2:25-28. Even though many Jews of Jesus’ day did not walk close with the Lord, Simeon and Anna are examples of true godliness. They had longed for the coming Messiah and were eager to accept Him. The phrase “consolation of Israel” points to the comfort for the troubled in the Messianic age (Isa. 40:1; 49:13; 52:9).

The Holy Spirit specifically revealed to Simeon that before he died he would personally see the Messiah. Mary and Joseph brought the child into the court of the temple for the presentation. Simeon was there being responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The parents handed the child to Simeon. Holding the child in his arms, he praised God for this wonderful occasion and expressed himself in a beautiful hymn. Luke’s reference to ‘parents’ in no way denies the virgin birth. Joseph and Mary were His legal parents. See also 2:48.

2:29-32. Plummer notes the emphasis on *now*. “*Now* that I have at last seen the long-looked for Messiah” (p. 63). Now that Simeon had seen the Messiah, as was promised by the Spirit, he was ready to be dismissed from his long vigil. God promised Abraham, “You shall go to your fathers in peace” (Gen. 15:15). Simeon asked that he might depart in peace.

Simeon had seen God’s salvation because he had seen the Savior.

This salvation would soon be made available to all people, both Jews and Gentiles (Isa. 42:6,7; 52:10; Matt. 28:19; John 3:16; Eph. 2:13,14).

The revelation of God in Christ brought light to the darkness of paganism. They could have a true knowledge of God and experience holiness, love and joy as never before. *Glory of Israel* commonly referred to God's presence over the ark of the covenant. As God became a man and lived among His people God's glory was manifested to Israel. From Israel had come the Redeemer of the world — Jesus, the glory of Israel.

2:33-35. While the announcements of the angels, the fact of the virgin's conception, the words of the shepherds all pointed to Jesus' role as the supernatural Savior, Joseph and Mary were still awed by it all. They were beginning to grasp the significance of it all.

Simeon prayed for God's blessings on them and then addressed Mary directly. He wanted to check any unwarranted expectations by predicting the opposition He would face and the sorrow Mary would experience.

Not everyone would be blessed by His coming. Some will accept Him and build their lives on Him. Others will reject Jesus as Savior and Lord and they will be broken by that rejection and suffer eternal loss. Isaiah had predicted, "And he will become a sanctuary, and a stone of offense, and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many shall stumble thereon; they shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken" (Isa. 8:14-15). The downfall of Israel came when they misused the privileges God had provided. See Matthew 21:44; Acts 4:11; Romans 9:33; I Peter 2:6. Christ's purpose and desire in coming to earth was not that men fall but that they rise to new life in Him. Many in Israel found new life through His name.

Christ faced much opposition, climaxing with His crucifixion (Mark 6:3; Luke 4:28; Acts 28:22, I Cor. 2:16; Heb. 12:3). Simeon told Mary a large, broad sword will pierce her soul, bringing deep anguish. The fulfillment of this prediction is described in John 19:25-27 as Mary stood near the cross.

One's response to Jesus reveals his or her true nature. Everyone is either for Him or against Him. "Neutral you cannot be." Love and faith in God is shown by accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord. Rejection of Christ reveals that one does not love and trust God.

2:36-38. An aged, godly prophetess named Anna (Hannah) also praised God for his redemption. Like Deborah (Jdgs. 4:4) and Huldah

(II Kgs. 22:14) and the daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9), she was divinely inspired to declare God's will to others. She was of the tribe of Asher, one of the so-called ten lost tribes of Israel.

She was very old, literally "advanced in many days." She had been married seven years when her husband died. The wording of the text is hard to understand. It may mean that she had been a widow for 84 years making her about 105 years old, or it may mean that she was an 84-year-old widow.

It is possible that she lived in the area of the temple but more likely she was faithful in attendance for the public and private services. She spent much time in fasting and prayer.

Anna came up and stood by as Simeon spoke. She then took her turn and gave thanks to God because she recognized the child as the Messiah. It became her habit to speak about Jesus to others who also looked for the redemption of Jerusalem by the Messiah.

Childhood in Nazareth and the Visit to the Temple at Age Twelve — Luke 2:39-52

After the requirements of the law were met, Mary and Joseph and Jesus returned to Nazareth where Jesus spent His childhood. Luke records a visit to the temple when Jesus was twelve years old.

³⁹And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. ⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

⁴¹Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; ⁴³and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; ⁴⁵and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; ⁴⁷and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." ⁴⁹And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's

house?"⁵⁰And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. ⁵¹And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

2:39-40. Luke stressed the fact that Mary and Joseph had obeyed the law of God (2:22,23,24,27). Luke does not record the visit of the wise men, nor the trip to Egypt (Matt. 2:1-21). We do not know why Luke omitted this material. Apparently it did not suit his purpose.

Jesus developed physically and intellectually in a normal fashion. He was human, but He was also divine and sinless, "In every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Human wisdom can not adequately explain in detail His human development and His divine nature but in faith we affirm it.

2:41-42. Jewish men were required by the law to attend the three great feasts each year — Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, Exodus 23:14-17; 34:22-23; Deuteronomy 16:16. In the time of Christ most Jews who lived a distance from Jerusalem attended only one feast, usually Passover. The law did not require women to attend the feasts. The feasts functioned somewhat as modern conventions providing an occasion for renewal and recommitment. The Passover festival was a week-long celebration of God's deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage.

Jewish sources do not agree on the exact age a Jewish boy became a *bar mitzvah* (son of the law) with responsibility for keeping the commandments. Nevertheless, it is certain that Jesus at age twelve accompanied his parents on their annual trip to the Passover.

2:43-45. Many pilgrims stayed only one or two days, leaving after the main sacrifices were over. Apparently Joseph and Mary stayed for the entire seven days.

When Joseph and Mary started home, Jesus stayed in Jerusalem, perhaps because He was attracted by His Father's house. His parents had confidence in Him. In a group of Jewish travelers the women and smaller children went on ahead and the older boys and the men followed behind. Joseph may have thought Jesus was with Mary and Mary may have thought He was with Joseph. When the family units came together that evening they learned Jesus was missing.

2:46-47. "After three days" would include the day of travel going away from Jerusalem, the day returning to Jerusalem, and on the third day they found Him visiting with the teachers in the temple.

Jesus was listening to the teachers and asking questions. He also answered questions because those who heard Him were greatly amazed at his wisdom.

2:48-50. When Joseph and Mary saw Him they were astounded, shocked. Mary spoke out of her anxious concern. Her question indicated her perplexity and some reproach. It was a very typical mother's question. Her question informs Him of the great anxiety He has caused them.

The response Jesus gave indicated He was aware of His unique relationship with His Father in heaven. Jesus seemed to be surprised that they did not know where to find him. The reading in the *King James Version*, "about my Father's business," is possible but not likely. "In my Father's house" is more likely because the issue concerned where He was. "I must be" indicated His priority and sense of obligation and allegiance to the will of God (see Luke 4:43; 9:22; 13:33, 24:7,26; 24:44).

The lack of understanding on the part of Joseph and Mary is not too surprising if one considers how difficult it would be to understand many things if one's own child were the divine Messiah.

2:51-52. Even though Mary and Joseph did not understand His unique relationship with God, still Jesus was subject to His parents and obeyed them. Thoughtful Mary carefully and continually kept all these things in her heart. Luke tells these first two chapters from Mary's point of view. It is hard to avoid the idea that Luke may have interviewed Mary personally about these events.

Jesus made progress in wisdom and in physical growth. He increasingly experienced the loving favor of God and the good will and friendliness of man. (See I Sam. 2:21-26.) Luke makes no further reference to Joseph except in the genealogy. He likely had died before Jesus began His ministry.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Describe the political and cultural conditions of the world of the New Testament.
2. Who was Augustus?
3. What evidence has helped explain 2:3?
4. What does *betrothed* mean?
5. What do we know about the date of the birth of Jesus?
6. Why do we infer that Jesus was born where animals were quartered?

THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS, LUKE 2:1-52

7. Identify the shepherds who kept flocks year-around near Bethlehem.
8. What does the title Christ mean?
9. What was the response of the shepherds after they saw the child?
10. When was the name Jesus originally given and at what age was the child named?
11. What does the name Jesus mean?
12. What does "their purification" designate? (2:22)
13. The offering of turtledoves or pigeons indicated what about the economic status of Joseph and Mary?
14. What had the Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon about the Christ?
15. How old was Anna?
16. Briefly describe the Passover feast.
17. What did Jesus mean, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

4

JOHN'S PREACHING, THE BAPTISM AND GENEALOGY OF JESUS LUKE 3:1-38

In the third chapter Luke introduced the preaching of John the Baptist and reported John's baptism of Jesus. It ends with the genealogy of Jesus.

The Preaching of John the Baptist — Luke 3:1-20

3 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ²in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness; ³and he went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways shall be made smooth;
 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

⁷He said therefore to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits that befit repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰And the multitudes asked him, "What then shall we do?" ¹¹And he answered them, "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." ¹²Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" ¹³And he said to them, "Collect no more than is appointed you." ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

¹⁵As the people were in expectation, and all men questioned in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he were the Christ, ¹⁶John answered them all, "I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he preached good news to the people. ¹⁹But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰added this to them all, that he shut up John in prison.

Luke sets his story in the political and religious history of the first century world. He views the coming of John the Baptist as a key turning-point in history. As Greek historians often did, Luke identified various officials as he dated the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry.

Alfred Plummer called attention to the significance of the ministry of John the Baptist.

A nation, which from Samuel to Malachi had scarcely ever been without a living oracle of God, had for three or four centuries never heard the voice of a Prophet. It seemed as if Jehovah had

withdrawn from His people. The breaking of this silence by the voice of John the Baptist caused a thrill through the whole Jewish population throughout the world. Luke shows his appreciation of the magnitude of the crisis by the six-fold attempt to give it an exact date . . . of Christian writers he is the first who tries to fit the Gospel history into the history of the world (p. 80).

William Barclay observed, "To Luke the emergence of John the Baptist was one of the hinges on which history turned" (*Luke*, p. 26).

3:1-2. Luke began with the Roman Empire, then listed local governors. It is difficult to decide if the fifteen year reign of Tiberias, the second Roman emperor, is to be dated from A.D. 11 when Tiberias became co-regent with Augustus or A.D. 14 when he became emperor after Augustus' death. The earlier date would point to A.D. 30 for the death of Christ, the latter toward A.D. 33 as the date of Christ's death.

Pilate was governor of Judea, A.D. 26 to A.D. 36. After Herod the Great's death in 4 B.C. his son Archelaus ruled Judea. He was so oppressive that Rome deposed him and set up rule by Rome-appointed governors over Judea. Pilate was the fifth such governor. Final jurisdiction in Jesus' trials fell to Pilate.

Herod Antipas was the Tetrarch of Galilee. This son of Herod the Great ruled Galilee and Perea from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39. This Herod appears in Luke's Gospel in the following references — 3:19; 9:7; 13:31ff; 23:6ff. *Tetrarch* originally meant ruler of the fourth of an area but came to mean a petty ruler subject to a higher ruler.

Philip was a half-brother of Herod Antipas (not the Philip of Mark 6:14-29). Philip was Tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis (northeast of Galilee) from 4 B.C. to A.D. 34. He developed the city called Caesarea Philippi.

Lysanias was Tetrarch of Abilene, a small region north, northeast of Galilee in Lebanon. Lysanias' rule has been questioned by some critics but has been confirmed by an inscription. Neither Lysanias nor the above Philip otherwise figure in the gospel story.

Luke also lists Jewish religious officials — "the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas. Annas was the high priest from A.D. 6 to A.D. 15. Even after he was deposed, many Jews continued to recognize him as high priest. The Romans recognized Annas' son-in-law Caiaphas from about A.D. 18 to A.D. 36. Jesus appeared before both Annas and Caiaphas at His trials (Matt. 26:3; John 11:49ff; 18:13f;

see also Acts 4:6).

Critics have said that Luke was incorrect in identifying both Annas and Caiaphas as high priest. Even though deposed, Annas exercised considerable power during Caiaphas' high priesthood. Geldenhuys stated that Luke's uncommon expression "Annas and Caiaphas being high priest" (singular and not plural), indicates the real state of affairs: although the Romans had deposed Annas, and Caiaphas was the official high priest, Annas nevertheless in reality still exercised some high-priestly authority (p. 135).

John's public ministry began either in A.D. 26 or 29, probably A.D. 26. In this dark period of history God sent a new prophet to be the herald for the Messiah. This expression is used in the Old Testament to express divine inspiration (I Sam. 15:10; II Sam. 7:4; etc.). God commissioned and inspired John to preach as the forerunner preparing for the Messiah. The promises of Luke 1:14-17 and 1:76-79 were fulfilled.

3:3. Matthew said John was preaching in "the wilderness of Judea" (Matt. 3:1). John preached in the vicinity of the Jordan River, which was important as a place for immersion.

John preached judgment on the nation of Israel, repentance, baptism and announcement of the coming Kingdom. The Jews were familiar with ceremonial washings. Many hold that in the first century the Jews practiced proselyte baptism, the baptism of Gentile converts to Judaism. In this case John was shocking the Jews by asking them also to be baptized.

Others contend that since the sources about Jewish proselyte baptism are third or fourth century A.D. the practice may have been derived from Christianity. In this case John would have been the first to baptize.

In preparation for the coming Savior John demanded repentance — a change of mind toward God, away from self rule. This decision to surrender to the will of God involves turning from sin and submitting to a life of obedience to God.

John's baptism was "for the forgiveness of sin." It was not a baptism into Christ (Romans 6:3-6) because Christ obviously had not died. The Old Testament sacrifices were promisory notes on salvation, paid in full and made effective by the death of Christ. John's baptism was for the purpose of forgiveness of sins, yet, those who received John's baptism were still in need of being baptized into Christ to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-5; see also Acts 2:38; 5:32).

3:4-6. John's work of preparing the way for Christ was predicted

by the Old Testament prophets Malachi (3:1; 4:5-6) and Isaiah (40:3-5). Luke quoted Isaiah's words, "Just as Oriental monarchs, when making a royal progress, send a courier before them to exhort the population to prepare roads, so the Messiah sends His herald to exhort His own people (John 1:11) to prepare their hearts for His coming" (Plummer, p. 87).

John did not bring the final message. Jesus was the Word, the message of God to man. John was a Voice announcing the coming of the Word and through his preaching of repentance and baptism prepared men and women to receive Jesus as Messiah. As roads were made where none existed and bad roads made better when the king was coming, John's preaching paved the way for Christ. The quotation from Isaiah also underscored Luke's theme of salvation through Christ available to all human beings.

3:7-9. Luke gave us a summary of what John the Baptist was in the habit of preaching when crowds came out of towns and villages into the wilderness to be immersed by him. John used several figures drawn from the wilderness — vipers, stones and barren trees. John called them offspring of serpents. In Matthew's Gospel this language was directed to the Pharisees.

Baptism alone was not fire insurance against the impending judgment of God. John called them to genuine repentance as well. Salvation is for those who repent and accept the Messiah; God's wrath will fall on those who reject the Messiah. John wanted evidence of repentance, not mere words professing repentance. He told them not even to begin to have the thought in their mind that they were secure because they could trace their ancestry back to Abraham. John reminded them if they did not live as true children of God, God could raise up true children of Abraham from the stones lying on the ground there in the wilderness. Repentance is an urgent matter because God's certain judgment was impending and would not be long postponed.

3:10-14. Those in the crowd continually asked John what they needed to do to bring forth fruits befitting repentance. The word translated *coat* is the undershirt (tunic) and not the indispensable outer cloak. Those with food need to share with the hungry.

The tax collectors (publicans) were Jews who collected taxes for Rome or for Herod. "The Jews especially abhorred them as blood-suckers for a heathen conqueror. For a Jew to enter such a service was the most utter degradation. He was excommunicated and his whole family was regarded as disgraced" (Plummer, p. 91). Since it was common for tax collectors to dishonestly extort more money for

themselves. John told them to collect no more than the tax due.

Those doing military service were Jewish soldiers, perhaps police. John told them they were not to take money from people through force, intimidation or false accusation. John did not tell them it was wrong to be a soldier. What a needed lesson for today — “Be content with your wages.”

John’s answer to their question, “What must we do?” was not some special, great act but rather to show genuine love for their fellow man.

3:15-18. John was so remarkable that the crowd wondered if perhaps he was the Christ, the Messianic redeemer prophesied in the Old Testament. (See John 1:20.) Luke said he answered “all,” indicating how widespread this opinion was.

In answering the question in their hearts John humbly contrasted his baptism and its importance with Jesus’ baptism with the Holy Spirit. John baptized with water but no mention is made of the Holy Spirit with his baptism (Acts 2:38; 19:1-8). John did not feel worthy to be the slave who unfastened the sandals of the One mightier than himself who was coming. It is a great virtue of John that he recognized his subordinate role and pointed away from himself to Jesus.

Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Some take the fire to refer to the purifying grace; however, it may well refer to the final judgment of the unrepentant in hell (II Thess. 1:7-8; Rev. 20:11-15).

John used a figure from the threshing floor. They would take a forked shovel and throw up the grain so that the wind would blow away the chaff, which would be burned. The grain was then carried to the barn.

Christ’s coming would separate the believer from the unbeliever, those truly repentant from the unrepentant. For those who reject Christ there awaits an eternal hell (Mark 9:46; Matt. 25:46; Rev. 14:9-11).

John had preached the bad news of judgment. He did not neglect the good news of forgiveness through the coming Redeemer.

3:19-20. Herod Antipas, ruler over Galilee and Perea had stolen Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip, a private citizen. Herod divorced his wife, the daughter of Aretas, and married Herodias. John the Baptist courageously and repeatedly rebuked Herod for this wrong and for his sinful life.

Herod put John in prison at Machaerus, near the Dead Sea. John was later beheaded at the instigation of Herodias (Luke 9:7-9; Mark

6:20). Josephus told of the ministry of John the Baptist and of his imprisonment and beheading by Herod (*Antiquities*, xviii,5,2). Josephus said Herod imprisoned John because he feared John would start an insurrection. This is the reason he publicly gave for the imprisonment. Luke gave us the real reason.

The Baptism of Jesus — Luke 3:21-22

²¹Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²²and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased."

Jesus began his public life by submitting in obedience to the Word of God announced by John the Baptist. Matthew (3:13-17) and Mark (1:9-11) gave more details about Jesus' baptism. Since Jesus had no need for repentance or forgiveness of sin, John saw no need of baptism for Jesus. Jesus confessed no need for baptism in this sense but he submitted to baptism "for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). Jesus was obedient in baptism to the righteous will of God as an act of humble submission.

3:21. Some think that this verse means Jesus' baptism was private with no others present. Luke may mean that many of the Jews had already been baptized by John before Jesus came to be baptized. Or he may mean that Jesus was the last to be baptized that day having waited for the others to be baptized.

Luke is the only Gospel writer to state that Jesus was praying when He was baptized. Luke recorded many instances of prayer in Jesus' life: 5:15-16; 6:12; 9:18,28; 10:21; 11:1; 22:32,42; 23:34,46; 24:30.

It is difficult to comprehend the statement "the heaven was opened," however, it is doubtful that it refers to atmospheric conditions. Perhaps it means to convey that God was communicating from heaven through a divine manifestation and message.

3:22. Upon this occasion God sent a visible manifestation of His approval of Jesus and His work. The invisible Spirit came in this visible way, "in bodily form, as a dove." This does not mean that Jesus did not have the Holy Spirit before his baptism, because He possessed the Spirit without limitation. But now through this manifestation Jesus is publicly set apart to begin His work as Messiah. It was a sign promised to John the Baptist verifying that Jesus was the Lamb of

God and the Son of God (John 1:29-34).

God's voice identified Jesus as His unique and loved Son, thus affirming Jesus' deity and God's approval of all Jesus said and did. When a repentant believer submits to Christ's rule through baptism he receives the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) and is declared to be a child of God having put on Christ (Gal. 3:26-27).

The Genealogy of Jesus — Luke 3:23-38

²³Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, ²⁴the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, ²⁴the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, ²⁶the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, ²⁷the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, ²⁸the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, ²⁹the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, ³⁰the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, ³¹the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, ³²the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, ³³the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, ³⁴the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, ³⁵the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, ³⁷the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, ³⁸the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

3:23-38. A young boy called the genealogies the "Skip-its." He could not pronounce the names so he read it "Skip-it" begat "Skip-it." Some people when reading the Gospel feel they should skip this section. What value can it have for us today?

The two genealogies of Jesus (Matt. 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38) teach several significant lessons.

The faithfulness of God is demonstrated. God keeps His word. He brought to fulfillment what He promised to Abraham, Moses, David

and to all the prophets. History from the beginning of time has prepared for and led up to the coming of Christ.

The genealogies also show that Jesus identified Himself with humanity. Some notorious sinners are included in Jesus' family history. His human heritage could not account for the sinlessness and divine character of Jesus. Even though He was divine, yet He identified Himself with us by becoming a man and had fellowship with men.

Some have said that Herod the Great destroyed all genealogies of Jewish families. Plummer said even if Herod did make such an order many private records would have been concealed (p. 102). Josephus, writing near the end of the first century after Christ, gave his genealogy "as he found it in the public records" (*Life*, I). It is evident from this statement that not all public records were destroyed. Mary may have supplied the family history to Luke.

3:23. Luke is the only gospel writer to record Jesus' age at the beginning of His public career. Jesus was about thirty years of age when He began His ministry. Luke's expression is not meant to be exact. "About thirty" could include up to two years more or less.

Plummer commented, "Being the son (as was supposed of Joseph) of Heli; i.e. being supposed to be the son of Joseph, but being really the grandson of Heli" (p. 103). In the original language the name *Joseph* is without an article indicating it is outside the genealogical series proper. The word *begat* is used to refer to the relationship of a father to his son, to a grandson, a son-in-law, or a levirate son. If Luke is giving the family history through Mary, then Heli was Mary's father, father-in-law of Joseph.

3:24-38. Matthew's genealogy goes back to Abraham. To convince Jews concerning the Messiahship of Jesus it was sufficient to establish that Jesus was the son of David and the son of Abraham. Luke's genealogy traced the ancestry back to Adam. This approach would have more meaning to a non-Jewish reader.

Although scholars are not all agreed, the best explanation is that Matthew traced the real descent of Joseph, thus giving legal and kingly genealogy. Jesus was a legitimate heir to the throne of David and, though He did not owe His physical origin to an earthly father, Joseph was His legal father because he was married to Jesus' mother. Matthew's record fits his purpose of establishing the Messiahship of Jesus in the mind of Jews.

Luke, in addressing a non-Jewish audience, gave the actual descent of Jesus through Mary back to Adam, thus linking Jesus with the

whole human race. This contributed to Luke's purpose of showing Jesus as Savior of mankind. Jesus is akin to Gentile as well as Jew. We can all claim Him as a brother.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How is 3:1-2 unique among the gospels?
2. What are the two possible dates for the beginning of the rule of Tiberias?
3. When was Pilate governor of Judea?
4. Define tetrarch.
5. Could Annas and Caiphas both be high priests at the same time? Explain the problem and suggest a solution.
6. Why was it a new thing for John to ask Jews to be baptized?
7. What does the text mean that John's baptism was "for forgiveness of sins"?
8. How does the preparing of roads for a monarch relate to the work of John the Baptist?
9. How were Jews who became tax collectors viewed by fellow Jews?
10. What did John the Baptist say about wages?
11. What are two possible meanings of baptism "with fire"?
12. What had Herod Antipas done that called forth a rebuke from John the Baptist?
13. How does Josephus' explanation of John's imprisonment differ from the Gospel record?
14. Why did John the Baptist think Jesus did not need baptism?
15. Why did Jesus need to be baptized?
16. What does Luke say Jesus was doing when He was baptized?
17. What sign did God give John the Baptist verifying Jesus as the Son of God?
18. What lessons can be learned from the genealogies?
19. How old was Jesus when He began His ministry?
20. Matthew traced the ancestry of Jesus through Mary or Joseph?
21. Luke traced the ancestry of Jesus through Mary or Joseph?
22. How does tracing the genealogy back to Adam fit the theme of Luke's Gospel?

5

JESUS FACED OPPOSITION *LUKE 4:1-44*

Jesus faced the opposition of the devil in the wilderness, the hostility of His fellow townsmen in Nazareth, and the problems of demons and disease in Capernaum.

Temptation in the Wilderness — Luke 4:1-13

The conflict between the devil and Jesus neither began nor ended in the wilderness. However at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry the devil attempted to deceive Him concerning how He should use His miraculous power and how He should gain the attention and allegiance of men. These temptations tested Him and prepared Him for His public ministry. His mission as Savior necessitated personal confrontation with the devil. He proved victor over the wiles of Satan.

4 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit ²for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, he was hungry. ³The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴And Jesus answered him, "It

is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.' " 'And the devil took him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, 'and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. 'If you, then, will worship me, it shall all be yours.'" 'And Jesus answered him, "It is written,

'You shall worship the Lord your God,
and him only shall you serve.' "

⁹And he took him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; ¹⁰for it is written,

'He will give his angels charge of you, to guard you,'

¹¹and

On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.' "

¹²And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' " ¹³And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

4:1-2. At Jesus' baptism the Father endorsed Jesus' mission and messiahship. Jesus' will was totally in harmony with the Spirit of God. Jesus was led by the Spirit through this time of combat with the devil. Leaving the Jordan River Jesus went into the wilderness west of the Dead Sea. This wilderness of Judea has wild, desolate mountains and was a lonely, inhospitable place.

The devil apparently tempted Jesus throughout His forty-day fast, climaxing with this testing time by three temptations. The word translated "tempted" means, in the context, to try or test with intent to produce failure. The devil, "the adversary," is a real being who seeks to bring others into opposition to God (I Pet.5:8).

Jesus went forty days without eating food. Moses and Elijah had fasted forty days (Deut.9:9; I Kgs.19:8). The text does not say He went without water. Jesus' body cried out for food. In a long fast the hunger is strong for a few days, then lessens. Hunger pains become very severe right before final collapse. Some have observed that Adam and Eve fell for Satan's temptations under the best of circumstances, but Jesus was able to resist even in the most unfavorable situation.

4:3-4. The devil is deceptive and subtle. He came in the guise of a friend giving helpful advice. He makes evil appear attractive. *If* does not mean he doubted Jesus' deity, though perhaps he intended to create doubt in Jesus' mind. He likely meant, "Since you are God's

son, it is a shame you are starving. As Lord of nature, speak the word and change the limestone rocks to pieces of bread. You have a right to live. Why perish out here in the wilderness?"

What was wrong with Jesus miraculously providing food for Himself as he did later for the multitudes? It would be using His miraculous powers selfishly and obeying Satan rather than the will of God. Jesus came as a self-sacrificing servant, not as a self-indulgent aristocrat. He worked miracles to meet the needs of others, but He refused here and on the cross to work a selfish miracle. Physical desires, such as hunger, can do a blitz on one's reason and conscience, leading one to disregard the will of God.

The devil tempts people to selfishly gratify their bodily desires. God gave us our bodily drives and desires for food, for sex, for relief from pain and for rest. The devil seeks the misuse of these proper desires. The desire for food must not be indulged in gluttony. The God-given drive for sex must not be abused in pre-marital sex, in adultery or in homosexuality. God created chemicals as a resource for man and can be properly used in treating man's ills. Horrible slavery and destruction come from the selfish use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. The need for rest must not be abused in laziness.

Jesus refused to selfishly gratify His bodily desires. He pointed to the word of God. "It is written" prefaced his quotation of Deuteronomy 8:3. Trusting and obeying the word of God is more important than satisfying bodily desires (John 4:34). "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to they word I have laid up thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:9,11). Sin will keep one from the Bible, but the Bible can keep one from sin. In the teeth of temptation rely on the word of God and do not allow physical desires to become an enslaving dictator.

4:5-8. The devil offered Jesus the rule of the world through the route of compromise. Nothing would forbid their being on an actual mountain. Miraculous vision was employed to view all the kingdoms of the world in an instant.

Jesus referred to the devil as "the prince of this world" (John 14:30). (See also II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12.) The devil's offer concerned more the control over the lives of men than it did the deed to real estate. The devil suggested, "The lives of the people show allegiance to me. I can transfer them as subjects to you. There's room for both of us." The devil overlooked the fact that he does not have the power to overrule man's free will. The appeal was for Jesus to gain the kingdom without the cross — no struggle, sacrifice, or suffering.

Satan's asking price was for Jesus to acknowledge and submit to *his* authority.

The second temptation was to worship the devil rather than God. What matters most to a person is in a practical sense that person's god. Many have yielded to Satan's temptations because they put money, pleasure, fame, power or self as the thing most important in their life. God brooks no rivals. He alone is God. Believers in Christ must let God be God in our lives. He must have first place. The substitute gods suggested by Satan must be rejected.

Jesus unhesitatingly refused the devil's temptation and again appealed to Scripture as His authority (Deut. 6:13). He would not make a deal with the devil to gain the kingdom by compromise. God is supreme. He alone deserves our worshipful service and allegiance. Jesus strongly asserted His total submission to the authority of God.

4:9-12. "The pinnacle of the temple" may have been the parapet at the southeast corner of the temple area where there was a great drop into the valley below. The devil quoted the then misapplied Scripture (Psalm 91:11-12). He misinterpreted the text because he took a conditional promise as unconditional. He suggested that by this spectacular stunt Jesus would gain followers. The appeal was to use sensational means to gain people's favorable attention.

The third temptation was to substitute sensationalism for a true spiritual appeal. The church often borrows methods from the world. The church must be careful lest in its church programs, music programs and youth programs a worldly sensationalism is imported that fails to honor and glorify Christ. Christians cannot serve Christ self-importantly. The temptation to demand the limelight and praise of men must be refused. To attract people by sensationalism is to substitute a shallow and selfish motive for the true appeal of the person of Christ

To put God to the test presumptuously was not a sign of trust in God. Jesus' obedience to God rather than to Satan proved His trust in God. Jesus refused this suggestion to sin by quoting, "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord" (Deut. 6:16 ASV). It is wrong to foolishly hazard one's life in a way not required by God, yet expecting God to give special protection.

4:13. Satan used every kind of tempting appeal, but he failed. Jesus resisted and the devil fled (James 4:7). His attempts to ensnare Jesus in sin did not cease there. He left Jesus only to return at other times. The battle continued throughout Jesus' ministry. Matthew added that angels came and ministered to Him (4:11).

Yet Without Sin

Jesus' temptations were real because His humanity was real. Temptation is not in itself sin. Sin is yielding to the temptation. Christ "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 2:17-18). He can be sympathetic, not because He participated in sin, but because He felt the pull of temptation. His triumph over temptation fits Him to be our perfect Savior and our example of how to deal with temptation.

Jesus trusted and relied on the Word of God. One needs to know the word of God so he can see sin for what it is. Seeing God's will can give one power to resist. We dare not rationalize the Bible or excuse ourselves. Let us trust God and obey His Word. What He says is right and best.

A prompt and definite refusal must be the response to temptation. Jesus did not argue or debate with Himself that maybe it would not be so bad. He employed the positive "No."

Our Lord's prayer life gave Him strength. Prayer and temptation cannot dwell in one's heart at the same time. Prayer joins one with the One who has the power to overcome the tempter (Matt. 26:41; Luke 11:4).

Preaching and Rejection in Nazareth — Luke 4:14-30

Luke described Jesus' traveling, teaching ministry in Galilee. Jesus preached with authority and love. His new message was confirmed with miracles.

Luke omitted many events that occurred after Jesus' baptism and temptation and before His preaching ministry in Galilee (Luke 4:14ff). These events are described in John 1:19-4:42.

¹⁴And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report concerning him went out through all the surrounding country.

¹⁵And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

¹⁶And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; ¹⁷and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives

and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

¹⁹to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

²⁰And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogues were fixed on him. ²¹And he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” ²²And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth; and they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” ²³And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal yourself; what we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here also in your own country.’” ²⁴And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. ²⁵But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; ²⁶and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” ²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogues were filled with wrath. ²⁹And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. ³⁰But passing through the midst of them he went away.

4:14-15. Jesus entered into Galilee, the northern section of Palestine. It was a highly populated area. Josephus, Jewish historian, said Galilee had over 200 towns with a population of at least 15,000. He described the Galileans as quick to change, quick in temper and given to quarreling (*Wars*, iii, 3,2; *Life*, 45).

Jesus came “in the power of the Spirit.” His words were spoken with divine authority and His works manifested the power of the Spirit of God. A report of Him had circulated throughout the area of Galilee.

Synagogues were Jewish meeting places for worship, teaching and community gatherings. Each community with at least ten Jewish families was to have a synagogue. The sabbath service consisted of scripture reading, explanation of the scripture text and prayers. The president could invite a visitor to speak on the scripture. Jesus was invited to speak in their synagogues.

Jesus was praised and honored wherever He went in His preaching in Galilee. However, Luke documents an exception to this acclaim.

4:16-17. Jesus came to His home town of Nazareth nestled in the hills of Galilee. Nazareth is located 15 miles west of the Sea of Galilee.

Here Jesus had lived until the age of about thirty (Luke 2:39-51). He was known by the people of Nazareth, having worked as a carpenter there (Mark 6:3). Apparently He had not previously performed miracles or declared His messiahship in Nazareth.

Some hold that this visit to Nazareth is the same as that recorded in Matthew 13:53-58 and Mark 6:1-6. However the following differences point to these being separate events. It occurs in the first of His Galilean ministry. In the visit described in Matthew 13 and Mark 6 Jesus worked few miracles and His disciples are present. That visit occurred near the end of the Galilean ministry.

Luke said Jesus "had been brought up" in Nazareth and that He attended the synagogue on the sabbath "as his custom was." Apparently this indicates His regular practice of synagogue worship since His childhood. Because of the expression in Acts 17:2, some suggest that statement refers to His regular use of the synagogue for teaching.

William Barclay makes an excellent observation concerning Jesus' regular worship in the synagogue:

There must have been many things with which He radically disagreed and which grated on Him — *yet He went*. The worship of the synagogue might be far from perfect; yet Jesus never omitted to join Himself to God's worshipping people on God's day" (Luke, p. 45).

What an example for Christians of today who are tempted to quit going to church because of imperfection they see there!

Luke's description of this synagogue service is the oldest known record available on what was done in the synagogue in the time of Christ. Jesus stood to read the scripture but He sat down when He preached. Jesus customarily taught in a seated position (Matt. 5:1; 26:55). An exception to this practice would be in Acts 13:16 where Paul stands to give an exhortation in the synagogue.

Jesus was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He may have Himself selected the specific passage by unrolling the scroll to this text which He read.

4:18-19. The passage is from Isaiah 61:1-2 with a phrase from Isaiah 58:6. It is likely that Jesus read in Hebrew and translated into Aramaic, the language spoken by the Jews of Jesus' day. Luke's Greek text essentially is a quotation of the Greek Old Testament (*Septuagint*).

tuagint). This explains the minor differences between Isaiah and Luke.

At Jesus' baptism the Holy Spirit descended on Him (Luke 3:22). Peter said, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38). The tense of the verb *anointed* indicates a once and for all event — perhaps His baptism. In the Old Testament prophets (I Kgs. 9:6), priests (Exod. 28:41) and kings (II Kgs. 9:6) were all anointed when they were installed in office. The words *Messiah* (Aramaic) and *Christ* (Greek) mean "the anointed one." The context from Isaiah points to the prophetic role of the Messiah.

The prophecy highlights the message and ministry of the Messiah. People who are in need — poor, captives, blind, oppressed — will hear the message He brings. Jesus came as a preacher to needy people. R.V.G. Tasker observed that Jesus informed the congregation that

The prophecy of Isaiah 61:1 was being fulfilled in Himself. His own mighty deeds could not be dissociated, He said in effect, from the gospel He had come to proclaim to those who were humble enough to receive it wherever they might be found, a gospel of release from the fetters of human sin (p. 18).

The great power of the gospel to give new life is pictured as good news to the poor, release for prisoners of war, sight regained by the blind, freedom for the oppressed.

In the Hebrew text of Isaiah, the reading is "the year of the Lord's favor." Marshall said it is "the year which God has graciously appointed to show his salvation" (Marshall, p. 184). The new age of salvation has been ushered in by the coming of the Messiah.

4:20-21. John Stott describes this dramatic moment:

He closed the book, returned it to the synagogue attendant and sat down, while the eyes of all the congregation were fastened on Him. He then broke the silence with the amazing words, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' In other words, 'Isaiah was writing about me' (*Basic Christianity*, p. 23).

Jesus gave the rolled-up scroll back to the attendant. This person was an assistant to the head of the synagogue. The attendant took the scriptures from the ark and then returned them after the reading. He also taught the children to read.

Jesus then publicly announced that He was the Messiah predicted by the Old Testament prophets.

4:22-23. “All spoke well of him” means literally all witnessed to Him. They wondered at his *gracious words*, meaning pleasing words or perhaps words of divine grace. *Wondered* “expresses amazement rather than admiration” (Plummer, p. 124). Their initial response of amazement turns to hostility possibly because of remembering He was merely Joseph’s son. Their “enthusiasm was chilled into indifference and scepticism” (Geldenhuys, p. 168).

Jesus read their minds. He said they would want to quote a parable (literal meaning of the Greek word) to Him. In English literature a parable is a true-to-life story illustrating a truth. Apparently the New Testament word, *parable*, has a broader meaning including proverbs, such as the one Jesus quoted in 4:23. They wanted Him to work the miracles in His home town of Nazareth that they had *heard* he worked in Capernaum. However, Jesus did not work miracles on demand to satisfy the curiosity of His audience.

4:24-27. *And* in the beginning of verse 24 in many translations does not best fit the meaning of the Greek text. Jesus shifted the line of the discussion. The people demanded proof, but instead Jesus quoted proverbs. The word *truly* or *verily* emphasized the importance of the truth which followed.

People recognize greatness more quickly in a stranger than in a person with whom they are familiar. Prophets are not honored by their home communities. Jesus made similar statements in different circumstances (Matt. 13:57; Mark 6:4; John 4:44).

Jesus draws illustrations from the lives of two great Old Testament prophets. Elijah was sent by God to help the Gentile widow in Phoenicia even though there were many widows in Israel (I Kgs. 17:8-16). Morris commented on the length of the famine:

The length of the famine is given as *three years and six months* (as in James 5:17), which is a trifle longer than ‘in the third year’ (I Kgs. 18:1). The ‘third year’ may, of course, refer to the length of Elijah’s time in Zaraphath (I Kgs. 17:8) rather than to that of the famine, in which case there is no problem (p. 108).

Elisha was sent by God to help a Gentile leper, Naaman, not to lepers in Israel (I Kgs. 5:1-14). God’s favor was not limited to Jews but was granted to Gentiles as well.

4:28-30. The homefolk of Nazareth had manifested curiosity and

amazement but their unbelief led to rejection which issued in a murderous hate. They were incensed at His mention of God's favor on Gentiles because they despised all Gentiles. Plummer observed:

They see the point of His illustrations; He has been comparing them to those Jews who were judged less worthy of Divine benefits than heathen. It is this that infuriates them, just as it infuriated the Jews at Jerusalem to be told by St. Paul that the heathen would receive the blessings, which they despised (Acts xiii. 46,50, xxii. 21,22). Yet to this day the position remains the same; and Gentiles enjoy the Divine privileges of which the Jews have deprived themselves (pp. 128-129).

Perhaps they regarded Jesus' words as blasphemy and worthy of death. Nazareth was nestled in a mountainous section of Galilee. It is impossible to locate the exact place where they tried to hurl Jesus off the cliff.

Some say that His majestic bearing kept them from preventing Jesus from walking through their midst. If this were the case, why did His majestic bearing not prevent them from taking Him from the synagogue to the brow of the hill? If His escape was in any sense miraculous it was not the kind of miracle the people desired.

This incident in Nazareth teaches that Jesus claimed to be the promised Messiah who would bring the benefits of salvation to needy men and women. It also reminds one that unbelief and familiarity can cause people to reject Christ. Christians must not manifest the narrow provincialism of the townsfolk in Nazareth. When believers have the mind of Christ they are world Christians with a concern for the salvation of men and women throughout the world.

Lost opportunities make people poor. How sad to see the Lord from heaven rejected by his own people who had the great opportunity to know Him personally. Their familiarity bred contempt. How sad when Americans amid Bibles, churches, and preaching know the name Jesus but reject Him as Savior and King of their lives.

Preaching and Miracles at Capernaum — Luke 4:31-44

³¹And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the sabbath; ³²and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority. ³³And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon; and he cried

out with a loud voice, ³⁴“Ah! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ³⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. ³⁶And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.” ³⁷And reports of him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

³⁸And he arose and left the synagogue, and entered Simon’s house. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they besought him for her. ³⁹And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her; and immediately she rose and served them.

⁴⁰Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. ⁴¹And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

⁴²And when it was day he departed and went into a lonely place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them; ⁴³but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose.” ⁴⁴And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

4:31-32. From Nazareth Jesus traveled east. At a certain point the traveler suddenly sees the Sea of Galilee and the surrounding area lying map-like below. The elevation of the Sea of Galilee is 692 feet below sea level, so literally Jesus “went down to Capernaum.” Capernaum was a city located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. *He* refers to Jesus. From Mark we learn that Peter, Andrew, James and John were along also (Mark 1:16-20,29). Luke records five miracles of healing performed by Jesus on Sabbath days (4:31-37, 38-41; 6:6-11; 13:10-17; 14:16).

Jesus was teaching in the synagogue (5:33,38; Mark 1:21). In the ruins of Capernaum (Tell Hum) one can see the uncovered remains of a second or third century synagogue. Evidence of a first century synagogue has also been found at the site.

They were knocked “out of their senses” in amazement at His teaching. Jesus’ teaching was unusual because He did not quote one

rabbinic authority after another as the scribes taught (Matt. 7:28,29). Rather He presented His teaching direct from His own personal authority.

4:33-34. Luke did not blame all disease on demons nor did he call insanity demon-possession. He here described a situation where a man in the synagogue was under the control of an evil spirit. The demon used the man's voice to say, "Ha! Why do you bother us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God!" (Hendriksen, p. 264). The demon expects a common fate for his fellow demons.

The demons know the reality of God. James said, "The demons believe and shudder" (2:19). They know their impending doom from the One who came to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8). The "Holy One" stands in bold contrast with the unclean spirit. Demons also called Jesus "the Son of God" (Luke 4:41) and "the Son of the Most High" (Luke 8:28).

4:35-37. Jesus silenced and expelled the evil spirit from the man. "The unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him" (Mark 1:26). Convulsing is a better translation than the King James Version which has "the unclean spirit had torn him." Luke made it clear that the spirit had "done him no harm."

"Amazement fell on them all and they said to one another: 'What is there in this man's words? He gives orders to the unclean spirits with authority and power, and out they go.' So the news spread, and He was the talk of the whole district" (4:36-37, N.E.B.).

4:38-39. Mark said Jesus "entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John" (1:29). John said Bethsaida, a city near Capernaum, was the city of Andrew and Peter (1:44). Peter's home may have been in Capernaum at this time.

Paul also stated that Peter was married (I Cor. 9:5). Doctor Luke is the only writer who describes the condition as "a high fever." Some have objected to Jesus' addressing the fever as if it were a person. However Jesus commanded that the fever leave. The cure was instant and complete. "Immediately she rose and served them." Her gracious hospitality expressed her gratitude for the healing.

4:40-41. After the sabbath ended — at sunset — "the whole city was gathered together about the door" (Mark 1:33). The *divers diseases* (KJV) sounds omnious but simply means "various diseases." Jesus personally touched each sick person as He healed them. Matthew stated that Jesus cast out demons with a word (8:16). The demons came out screaming, "You are the Son of God."

Jesus did not want advertisement from Satan's servants even though they spoke truly. Jesus did not want to unduly excite a nationalistic movement which would try to force Him to be a King (John 6:15).

4:42-44. At daybreak Jesus left the house. Mark said, "in the morning, a great while before day" (1:35). Jesus went to a place away from people to find a quiet retreat for prayer. The word translated *lonely place* is not a desert in the sense of an arid place nor a wilderness in the sense of tangled underbrush. It means a deserted or uninhabited area.

Simon and the crowds sought and found Jesus (4:42; Mark 1:36). Selfishly they did not want Jesus to leave them.

Jesus responded that He "must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities." This is the first of 30 occurrences of the phrase "kingdom of God" in Luke's Gospel. The essence of the kingdom of God is the rule of Christ in the hearts and lives of men (Wilson, p. 176). Hendriksen summarized:

Luke speaks about preaching or proclaiming the kingdom of God (4:43; 8:1; 9:2,60; 16:16), entering it (18:24-25; 22:18), seeking it (12:31). It is 'at hand' (10:9,11; cf. 7:28; 17:20,21; cf. Rom 14:17), but embraces also the material realm (22:28-30). It is God's gift to his children (p. 273).

Jesus came to be the savior for lost men and women (19:9). In 4:44 some translations say he preached in the synagogues of Galilee, others say Judea. Matthew and Mark in parallel passages locate His preaching in Galilee (Matt. 4:23-25; Mark 1:39). Even though Luke said *of Judea*, he may have meant the area inhabited by Jews, Palestine (23:5), including Galilee.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Was this the only time the devil tempted Jesus?
2. Define the word "tempt."
3. What was wrong with Jesus miraculously providing food for Himself?
4. What does the statement, "Is is written," mean?
5. Does the devil control the world?
6. How did the devil misuse scripture?
7. What was Jesus' custom on the sabbath day?

TWENTY-SIX LESSONS ON LUKE

8. The text Jesus read in the synagogue in Nazareth was from what book and chapter?
9. What did Jesus claim by saying, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"?
10. What about the two Old Testament illustrations Jesus used that angered the people of Nazareth?
11. Tell the location of Capernaum.
12. Identify demons or unclean spirits.
13. Why did Jesus forbid the demons from identifying Him?
14. *Desert* in the King James Version means what?

6

JESUS: LORD AND SAVIOR *LUKE 5:1-39*

In Luke 5 we see Jesus as Lord and Savior. His lordship over nature was shown in the miraculous catch of fish. His cleansing of the leper and healing of the paralyzed man demonstrated His mastery over disease. His lordship over lives was evident in His calling of the fishermen and Levi.

Jesus invited the fishermen to be fishers of men bringing lost people to Him as Savior. Jesus told the paralyzed man his sins were forgiven. He declared His mission was to call sinners to repentance.

The Miraculous Catch of Fish — Luke 5:1-11

Matthew (4:18-22) and Mark (1:16-20) recorded the calling of the four fishermen by Jesus. Luke's account differs from Matthew and Mark in that he alone mentioned the miraculous catch of fish and the statement in 5:11. It is possible that Luke described a separate, later incident or it may be that the accounts manifest the normal differences of independent accounts of the same event.

The story of a large catch of fish in Luke's account (5:1-11) has similarities with John's record of a large catch of fish after Jesus'

resurrection (21:1-14). The differences in these two accounts are too marked for them to be descriptions of the same event. Plummer said, "There is nothing improbable in two miracles of a similar kind, one granted to emphasize and illustrate the call, the other the re-call, of the chief Apostle" (p. 147).

5 While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. ²And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. ⁴And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish, and as their nets were breaking, ⁷they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." ⁹For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; ¹⁰and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." ¹¹And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

5:1-3. Luke is the only New Testament writer of refer to the Sea of Galilee as a lake. The lake is shaped like an upside-down pear. It is twelve or thirteen miles long and about seven miles wide. Gennesaret is the fertile plain just southwest of Capernaum on the northwest corner of the lake. Jesus was standing on this plain by the edge of the water speaking to large crowds. Even though His voice carried well in that particular setting the people were eager to hear Him speak the Word of God. They kept pressing closer and closer. Jesus saw two empty boats nearby. A fishing boat was usually about 20-30 feet long. Jesus entered one of Peter's boats and used it for His pulpit. The large crowd could see and hear Him as He spoke from the boat. He sat as He taught which was His customary position for teaching.

5:4-5. After Jesus stopped teaching He said to Peter to move the boat out to deep water and let down the nets to catch fish. Jesus ad-

dressed Peter who apparently was steering the boat. Peter felt they had exhausted all possibilities for catching fish at that time. This kind of fishing was usually done at night. The morning was not the best time because of the sun shining on the lake. The exhausted disciples had spent a sleepless night in fruitless fishing. It seemed strange, "A carpenter telling an experienced fisherman how to fish!" (Hendriksen, p. 281).

Peter addressed Jesus as Master. The word used here is not the usual word for teacher (rabbi). This word refers to any authority who has a right to give orders. Peter said they worked hard and with much effort. The *nevertheless* of the *King James Version* may overstate what is stated in the original text. Perhaps Peter meant that humanly speaking what was asked seemed useless but on the basis of what Jesus said as His authority he would obey and put down the net. The obedience of faith does not require that we know all the reasons for a command given by the Master.

5:6-7. The casting of the large net was not a one man operation. *They* may indicate that Andrew was also in the boat. The net enclosed such a large number of fish that the weight caused some of the cords to begin to snap. The fishermen signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to their assistance. It may be that the other boat was too far for the voice to carry or as fishermen they may have been used to silent communication while fishing. The weight of the catch of fish was so great that the boats sat so low in the water and began to take on water.

5:8-9. Peter was so overwhelmed at this awesome display of supernatural power that he felt unworthy to be in the presence of Jesus. He did not want Jesus to literally go away from him. He was not confessing to have lived an exceptionally wicked life. When he was face-to-face with the glory, holiness and power of God, he saw acutely his own sinfulness and unworthiness. See Genesis 18:27; Job 42:6; Isaiah 6:5 for examples where persons realized their own sinfulness in the presence of God. Perhaps it was because the miracle was in the area of Peter's expertise that he was so impressed. It is possible to study this passage with a bored yawn or we can be overwhelmed as was Peter at the lordship of Jesus. One of the reasons for so much disobedience in today's church is that there is too little awe and reverence for God. If Jesus was God in flesh as His miracles indicated then He has every right to be our Lord and King. Proud human beings need to bow before the Lord and beg, "Be merciful to us for our arrogance, indifference and disobedience."

5:10-11. Simon Peter was not the only one overwhelmed, the other fishermen shared his awe. Jesus had reassuring words for Simon. Fear is the natural response to the demonstration of divine power. Jesus said, "Stop being afraid, in the future you will begin a new practice of catching men." It would become a continual habit. Even though Simon is said to be addressed, the others were included in this commission. The word for catch literally means "catch alive." Instead of catching fish to die so they could be food, now they would catch men alive saving them from spiritual death and giving them new life through Christ (Hendriksen, p. 284).

A good evangelist is like a good fisherman in several respects. Both must patiently wait for results and not be quickly discouraged. Both the fisherman and the evangelist must seek the right time and the right approach. In both endeavors one must not call undue attention to oneself. Jesus recruited special leaders to be fishers of men. They in turn taught all followers of Christ that it was the responsibility of each Christian to introduce others to the Savior (e.g. Acts 8:4).

Jesus had called Peter to be His follower when John the Baptist had identified Jesus as the Son of God months before (John 1:35-42). Jesus had been in Peter's home and healed his mother-in-law (Luke 4:38,39). This call in this text was more permanent than the first. Peter and the others were being called to a relationship as Jesus' special disciples. Some have suggested that the catch of fish helped to provide for the families of the men while the men traveled with Jesus. This day marked a change in their main vocation in life. They left their occupations and became companions, learners and followers of Jesus. Questions about their future and financial security were left in the hands of Jesus. "They left everything and followed him."

A Leper Is Cleansed — Luke 5:12-16

Read the parallel accounts in Matthew 8:1-4 and Mark 1:40-45 while studying this text.

¹²While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and besought him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." ¹³And he stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him. ¹⁴And he charged him to tell no one; but "go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to the people."

¹⁵But so much the more the report went abroad concerning him; and great multitudes gathered to hear and to be healed of their infirmities.

¹⁶But he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed.

5:12. The name of the city where the leper was cleansed is not given. Did the leper disobey the Old Testament law by coming to Jesus and to the crowd? The law did forbid a leper to come into a city (Leviticus 13:46). The law required a leper to keep his distance from healthy people, crying "Unclean" in case of incidental contact (Lev. 13:45). The leper's desperation and faith may have led him to have the boldness to disregard the law in coming to Jesus. The Biblical term, *leprosy*, covered a variety of skin disorders. The worst form was a disease that was disfiguring and deadly. Biblical leprosy was a different disease from what is called leprosy today. Several instances of leprosy and information concerning leprosy can be found in these passages: Exodus 4:6; Numbers 5:2-4; 12:10-15; Leviticus 13,14; Deuteronomy 24:8; II Kings 5:1,27; 7:3; 15:5; II Chronicles 26:23; Luke 17:12.

Luke's graphic description, "full of leprosy," indicated the disease was in the advanced stages. The leper humbly fell on his knees (Matt. 8:1; Mark 1:40) and then on his face before Jesus. He had heard of or seen Jesus' healing miracles and believed in the divine power of Jesus to heal even a humanly incurable disease. In the context his addressing Jesus as Lord indicated trusting His divine nature. Rather than showing doubt of Jesus' willingness, "If you will" may display a humility and submission rather than an arrogant demand on the man's part. Since leprosy brought ceremonial defilement, usually its cure was called cleansing rather than healing. See Luke 17:15 for an exception to this.

5:13. Some hold that Jesus broke the law by touching a leper. However Jesus' authority transcended the Mosaic law, since He was the author and the fulfillment of it. Jesus was in no danger of contracting or spreading the disease which may have been the intention of the law. The regulations in the Mosaic law did not cover procedures for a miraculous cure of leprosy. The higher principle of love and mercy took precedence.

Jesus could have cured the leprosy without touching the man but for some reason He chose to perform the miracle in this manner. Perhaps He used touch to convey His personal love and sympathy to the man. No doubt the leper had not been touched by a non-leper for years. Plummer observed: "Jesus touched the leper on the same prin-

ciple as that on which He healed on the Sabbath: the ceremonial law gives place to the law of charity when the two came into collision. His touch aided the leper's faith" (p. 149). For other examples of Jesus' healing touch see Matthew 8:3,15; 9:29; 17:7; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 7:33; Luke 7:14; 22:51.

Jesus was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15). "Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him" (Mark 1:41). Frequently Jesus showed His compassion by healing people's diseased and broken bodies. Matthew described our Lord, "He saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick" (14:14). "The leper's need and faith found an immediate response in the Savior's eagerness to help. And in this readiness his power and his love embraced each other" (Hendriksen, p. 290).

Before Jesus spoke, the man was full of leprosy. After Jesus said, "I will; be clean," not one trace of the leprosy was left. The cure was immediate and total. For other examples of complete instantaneous healing see Luke 4:38-39; 5:17-26; 6:6-11; 8:43-48.

5:14. Jesus "sternly charged him and sent him away at once" (Mark 1:43). Two instructions were given: "tell no one" and "go show yourself to the priest." Why forbid the man to speak of the miracle? Galilee was aflame with the idea of a messianic deliverer who would lead them in political revolt against the bondage of Rome. Jesus did not want the crowds to become so excited and enthusiastic about a messianic king that they would fail to understand His teaching concerning the spiritual nature of His kingdom.

Jesus did not want the people to see only the spectacular miracles. He wanted to teach the spiritual nature of His rule, rather than to excite the mob-like passions of the people. Avoiding undue excitement would also make it easier for the man to go to the priest and to return to his place in society.

Jesus meant to prohibit publishing the report of the miracle to the general public. It would have been impossible to hide it from family and close friends as he moved back into the community. Obedience to this command would keep the man from interchanges with people in society before being pronounced clean by the priest (Plummer, p. 149).

Why did Jesus send him to the priest? This obeyed the law of Moses (Lev. 14:1-32). The priest functioned as a community health officer. If he were satisfied a person no longer had leprosy, then the person was to offer two birds. After the sacrifice the priest then pronounced the person clean so he could return and be reinstated in

society.

Not only was the command for the benefit of the man, it was "for a proof to the people." Literally the text says "for a testimony to them." Some hold *them* refers to the priest and fellow priests. The priests needed to be confronted with the evidence of Jesus' miraculous power as a testimony to them because of their unbelief. Cleansing lepers was one of the evidences of the Messiah (Luke 7:18-22).

The *Revised Standard Version* translates *them* as people. It would have been a testimony to both the priests and to the people. Leon Morris said: "People would know that he had been a leper and would be slow to accept him. But if a priest had inspected him and accepted his offering, there was proof that he had been healed. It would also show that Jesus upheld the law. And it would be a testimony to people in general that the power of God was at work in Jesus" (Morris, p. 115).

5:15-16. Luke does not mention that the problem was due in part to the man's disregard of Jesus' instruction. Mark said, "But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town but was out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter" (Mark 1:45). No doubt the cleansed leper could not contain his excitement and did it out of gratitude to Jesus. But the results were not helpful to Jesus' program. Geldenhuys said, "In other circumstances, where there was no danger that the masses would develop a dangerous form of enthusiasm, Jesus did in fact command persons whom He had healed to proclaim publicly that He had done so (cf. viii. 39)" (p. 186).

More than ever all the more people wanted to hear Jesus and be healed by Him. "But He" indicated contrast of His behavior with that of the crowds seeking Him. Jesus withdrew to the wilderness for peace and quiet and prayer.

A Paralyzed Man Is Healed — Luke 5:17-26

The dramatic incident of a man let down through the roof is recorded by Matthew (9:1-8) and Mark (2:1-12) as well as Luke. Jesus performed a miracle of healing and answers the criticism of the Pharisees.

¹⁷On one of those days, as he was teaching, there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come from every village of

Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. ¹⁸And behold, men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they sought to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; ¹⁹but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. ²⁰And when he saw their faith he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." ²¹And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" ²²When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts? ²³Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?" ²⁴But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the man who was paralyzed — "I say to you, rise, take up your bed and go home." ²⁵And immediately he rose before them, and took up that on which he lay, and went home, glorifying God. ²⁶And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today."

5:17. Mark locates the incident in Capernaum. This is Luke's first mention of the Pharisees and the first clash in Galilee between Jesus and the Jerusalem authorities. Soon in Jerusalem the conflict was so sharp that they had wanted to kill Jesus (John 5:16-18).

The Pharisees, whose name means "separated ones" were Jewish religious teachers. They numbered about six thousand. They built a hedge around the law by their oral traditions which they placed as equal in authority with the Word of God. They did this to try to keep people from breaking the law. The real law of God was often buried beneath their tradition (Matthew 15:6). They considered themselves righteous because of the obedience to ceremonial rules and avoidance of outward evil acts. The teachers of the law were scholars who studied and taught the law and the teachings of the rabbis. They were also called scribes (Luke 5:21) and law experts (Luke 10:25). Most of the scribes were Pharisees but some were Sadducees. Luke links the scribes with the Pharisees five times and with the chief priests six times (Morris, p. 117). These Jewish leaders came from all over Palestine to observe Jesus.

"The power of the Lord was with him to heal." When the Greek word for Lord is used without an article it refers to Jehovah (Luke 1:11; 2:9; 4:18; Acts 5:19; 8:26,39; 12:7) (Plummer, p. 152). Because miracles involved the direct exercise of the power of God they were

often called powers.

5:18-19. Four men (according to Mark) brought a paralyzed man on his bed or stretcher to be healed by Jesus. The *King James Version* has *palsy* which is misleading. The Greek word means paralyzed. Luke used the term in the same way the ancient medical authorities did. The men were unable to enter the house where Jesus was teaching because of the crowd. Being resourceful and not easily deterred they carried the man up an outside stairway and on to the roof. They took up some tile in the roof above where Jesus taught. They gradually lowered the man on his stretcher down into the middle of the crowd directly in front of Jesus.

Our imaginations wonder if the crowd was not somewhat irritated by the dust and dirt from the excavation of the ceiling falling on their heads and by this bizarre interruption. Jesus registered no disapproval.

5:20-21. Jesus saw the faith of the four and no doubt also the man himself in their actions. That they believed Jesus could heal the man is evident in measures they took to get the man to Jesus. As James taught, our faith is seen by our works (James 2:18).

Jesus addressed the man and announced that his sins were forgiven. Jesus does not imply that the man's condition is a direct result of his sins. This statement was an exercise of His divine authority. We can forgive the sins another person commits against us. But no human has the authority to forgive all the sins another person has committed. Jesus' statement is a bold claim to deity.

The challenge did not go unnoticed by the Jewish leaders. They were right in saying that only God can forgive sins, but they were wrong in concluding that Jesus could not forgive sin and hence was guilty of blasphemy. They meant blasphemy in the sense of claiming to be able to do what is a prerogative of God alone. They failed to recognize that Jesus was God in flesh.

5:22-24. The Pharisees and teachers were questioning Jesus in their minds. Jesus "knew what was in man" (John 2:25). Inner thoughts were not hidden from Him (Matt. 17:25; John 1:45,48; John 21:17). Jesus "perceived their questionings" indicating thorough and accurate knowledge. He read their thoughts and answered them publicly.

Jesus challenged their reasoning by asking "Which is easier?" to forgive sins or instantly heal the man. "It is easier to *say*, 'thy sins are forgiven,' because no one can prove that they are not forgiven. But the claim to heal with a word can be easily and quickly tested" (Plum-

mer, p. 155). Forgiving the man's sins was a divine act but it was invisible. The man did not suddenly turn chalk white as an evidence his sins were forgiven. He still looked the same. The Jewish leaders were unconvinced.

Jesus gave the reason for the miracle, "But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins." Jesus performed a miracle in the physical world, addressed to human senses, to demonstrate His divine authority. If Jesus could work this miracle of healing, then He had the right to forgive sins.

Jesus refers to Himself as "Son of man," which is His favorite title for Himself. Jesus uses this title about 80 times in the Gospels. In the Gospels no one else addressed Jesus with this title. It is a messianic title. Daniel predicted a coming Son of man (Dan. 7:13,14). It was not a common title for the Messiah perhaps because it stressed his humanity. It did not have the explosive emotional overtones that the title *Messiah* carried in Palestine of Jesus' day.

5:25-26. The healing of this humanly hopeless case was instantaneous. The healed man immediately stood up and gathered up his pallet and headed home, giving glory to God. Many of those who witnessed this display of supernatural power were filled with awe and amazement and also gave glory to God. What they had seen was incredible and beyond human explanation. They had witnessed God become man, demonstrating His power.

The Calling of Levi — Luke 5:27-32

The call of Levi (Matthew) followed the healing of the paralytic.

²⁷After this he went out, and saw a tax collector, named Levi, sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, "Follow me." ²⁸And he left everything, and rose and followed him.

²⁹And Levi made him a great feast in his house; and there was a large company of tax collectors and others sitting at table with them.

³⁰And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

³¹And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; ³²I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

5:27-28. Tax collectors, *publicans* of the *King James Version*, collected taxes for the Roman government. Their fellow Jews hated them

and viewed them as traitors. Barred from the synagogue, they were classed with the lowest of sinners. One type of tax gatherer collected the fixed taxes such as the poll tax on each man and woman for just existing, an income tax of a percent of one's income and a ground tax which was a set percent on grain and produce. The other kind of tax collector, of which Levi was one, was the customs house officer. They had abundant opportunity for oppressing the people, for they agreed to collect a certain amount of money in taxes from a certain district, and anything they could collect above that was their own profit. They could charge as much as they chose on the import and export duties, highway use taxes and other taxes. They often extracted more than their share.

After Jesus left the place where He healed the paralyzed man, He looked intently at the tax collector named Levi, also called Matthew. Levi was seated at his customs office on the great trade route highway that passed near Capernaum. He collected taxes for Herod Antipas. Jesus invited him to be a constant follower of Him. No doubt Levi had seen and heard Jesus preach and heal. His response to the call of Jesus was immediate. Mark used an expression which indicated his was a once-for-all decision to follow Jesus (Mark 2:14). Luke's expression suggests the following was continual. The completeness of his commitment is evident in his forsaking his former manner of life and lucrative business. At this crossroads in life he chose the high road.

5:29-30. Levi had a large banquet in his own home probably for the purpose of introducing his fellow tax collectors and their outcast friends to Christ. The fact that he held the feast in his own home shows his affluence. Jesus fearlessly ignored public opinion and attended the dinner because He loved all men.

This raised the ire of the Pharisees and the scholars and teachers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees. They did not approve of Jesus' participation in the dinner and had come in perhaps uninvited to watch Jesus' conduct. They eyed Him like turkey vultures seeking to find some fault in Him. Rather than direct their objection to Him, they criticized His disciples for eating with sinners. Jewish tradition did forbid an orthodox Jew from eating with those who did not keep the law (Geldenhuys, p. 193). They inferred that eating a meal with sinners meant approval of their sins. Their charge was one of guilt by association. They made the mistake many make today that friendship and fellowship means endorsement or total approval.

5:31-32. Jesus ignored their question about the disciples and answered for Himself. He was responsible for their being present. The

scribes felt righteous because they separated themselves from sinners. Jesus justified His association with sinners on the basis of His desire to save them.

If one were really righteous, repentance would be unnecessary. Who can really claim to be righteous? "All have sinned" — including the Pharisees. Those who will not admit their sickness will not go to a doctor. Those who are blind to their own sin do not seek the Savior. Self-righteousness is a dangerous delusion because it makes one feel safe in his own sin. Paul reminded us, "None is righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). Confessing one's sin before God is a necessary condition of salvation by God. The Jewish leaders did not seek out sinners to bring them to repentance. This was the very purpose for which Jesus came to earth from the presence of God — "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

Jesus had compassion for sinners. He did not shun, scorn, nor separate Himself from sinners. He did not share with the sinner in his sin. Yet He sought to show concern for the personal and spiritual welfare of the sinner. Even in contacts involving immoral persons He was not a prude, nor an unreal goody-goody, nor a soiled compromiser, but His purity and integrity of character were evident and genuine. If we are faithful to our Lord we will follow His example by reaching out to lost men and women with compassion but without compromising our moral integrity.

Questions About Fasting — Luke 5:33-39

³³And they said to him, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink." ³⁴And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? ³⁵The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." ³⁶He told them a parable also: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it upon an old garment; if he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. ³⁷And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. ³⁸But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. ³⁹And no one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, 'The old is good.' "

5:33-35. Matthew identified the questioners as disciples of John (Matt. 9:14). Mark said that both the disciples of John and the Pharisees were fasting and the people questioned Jesus about why His

disciples did not fast. In fasting one abstains from food for a period of time for spiritual reasons. The Jews had one required fast — the Day of Atonement, once each year (Lev. 16:29-31). But tradition had established Mondays and Thursdays as fast days. Many Jews followed the practice of fasting twice a week (Luke 18:12). Other days were also designated as fast days. The question concerned the prayers at set times each day. The questioners wanted to know why Jesus' disciples did not conform to the widespread practice. Jesus' disciples prayed often but at that time they did not fast.

“ ‘Wedding guests don't fast' is the gist of Jesus' answer. His presence brings joy like that of a wedding party” (Morris, p. 120). In the analogy Jesus is the bridegroom and His disciples are the guests or friends of the bridegroom. In such happy circumstances there is no need to fast. When Jesus is taken away from them — through the cross — then there will be times when Jesus' disciples will fast. After this, voluntary fasting will be appropriate.

In the Old Testament, fasting was used “voluntarily as a sign of mourning (II Sam. 1:12), at times of disaster and national calamities (Neh. 1:4), as a sign of repentance for sin (I Kgs. 21:27), and the like” (Geldenhuis, p. 198). The practice degenerated into a fixed and formal practice which was a source of display and hypocrisy (Matt. 6:16; 9:14). Geldenhuis summarized Jesus' attitude toward fasting, “He rejects it as a religiously meritorious ceremony bearing a compulsory, ceremonial character; but He practised it Himself at times and permits it as a voluntary form of spiritual discipline (Matt. 4:2; 6:16-18)” (p. 198). For fasting in the early church, see Acts 9:9; 13:2-3; 14:23; 27:9.

5:36-39. A parable is a true-to-life illustration used to teach a lesson. It may be a saying or story but it involves a comparison of something from everyday life to make a point. No one would tear a piece of cloth from a new-garment in order to patch an old garment. It would ruin the new garment and the patch will disfigure the old garment when the patch shrinks. Jesus' point is that His teaching is not just a minor adjustment to Judaism. He does not just bring a patch for the old ways. He brought a new relationship with God.

Wineskins were bottles or containers for liquids made from the skin of goats. The skin was removed intact. The legs were tied off and the neck became the neck of the bottle. When new wine is put into an old wineskin, the fully stretched wineskin will break open and be ruined due to the pressure of the wine expanding in fermentation. People have a natural tendency to prefer the old to which they are accustomed rather than to accept the new. Inflexible traditionalism kept

people from accepting Jesus in His day. Sadly many reject the new life offered by Jesus today because they say, "The old is better."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What other name does Luke use for the Sea of Galilee?
2. Why did Jesus' instruction about where and when to fish seem strange?
3. If Peter did not want Jesus to literally leave him, what did he mean by "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man"?
4. Name the father of James and John.
5. Instead of 'healing' what word is used describing the cure of the leper?
6. After the miracle the leper was to show himself to whom? Why?
7. After Jesus spoke to the paralytic, why did the Pharisees consider Jesus to be a blasphemer?
8. What reason did Jesus give for healing the paralytic?
9. What was Levi's occupation? Be specific.
10. What was Levi's other name?
11. While at Levi's banquet, what reason did Jesus give for coming to earth?
12. What was the basic answer Jesus gave as to why His disciples were not fasting?

7

THE STANDARDS OF CHRIST *LUKE 6:1-49*

In this chapter, the standards of Christ stand out bold and clear. First, they are seen through the controversy with the Pharisees. Then they are stated in His marvelous teaching which often stands in stark contrast with man's usual ways of thinking about things.

Sabbath Controversies — Luke 6:1-11

John R.W. Stott wrote,

The popular image of Christ as 'gentle Jesus, meek and mild' simply will not do. It is a false image. To be sure, He was full of love, compassion and tenderness. But He was also uninhibited in exposing error and denouncing sin, especially hypocrisy. Christ was a controversialist. The Evangelists portray Him as constantly debating with the leaders of contemporary Judaism (*Christ the Controversialist*, p. 49).

Few subjects generated more controversy among the Jewish religious leaders than questions concerning the right use of the sabbath.

Jewish books of doctrine and interpretation, the *Mishnah* and *Talmud*, devoted a large amount of space to opinions concerning sabbath-keeping. But this text (6:1-11) shows that the religious leaders had missed the true meaning of what God intended in regard to sabbath observance.

6 On a sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. ²But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath?" ³And Jesus answered, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?" ⁴And he said to them, "The Son of man is lord of the sabbath."

⁵On another sabbath, when he entered the synagogue and taught, a man was there whose right hand was withered. ⁶And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against him. ⁷But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come and stand here." And he rose and stood there. ⁸And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" ⁹And he looked around on them all, and said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored. ¹⁰But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

6:1-2. As they walked through the wheat fields, Jesus' disciples picked some heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, blew the chaff away and then ate the kernels. (*Corn* in the *King James Version* means small grain.) Wheat would be ripe in some places in Galilee by April. This practice was permitted under the Law as long as one did not use a sickle (Deut. 23:25).

The Pharisees did not object to the act but that it was done on the sabbath. They held that this was reaping, threshing, winnowing and preparing food — all which violated the traditional rules for sabbath observance. These were acts listed in the *Mishnah* as forbidden on the sabbath. The Pharisees were looking for a charge they could use against Jesus. Work was forbidden in the Mosaic Law (Exod. 20:8-11; 34:21; Deut. 5:12-15). However the Jewish rabbis added thousands of additional rules to what was written in the Old Testament.

6:3-4. Jesus referred to an incident in I Samuel 21:3-6. David and his men were fleeing for their life from Saul and were hungry. The priest gave them bread from the Table of Shewbread. Luke called it bread of the Presence as it is called in I Samuel 21:6. These twelve wheat loaves were changed on the table in the Holy Place weekly. None but the priests could eat the old loaves (Exod. 25:30; Lev. 24:9).

Hendriksen said, "If then David had a right to ignore a *divinely ordained, ceremonial provision* when necessity demanded it" then would not Jesus "have the right, under similar conditions of need, to set aside a *totally unwarranted, man-made sabbath regulation?*" (p. 319). Jesus and His disciples had every right to "ignore a purely rabbinical regulation regarding sabbath observance, a rule resting on nothing more solid than a misinterpretation and misapplication of God's holy law" (Hendriksen, p. 513).

It is possible that Jesus used this example as an argument to point out the inconsistency in the thinking of the Pharisees. He did not discuss whether David's behavior was right or wrong. His argument is — You do not condemn David, why do you condemn my disciples? They approved what David did which was forbidden by the Law while they disapproved what the disciples did which was not forbidden by the Law. Therefore the disciples were guiltless according to the Law.

6:5. For Jesus to claim to be "Lord of the Sabbath" was to make a claim to have divine authority because Jehovah God had established the sabbath and revealed how it should be observed (Exod. 20:8-11). Jesus, as God-in-flesh, certainly had a right to tell how God intended the Sabbath to be kept. In the Greek sentence *Lord* is placed first for emphasis. His disciples were in submission to His lordship rather than to the lordship of rabbis' traditions. The fundamental issue is — What is your relationship with Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath?

Jesus honored the sabbath. He worshipped regularly on the sabbath (Luke 4:16). He performed acts of mercy and healing on the sabbath — Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 5:9; 7:23; 9:14).

The Pharisees' narrow interpretation of the Law was not in harmony with the spirit and intention of the Law. The Lord of the sabbath knew the true intention of the sabbath. He exposed as wrong a system of fencing the law with human regulations which in effect nullified the Word of God. Jesus claimed sovereign authority over the sabbath, and as such He had a right to lay down the principles for the proper way to observe the sabbath.

6:6-8. On another sabbath when Jesus was teaching in a synagogue

a man with a crippled hand was present. Dr. Luke specifies it was his right hand. The word translated withered was a word used of dried-up plants.

The scribes and Pharisees watched Jesus very closely hoping to see Him heal someone on the sabbath so they would have an accusation against Him. The rabbis allowed healing of a Jew on the sabbath day when his life was threatened. They generously applied this to many diseases. They made exceptions for themselves but they wanted to make none for Jesus.

He knew their inward thoughts and questionings. Jesus told the man with the useless hand to come and stand in the midst of those assembled.

6:9-11. He then answered the questions in their hearts by His public question which put things in true perspective. It was an "either or" situation. He asked His antagonists, "Is it lawful to do good or to refuse to do good and thereby do evil?" He then paused to allow them opportunity to answer. His question went unanswered. It was an embarrassing silence while He looked around the group. He then asked the man to stretch out his crippled hand. This was a test of the man's faith which he passed with flying colors. When he extended the useless, withered hand it was immediately completely well and healthy.

Jesus had bested them and they were angry. How ironic that they were faulting Jesus for healing on the sabbath, while they were filled with rage and a desire to destroy Him. Mark informed us, "The Pharisees went out, and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him" (Mark 3:6). The Herodians were the party associated with Herod Antipas, the governor over Galilee. Perhaps they thought he would help them do away with Jesus as he had done with John the Baptist.

The Choosing of the Twelve Apostles — Luke 6:12-16

Training the next generation of leaders is matter of high priority if a movement or organization is to continue with a commitment to its original mission and goals. The selection and the training of the Twelve was an important part of Jesus' ministry.

¹²In these days he went out to the mountain to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God. ¹³And when it was day, he called his disciples, and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles;

¹⁴Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, ¹⁵and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

6:12-13. Luke is indefinite about the time and place. It was characteristic of Jesus to spend time in prayer communing with the Heavenly Father. Luke stressed prayer: 1:10,13; 2:37; 3:21; 5:16; 6:12,28; 9:28-29; 10:2; 11:1-13; 18:1-8,9-14; 19:46; 21:36; 22:32,40-46. Our Lord continued all night in prayer. It was a momentous choice He was about to make. It no doubt increased the burden on His heart as He could foresee Judas' betrayal of Him, the apostles' misunderstanding of His mission and the hardships that lay in store for these specially chosen leaders.

Early the next day He called His disciples to Him. From this larger group He selected twelve apostles, *Disciple* means a learner. The word *student* may mean one who studies a subject or studies in a school. But *disciple* indicates a personal attachment to a specific teacher. *Apostle* means one sent forth on a mission, an ambassador. The word *apostle* appears nine times in the Gospels: Matthew 10:2; Mark 6:30; Luke 6:13; 9:10; 11:49; 17:5; 22:14; 24:10; John 13:16. The group is frequently called the Twelve in the Gospels. *Apostle* is used in the special sense of the word when referring to the Twelve, Matthias (Judas' replacement) and Paul. The following persons are called apostles in the general sense of the term: Barnabas (Acts 14:4,14), Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7), two unnamed brethren (II Cor. 8:23), Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25); Silas and Timothy (I Thess. 2:6). The word is used of Christ in Hebrews 3:1.

Jesus called these twelve men to be His personal companions and to be His representatives to carry out His mission. He personally commissioned them and sent them with His authority. Mark recorded, "And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons" (Mark 3:14-15).

Several stages can be noted in Jesus' leadership recruitment. Some of the men here chosen as apostles had become His disciples when John the Baptist announced Jesus (Andrew, Peter, James, John, Philip, Nathaniel — John 1). Jesus' disciples were with Him in His early ministry (John 2:12,17,22; 3:22; 4:2,8,27-38). He called four of them to be fishers of men (Matt. 4, Mark 2 and Luke 5). Then He chose twelve as apostles (Mark 3 and Luke 6). In Matthew 10 He gave

the apostles miracle-working power. After His resurrection just before His return to heaven, He commissioned the apostles to go into all the world with His message (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20:21-23; Acts 1).

6:14-16. The following is a list of the names of the apostles as given in Luke's text with additional names added to the list:

1. Simon, Peter, Cephas (rock), Barjonah (son of John or Jonas)
2. Andrew
3. James and 4. John, Boanerges (sons of thunder), sons of Zebedee
5. Philip
6. Bartholomew, Nathaniel
7. Matthew, Levi
8. Thomas, Didymus (twin)
9. James the son of Alphaeus, James the Less (the younger)
10. Simon the Zealot, the Canaanean
11. Judas the son of James, Thaddeus
12. Judas Iscariot, son of Simon Iscariot

The Twelve are listed four times in the New Testament: Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13,26.

Jesus gave Simon the name Peter (Greek) or Cephas (Aramaic) which means rock (John 1:42). He was fisherman by trade with his brother, Andrew. He first lived in Bethsaida (John 1:44) which was a section of Capernaum (Mark 1:21,29). Peter was the author of I and II Peter.

Andrew was Peter's brother. He brought Peter to Jesus (John 1:41,42). See Mark 1:16,17,29; 3:18; John 6:8,9; 12:22; Acts 1:13.

James and John were fishermen who were the sons of Zebedee. Perhaps because of their fiery tempers they were called "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17; 9:38; Luke 9:54-56). James was the first apostle martyred (Acts 12:2). John was the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20). John was the author of the Gospel of John, I,II, and III John, and Revelation.

Philip was from Bethsaida. He taught Nathaniel about Jesus as one promised by Moses and the prophets (John 1:45). See John 6:5,7; John 12:21-22; 14:8.

Bartholomew means the son of Tolmai. He is the Nathaniel of John's Gospel (John 1:45-49; 21:2).

Matthew, the tax collector, was also called Levi (Luke 5:27-32). He calls himself Matthew in Matthew 9:9. In all the New Testament lists of apostles he is called Matthew. He was the author of the Gospel of Matthew. He was the son of Alphaeus.

Thomas is often called "Doubting Thomas" because he said he would not believe Jesus had risen unless he saw Him with his own eyes. It is unwise to judge the whole personality of a person from one statement. He also expressed commitment and faith (John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24-28; 21:2; Acts 1:13).

James, the son of Alphaeus, in Mark's Gospel is James the Less or the Younger (Mark 15:40).

Simon the Zealot must have been at some time a member of a nationalist party that worked for independence from Rome. Mark called him the Cananaean (Mark 3:18).

Judas, the son of James, is called Thaddaeus in Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; (Lebbaeus in some textual readings). He is probably the Judas, not Iscariot, of John 14:22.

Judas Iscariot is identified variously as traitor, betrayer and Simon's son. It is likely that Iscariot means he was from Kerioth, a city in southern Judea. He finds frequent mention in the Gospels: Matthew 26:14,25,47; 27:3; Mark 14:10,43; Luke 22:3,47,48; John 6:76; 12:4,6; 13:2,26,29; 18:2-5.

Jesus chose ordinary men to be His apostles. He loved them dearly (John 13:1). The night before His death He prayed to the Father for their mission (John 17:6-19).

Blessings and Woes — Luke 6:17-26

Given sometime during the second year of His Galilean ministry, Jesus' teaching recorded in Luke 6:17-49 is possibly the same sermon as recorded as the "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 5-7. Luke includes much material in common with Matthew and omits much that Matthew includes. Luke also includes some material not in Matthew. Jesus may have used the same or similar material on different occasions. It is possible Matthew and Luke record different events. Or they may be reporting on the same sermon, which is abbreviated by Luke. Luke tells of Jesus' teaching some of the material in other contexts (e.g. Luke 12:22-31).

In a few discerning challenges and principles Jesus set forth the moral demands of the righteousness of God. Here is summarized God's kind of wisdom concerning the psychology of personal relationships and social justice.

Matthew contrasts the true spirit of righteousness with religious legalism. Luke's audience, being Gentile, would not be plagued with Jewish legalism. He has therefore preserved Jesus' teaching, con-

trasting human selfishness with Christian love.

¹⁷And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; ¹⁸and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came forth from him and healed them all.

²⁰And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹“Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh.

²²“Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man! ²³Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

²⁴“But woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation.

²⁵“Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger.

“Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

²⁶“Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.”

6:17-19. The level place to which Jesus came down may be a plateau on the side of a mountain. Three groups were there: Jesus and the Twelve, a large crowd of disciples of Jesus, and a great throng of people from as far south as Jerusalem and Judea and from northwest as far as the seacoast towns of Tyre and Sidon. They came to hear His teaching and to be healed of diseases. Jesus cast evil spirits or demons out of those possessed. People pressed through the crowd to touch Him and receive His healing power. The compassionate Son of God “healed them all.”

6:20-21. The crowds heard this teaching but it was especially directed to His disciples (see Matthew 5:1-2). It is a mistake to take the Sermon on the Mount as a program for social reform for society. It describes the principles of the righteous character and conduct of those who have submitted to Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The blessings and woes are flat contradictions of the way people usually view life. They are not platitudes but heartshaking challenges. These fundamental statements describe a true disciple of Christ. *Happy* is not the best translation because it may be so superficial and

selfish. The word *blessed* means one is really well off. It describes a spiritual well-being that is not dependent on circumstances.

Poor is used in the sense of being without spiritual resources to stand on one's own merit before God. Physical poverty is not necessarily a blessing (Psa. 40:17; 72:2,4). Matthew has "poor in spirit" (Matt. 5:3). Really well off is the person who is not impressed with his self-importance nor filled with self-sufficiency or self-righteousness. The humble person who realizes his spiritual need and inadequacy is the person who will submit to the rule of Christ in his heart and life.

Blessed are those who are hungry for God. Matthew has "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5:6). It concerns the strange, deep desires in one's heart. What do you want most in life? Really well off is the person who realizes that a selfish life, grabbing all the pleasure and power this world has to offer, does not satisfy. The person who longs to know God, to have His favor, to walk in His will, is the person who will find true, lasting satisfaction.

Jesus was not granting a blessing on cry babies and whiners. Even though important lessons are learned from sorrow, Jesus intended a deeper meaning. Those who have genuine grief and godly sorrow over their sinful unworthiness will truly be able to laugh and know real joy. Sorrow for sin and genuine repentance precede spiritual well-being.

6:22-23: Blessed are those unfairly persecuted — what a paradox! Jesus is not talking about all kinds of suffering. It is suffering "on account of the Son of Man," "for righteousness sake" (Matt. 5:10). Jesus said the world hated Him and would hate His followers (John 15:18-19). Paul said, "All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (II Tim. 3:12). When the apostles were beaten for refusing to cease speaking of Jesus, they left "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name" (Acts 5:41). Peter wrote, "But if when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God's approval" (I Pet. 2:20). When persecuted we must follow in Christ's steps. "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly" (I Pet. 2:23). Our reward is greater than any sacrifice (Rom. 8:18; II Cor. 4:17-18).

6:24-26: Each of the four woes gives a contrast corresponding with each of the beatitudes: poor-rich; hungry-full; weep-laugh; and hate you-speak well of you. Leon Morris observed:

These woes, which are found in Luke only, form the natural cor-

relative to the beatitudes. They pronounce a surprising verdict on qualities, and states which men have universally regarded as desirable. But the world blessings may encourage an independent attitude over against God, an attitude of self-sufficiency which is fatal to spiritual growth. *Woe* does not convey the exact force of Jesus' *ouai*. It is more like 'Alas' (NEB) or 'How terrible' (TEV). It is an expression of regret and compassion, not a threat (Morris, p. 127).

As the beatitudes declared who is really well off in a deeply spiritual sense, the woes declare who is not.

How sad for those whose sole ambition in life is to make money and gain material things. "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13). Greed is idolatry (Col. 3:5). Earthly riches are little consolation in the light of eternity's values.

Those who fill their lives only with the pleasures of this life do not find satisfaction. Those who are full of what this world has to offer have an inner emptiness and void. They may feel like they have no need of God. They will try various ways to deal with this void, but God alone can satisfy man's innate spiritual hunger.

Those who laugh at God in this life will spend an eternity where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Luke 13:28).

It is not the goal of Christians to get people to dislike them. An elder "must be well-thought of by outsiders" (I Tim. 3:7). Jesus meant how sad for the person who wants peace at any price and who compromises truth in order to buy friendship. Some teachers tell people what they like to hear rather than telling them the truth (II Tim. 4:3).

Love Your Enemies — Luke 6:27-37

This passage constitutes the heart of the sermon. They are told the manner of life needed to avoid the woes and to be able to claim the blessings. He states principles for living for His followers in their relations with their fellowmen.

²⁷"But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. ³¹And as you wish that men would

do to you, do so to them.

³²“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. ³⁶Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

6:27-28. These principles are valid for all persons. He addressed them to “you that hear.” His words stand in contrast to the way men generally selfishly view their life. Jesus announced the absolute demands of morality one must follow if he wants to do God’s will in his life.

The law taught against vengeance and advocated love for one’s neighbor (Lev. 19:19) and assistance for one’s enemy (Exod. 23:4-5). However, the Jews of Jesus’ day allowed themselves to hate Gentiles and even certain Jews, such as tax collectors.

Our word for love has been soiled by those who equate it with lust or make it only a sentimental feeling. Love seeks to act in the best interests of others. It acts in unselfish good will toward others regardless of how they respond. Love sees other persons as individuals made in God’s image, worthwhile to God. Love cares for the welfare of each person and out of this concern acts in regard for his welfare.

The word for love used in this verse is not the same as the word that denotes personal affection for intimate friends and family. God does not command “Like your enemies,” but He does ask, “Act in your enemy’s best interest.” It is natural to love those who love us, but the transforming power of God’s Spirit is necessary before we can love the unlovely. Christ’s love for enemies brought Him to earth (Rom. 5:8).

We cannot love our enemies as we love our dearest friends. But we can determine that no matter what evil he may do to us we will seek nothing but his highest good.

Express genuine interest in the welfare of those who curse you. Do not lower yourself to return abuse for abuse. Why should you let them determine your behavior? Rather than seething with hate and revenge toward those who misrepresent and misuse you, be willing to forgive. Share with God in prayer what they have done. Leave the vengeance in

His hands. Pray for their salvation. Pray for ways to show real love and for helping oneself and the hostile person to a better relationship with Christ. Return good for evil (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60; Rom. 12:20-21).

6:29-30. Jesus taught the principle of non-retaliation to personal insults. He is not laying down principles for national foreign policy, or forbidding government action against evil deeds. Persons who have submitted to the lordship of Christ and are responsive to the Spirit of God can obey this teaching.

Jesus does not expect us to allow violence and robbery. In one place Jesus told the disciple to flee for safety (Matt. 10:23). To the soldier who smote Jesus on the face, our Lord did not retaliate, but He did rebuke him (John 18:23). This verse concerns a personal insult, a slap on the face, not an assault on one's life. Self-defense when one's life is threatened is not prohibited. Instead of seeking revenge, love endures injury and injustice for the sake of peace. It is better to suffer wrong rather than return wrong (I Cor. 6:7; Heb. 10:34).

This principle of generous helpfulness must be understood in harmony with all other Biblical teaching and applied with common sense. Jesus did not say give *what* he asks. We would not give a bottle of poison to a baby just because he asks for it. God does not want us to contribute to the delinquency of drunks, frauds and professional beggars. Paul said not to help one who is too lazy and refuses to work (II Thess. 3:10). Unlimited giving to some would ruin their character. The limit on our giving must be because we care for the other person's best interest rather than out of selfish motives. Jesus wants in our heart a willingness to share with those in need. We need a sense of values that places spiritual priorities above material losses.

6:31-34. This guideline helps the Christian see his duty in carrying out the other principles that are in this passage. Jesus did not say to treat your brother as he wants you to treat him. We should behave toward other people in exactly the way we, with Christ's standards, would want them to act toward us in the same situation. The liquor ad that has the word "Do unto others" under a bottle of whiskey is a blasphemous misuse of this verse. The Greeks, Romans, Jews and the Chinese had expressed a negative form of the golden rule. Jesus put it in a positive form which makes the motive love rather than selfishness. This idea is so practical that it can guide one's conduct in all personal relationships. God's Spirit within can enable the Christian to practice this guideline for life.

To be concerned about only those who are concerned for us is to

behave only as a natural man. There is no special grace or credit in this. In general, non-Christians are kind to those who are kind to them. More is expected of a follower of Christ.

There is nothing unusual or difficult about being nice to nice people. Our treatment of others must not depend on their position, prestige or power, but on the fact they are persons made in the image of God. Christ calls us to be unselfish in loving not only our friends but also the unlovely and the hateful.

In a dog-eat-dog business world the Christian will be kind, generous and helpful, rather than ruthless, greedy and selfish.

6:35-36. Caring for others leaves you vulnerable to being hurt. Christians are to be concerned even for the welfare of their enemies. This will sometimes cost, but losses and hurts incurred in the service of Christ will not be in vain. Reward from God will come to those who practice love. God's children manifest His character in their lives, being partakers of His divine nature (II Pet. 1:4). God has expressed His love to all men unselfishly. He sends sunshine and rain on the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45). He is kind even to the ungrateful.

God is love. Mercy means not only pity over another's plight but it is a concern that seeks to help the person in his needs. Christians must be merciful in their treatment of others even as God has been merciful in dealing with them.

Unloving Judging Forbidden — Luke 6:37-45

³⁷“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

³⁹He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher. ⁴¹Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴²Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

⁴³“For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; ⁴⁴for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not

gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

6:37. Unloving criticism and harsh condemnation have no place in the Christian's life. God — not man — is the judge of the eternal destiny of man's soul. Jesus forbids the thoughtless, merciless, fault-finding judgments of people's motives and actions out of a heart of suspicion and jealousy. God is the final judge and He alone knows all the background circumstances and motives. Jesus did not prohibit all judging, as many have misunderstood Him to say. He said on another occasion, "Judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24; Matt. 7:8-15; Rom. 16:17-18; I Cor. 5:11 ff; I John 4:1-2; II John 7-11).

Matthew adds, "For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged" (Matt. 7:1). "Judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy" (James 2:13). "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7). "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14-15). "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).

6:38. As a general rule people are generous to a person who is generous. "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (II Cor. 9:6). The language comes from a grain market in the Near East. "Will be put into your lap" has reference to a loose fold in their garment which hung over the belt and was used as a pocket. (See Ruth 3:15.)

This text applies both to man's response to our giving and to God's response. If we give of ourselves and our means in His service, God will overwhelm us with His generosity. The rewards of service increase in proportion to the selflessness with which the Christian serves.

6:39. Jesus discusses the responsibilities a disciple has toward others. It is foolish to set oneself up a judge over others. As human beings we need to be led to know and do what is right. Paul said, "But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding" (II Cor. 10:12). Man needs an authority outside himself to know what is right. Leaders who do not see clearly where they are going bring

disaster to themselves and those they lead. "Into a pit" refers to an open well or quarry.

6:40. The relationship of disciple to teacher is one in which the disciple acknowledges the superior knowledge of the teacher and submits to the leadership of the teacher. The goal of the teacher is to enable the student to understand and act on the truth being taught. When the teaching task is complete the student is equipped to see and respond to the truth in both content and spirit with the same maturity as the teacher.

Jesus was warning against those who are "instant experts" in religious matters, Christian discipleship is a matter of wisdom, attitudes, motives and spirit, not just knowledge, content and information. Paul said, "My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). A disciple of Christ wants to know Christ and be Christlike. Some talk of discipling a small group of their disciples. We are to call men and women to be disciples of Christ, not of us. Our goal is not that they become like us but that they become like Christ.

6:41-42. We may miss the ridiculousness of the picture Jesus paints because we have heard it so often. He used a humorous illustration to teach a serious lesson. We must judge and correct our own faults first, before we can be of any help to others in overcoming their faults.

It is absurd for a person with a large beam of wood sticking out of his eye trying to pick a tiny bit of wood out of another's eye. A person is a hypocrite when he pretends to be able to judge the sins of others when he is unrepentant of sins in his own life. Careful, rigorous self-examination that results in changed attitudes and behavior is essential. Then and only then, we are spiritually prepared to see clearly and to help others deal with their faults.

6:43-44. Our deeds provide a test of our character. The fruit from a tree indicates what kind of a tree it is. There is an inseparable connection between one's belief and behavior, attitude and actions, and character and conduct.

6:45. Jesus emphasized the importance of the inner life. Thoughts are behind words and deeds. Evil thoughts give birth to evil behavior. Good thoughts give birth to good behavior. True religion concerns thoughts, motives, attitudes, as well as outward actions.

The old country doctor asked the patient to stick out his tongue. The condition of the tongue was an evidence of the health of the person. The words a person speaks may seem insignificant, but in fact they are an important index and revelation of inner character.

True Foundation — Luke 6:46-49

Some are attracted to Jesus as Savior, but not as Lord, For selfish reasons they want what Jesus has to offer, but they don't want to commit themselves to obey without reservation Jesus' demands on their lives. Christianity is not a situation in which you have a hold on Christ without allowing Him to have a hold on you. Jesus exposed the fundamental difference between a true follower of Christ and one who merely claims to be a follower of Christ.

“‘Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.’”

6:46. This short sentence probes to the heart of the matter. The issue is not whether one calls himself a Christian or calls Jesus Lord. The question Jesus asked shows the essential contradiction between calling Jesus Lord yet disobeying Him. Matthew's record has: “Not everyone, who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do mighty works in your name?’ And I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers’ ” (Matt. 7:21-23).

6:47-48. Jesus illustrated His point with the Parable of the Two Builders. The wise builder represents the true Christian who hears and obeys the words of Christ. This man wanted to build a house in the best way. He built the house on a solid rock foundation. The storm was not able to shake the house because it was secure on this foundation. The true follower of Christ does the will of Christ. He is humble and teachable. He trusts and obeys. He does not pick and choose, practicing selective obedience. He welcomes the searching analysis of God's Word because he knows it is good for him. The true believer trusts that Jesus knows best, and he obeys what Jesus commanded. His supreme desire is to please God and be like Christ.

6:48-49. The person who hears the words of Christ but does not obey them is like the foolish builder. He did not have time or inclination to build a foundation or follow the rules for the right way to construct a house. When the storm hit, the house fell in a heap. This kind of a person is more interested in the benefits of Christianity than the responsibilities. He wants forgiveness and hope, but does not want the discipline and demands of holy living. He wants to be comfortable and please himself. The root problem is that he does not know God and He does not fully trust God.

The New Testament teaches that we are saved by faith (Eph. 2:8), but we are not saved by faith only (James 2:24). We are judged by our works of obedience (II Cor. 5:10, Rev. 20:12). Our obedience does not earn salvation, but it does show whether or not we truly believe (James 2:18,22). Wise is the person who trusts *and obeys* Jesus as Lord.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What does *corn* in the *King James Version* mean?
2. Was it against the law to pluck grain as one walked through fields?
3. If Jesus did not approve of David's eating the shew bread, what did He mean by referring to the incident?
4. Who is the lord of the sabbath?
5. What was the response of the scribes and the Pharisees when Jesus healed the man with the withered hand?
6. What did Jesus do all night before he named the apostles?
7. Give the names of the apostles listed first and last.
8. Jesus said what four types of persons were blessed?
9. Contrast loving your enemies with liking your enemies.
10. Does Jesus forbid self-defense?
11. If all judging is not condemned, what kind of judging is wrong?
12. What humorous illustration did Jesus use in the last chapter studied?
13. Define hypocrite.
14. What does Jesus say is the essential difference between the two builders?

*THE MESSIAH: MIRACULOUS
AND MERCIFUL
LUKE 7:1-50*

In the seventh chapter Luke described Jesus' response to these persons: a believing centurion, a grieving widow, a questioning John the Baptist, a self-righteous Pharisee, and a repentant sinful woman. Jesus' divine power as Lord and His compassion as Savior are clearly evident in these incidents.

The Healing of the Centurion's Servant — Luke 7:1-10

The centurion is an outstanding example of humility and faith. This account records a distinctly separate event from the healing of the nobleman's son (John 4:46ff).

7 After he had ended all his sayings in the hearing of the people he entered Capernaum. ²Now a centurion had a slave who was dear to him, who was sick and at the point of death. ³When he heard of Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his slave. ⁴And when they came to Jesus, they besought him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, ⁵for he loves our nation, and he built us our synagogue." ⁶And Jesus went with them.

When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; ⁷therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸For I am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." ⁹When Jesus heard this he marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that followed him, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." ¹⁰And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave well.

7:1. The previous chapter should have ended with 7:1 and the new chapter started with 7:2. Verse one forms the conclusion to the preceding narrative. The Hill of Beatitudes, northwest Capernaum is more likely the site of the Sermon on the Mount than the traditional Horns of Hattin. Apparently Jesus was in Capernaum a period of time before the healing of the centurion's servant.

7:2. Roman forces were not stationed in Capernaum. But the troops of Herod Antipas were under Roman authority. This centurion was a pagan by birth (7:9; Matt. 8:11-12) and probably in the service of Antipas. Ordinarily a centurion was commander of about one hundred men, although the number varied. Perhaps an army captain might be our closest equivalent. Polybius said of centurions that they were "steady in action and reliable" (*History*, vi, 24). The centurions mentioned in the New Testament all manifested a strength of character (Luke 23:47; Acts 10:22; 22:26; 23:17,23; 24:23; 27:1,43).

This centurion not only commanded soldiers but also had personal slaves or servants. The word used in Matthew 8:6,8,13, could be translated either boy or servant. Luke used the word meaning bond-servant or slave in 7:3,10 and the word for boy in 7:7. So it is concluded that it was a servant and not a son of the centurion. The slave was held in honor by the centurion. Luke does not identify his sickness. Matthew says he was paralyzed, in terrible distress (Matt. 8:6). Luke seems to imply that he would have died without the intervention of Jesus.

The centurion is exceptional in his loving care for his servant. Barclay said, "In the eyes of Roman law, a slave was defined as a living tool; he had no rights; a master could ill-treat him or even kill him if he chose" (p. 83).

7:3-5. Apparently the centurion heard that Jesus was able to heal

people. As a Gentile he felt the Jewish leading citizens would have more influence with Jesus. He was sensitive to the chasm that existed between the Jews and Gentiles. The elders went to Jesus and made the request. Matthew relates the story in general terms while Luke gives the detail that Jesus was approached by the elders first. This by no means excludes the possibility that the centurion later went to Jesus himself.

The elders told Jesus that the centurion was worthy of being helped. Two reasons are given: "he loves our nation" and "he built our synagogue." The Romans generally hated the Jews as "a filthy race" and as a "barbarous superstition." The centurion had expressed his love for the Jews by building their synagogue at his own expense. The standing ruins of a synagogue at Capernaum date from the second or third century. But nearby are ruins of a first century synagogue, probably the one built by this centurion. The emperor Augustus had recommended in some cases for rulers to build synagogues to help maintain order among the Jews. This centurion had not done it out of political expediency but because of love and faith.

7:6-8. Jesus responded to the request and went with the elders toward the centurion's home. When he was aware that the great teacher and healer was near his house, "the man's humility and faith prevail over his anxiety" (Plummer, p. 196). He sent friends with a message for Jesus. "Lord" may be used as a term of respect but more probably indicates the centurion's recognition of Jesus as supernatural. He does not want to create a problem for Jesus. He knew a strict Jew is not to enter a Gentile's house. Even though the elders said he was worthy he felt unworthy.

He believed that Jesus had the divine authority to speak the word and his servant would be healed, as it were, by remote control. The centurion understood authority. He submitted to the authority of those to whom he was responsible. He had command over his soldiers and slaves. He asked Jesus to command the illness to leave.

7:9-10. Jesus was impressed by the kind of faith demonstrated by the centurion. Among the Jews Jesus had not found one who believed He could heal at a distance by just speaking a word. Jesus commended his faith because he had the kind of trust Jesus wanted in His followers. Twice in the Gospels Jesus is said to marvel. In Mark 6:6 He marveled at the unbelief of those in Nazareth. Here He marveled at the centurion's faith. (See also Matt. 8:10.) See another commendation of faith — Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30.

When the elders and friends returned from Jesus to the centurion's house they found the slave well. The word means in good health.

This account reminds us not to be hasty in classifying men. Just because the centurion was a Gentile does not mean he shared the same value system as one such as Pilate.

The centurion is an example in his *care for others*, his *humility* and in his *faith*. He demonstrated care and concern for his servant, for the Jews and for Jesus. His humility is seen in his deference to the elders. Not only was he under the authority of others but he submitted to the authority of Jesus in faith.

The Raising of the Widow's Son — Luke 7:11-17

This is the only mention of Nain in the Bible. Luke alone recorded this story.

¹¹Soon afterward he went to a city called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. ¹²As he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a large crowd from the city was with her. ¹³And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." ¹⁴And he came and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." ¹⁵And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. ¹⁶Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" ¹⁷And this report concerning him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

7:11-12. The raising of the boy occurred soon after the healing of the centurion's servant. The earliest manuscripts have the reading, "soon afterward," rather than the reading, "and it came to pass the day after," found in the King James Version.

Nain is located in Galilee about twenty miles southwest of Capernaum and six miles southeast of Nazareth. It is situated on an elevation against the slopes of Little Hermon. The tombs that have been located outside the eastern gate of the village may have been the destination of the burial party. The crowd accompanying Jesus and his disciples indicates His growing popularity.

The scene is a sad one. The death of this widow's only son left her alone in the world. No one would carry the family name. Who would

provide for her in her uncertain years ahead? The large crowd in the burial party indicated many felt sympathy for the widow.

Burial the same day is still practiced in Israel today. Hired mourners and musicians were included in the funeral procession of even the poorest. Flutes, cymbals and loud crying were a part of their grieving.

7:13-15. Jesus exercised His lordship by raising a dead man and ministering to a sorrowing woman. The mother was probably at the front of the funeral party. Next came the men carrying the dead young man on a bier, a flat wooden frame or wicker basket stretcher. When Jesus saw the grief-stricken mother, He felt deep sympathy. The strongest Greek word for compassion is used. Jesus wept with those who were weeping as He did later at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35). Often Jesus worked miracles because of compassion (Matt. 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 8:2).

As a word of encouragement and comfort Jesus tells the mother, "Don't cry." This may have seemed a strange comment except that He knew what He was going to do. Rather than speaking to the bearers Jesus touched the bier to stop them.

Jesus did not demand an evidence of faith but in this suspenseful and dramatic moment He simply commanded the young man to come back to life. The Lord of life and death needed only to speak a word to raise the dead (Luke 8:54; John 11:43).

The record clearly says the man was dead and Jesus restored him back to life. Luke used a technical medical word for a patient sitting up in bed. His speaking indicated the reality of the miracle. Rather than ask the young man to follow Him, out of tender regard for the widow, he gave the young man back to his mother. What a joy she must have felt!

7:16-17. The awesome power of God, evident in this miracle, filled the people with deep respect for God, and they praised Him. When Elijah raised an only son of a widow, she said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth" (I Kgs. 17:24).

After the centuries of silence, the people were impressed that a prophet greater than the Old Testament prophets had now appeared in their midst. God had greatly blessed them. News traveled fast. Soon the whole area had heard of this miracle. Judea probably is used in the sense of the whole country of Palestine (as in Luke 1:5; 4:44; 23:5).

Jesus as Lord demonstrated His authority and power over death and His love and compassion for those in need.

Jesus Answers John the Baptist's Question Luke 7:18-35

In Jesus' response to John's question and in Jesus' sermon on John we learn important truths about the evidence for Jesus' Messiahship and John's role as forerunner.

¹⁸The disciples of John told him of all these things. ¹⁹And John, calling to him two of his disciples, sent them to the Lord saying, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" ²⁰And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" ²¹In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. ²²And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. ²³And blessed is he who takes no offense at me."

²⁴When the messengers of John had gone, he began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵What then did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. ²⁶What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷This is he of whom it is written,

'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
who shall prepare thy way before thee.'

²⁸I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." ²⁹(When they heard this all the people and the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John; ³⁰but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

³¹"To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? ³²They are like children sitting in the market place and calling to one another,

'We piped to you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not weep.'

³³For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, 'He has a demon.' ³⁴The Son of man has come eating and drinking; and you say, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard,

a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”

7:18-20. In this text Luke did not say John was in prison as Matthew said (11:2). Luke had already said John was in prison (3:19,20). Josephus said John was imprisoned in Macherus, east of the Dead Sea (*Antiquities*, xviii, 5,2). John’s disciples told John of all the works Jesus was doing including the healing of the centurion’s servant and the raising of the widow’s son at Nain.

John sent two of his disciples to Galilee to ask Jesus a question. “He who is to come” designated the Messiah (Luke 3:16; 13:35; 19:38; Heb. 10:37). What did John mean? Some hold that John doubted whether or not Jesus was really the Messiah. It does not appear that John doubted his prediction or the Messiahship of Jesus or why would he trust Jesus enough to send his disciples to get an answer from Jesus? Plummer agreed:

John’s sending to Jesus is strong evidence that he was not seriously in doubt as to His Messiahship. For a false Christ would not have confessed that he was false; and what proof could the true Christ give more convincing than the voice from heaven and descent of the Spirit? (p. 202).

Another suggestion is that John grew impatient wanting Jesus to act faster in establishing His kingdom. More likely is the view that he was puzzled and perplexed about how his predictions would be fulfilled. Jesus had not fulfilled John’s predictions about the Messiah (Matt. 3:3,7-12; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:4-9; 3:28-30; John 1:19-35). John had predicted the Messiah would cut down unfruitful trees and cast them into the fire. He would cleanse the threshing floor indicating judgment. Jesus’ ministry of mercy seemed inconsistent with these predictions. John wanted to know if Jesus was going to fulfill his prediction by doing these works of judgment or would another come to do them. Are you the one or are we to expect God to send another? John wanted to know.

William Hendriksen observed that John had “failed to discern that this prophecy of doom would go into fulfillment not now but at Christ’s second coming. He had not seen the present and the future in true perspective” (p. 393).

Prophets were given a message but their revelation often did not include an understanding of how the prediction would be fulfilled

(I Pet. 1:10-12).

7:21-23. Jesus did not condemn John for asking his question. He appealed to the evidence of prophecy and miracle as a basis for continued trust in Him. Jesus called attention to His fulfillment of Isaiah's Messianic predictions: healing the blind (35:5); the lame (35:6), the deaf (35:5), and preaching to the poor (61:1). Leon Morris said:

The healing miracles and the preaching to the poor have Messianic significance. They are the divine accreditation of Jesus' mission. It was in such works of mercy and not in spectacular victories over Roman armies that the Messiah's work would be accomplished (p. 142).

Jesus said that anyone is really well who is not caused to doubt or to sin because of His words or actions. Some hold that Jesus is implying that John had found a cause of stumbling in Jesus. It was more likely a promise and a warning rather than an indictment.

7:24-27. His answer may have seemed to some that He was criticizing or condemning John the Baptist. He cleared up any possible such misunderstanding by teaching on the greatness of John. Jesus was tender in His defense of John.

After John's disciples left, Jesus asked the crowd rhetorical questions. Did they go to the wilderness and see a weak and vacillating man? Did they go see one soft from luxurious creature comforts? "The very fact that John had lived a hard life on the simplest of fare in the roughest of places ruled out all such suggestions" (Morris, p. 143).

The crowds had gone out into the wilderness to see a prophet. John the Baptist was a prophet of God but he was more than an ordinary prophet. He was the first prophet God had sent to Israel in about 400 years. He was the special forerunner of the Messiah who was predicted by Malachi (3:1).

7:28-30. The greatness of John did not rest in qualities in his personality but rather in His unique role as forerunner of the Messiah. He had the privilege of personally identifying the long-awaited Messiah. Because of this he was the greatest of the whole human race before Christ established His kingdom.

The establishment of Christ's kingdom is the dividing line of human history. John had a place of greatness in the era of preparation but even the least in Christ's kingdom has greater benefits. Christians

have the special privilege of "Christ living" in us (Gal. 2:20), "God working" in us (Phil. 2:12) and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19). The book of Hebrews emphasizes the superior benefits in Christianity over those in the law of Moses. Christians have wonderful benefits as sons and daughters of the King.

The *Revised Standard Version* makes verses 29 and 30 a parenthetical statement. It seems better to take these verses as words of Jesus describing the reactions people made to John's preaching. Many accepted John's message, accepted God's ways as right, and were baptized. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law did not repent and believe the gospel. They refused to be baptized. They were experts in the law of God but missed its real message and resisted the will of God in their lives. In their smug complacency and self-righteousness they rejected both John and Jesus.

7:31-35. The religious leaders rejected both John and Jesus, but for opposite reasons. They could not be pleased. Jesus asks rhetorically what would illustrate their behavior. He answers with an illustration from children at play. Often children only want to object to what other children want to play. Jesus pictured Jewish children saying to other children, "We wanted to play wedding, but you didn't want to play wedding. We wanted to play funeral, but you didn't want to play funeral." In stubbornness and self-will they refused to cooperate.

Jesus applied his illustration. John the Baptist practiced a severe lifestyle and brought a message of judgment. He ate the food of the desert (Mark 1:6) and did not attend dinner parties. They accused him of having a demon. (Later they accused Jesus of having a demon — John 7:20; 8:48; 10:20). "You say" indicates that men were present in the crowd who had voiced this objection to John's ministry.

Jesus ate ordinary food and attended dinners. Morris observed, "they called Him *a glutton and drunkard* and for good measure complained about His dining companions" (p. 145).

These Jews had stubborn, willful hearts refusing to be open and yielded to God's will. Truth is objective but our response to truth is influenced by our attitudes and the condition of our hearts.

Those who are really wise will be open to accept truth whether or not it is popular or suits their preconceptions. Although many Jews rejected both John and Jesus, those who were characterized by wisdom accepted the missions and methods of both John and Jesus.

Wisdom is vindicated by the results in those who receive the truth. Matthew 11:19 says wisdom is justified by her works. (See I Cor. 1:30; James 3:17.) A wise person is teachable. He is open to truth and trusts

and acts in obedience to truth.

Anointing by a Sinful Woman — Luke 7:36-50

³⁶One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and took his place at table. ³⁷And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisee's house brought an alabaster flask of ointment, ³⁸and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." ⁴⁰And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "What is it, Teacher?" ⁴¹"A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." ⁴⁴Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." ⁴⁸And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Some people confuse this anointing of Jesus with the anointing by Mary of Bethany (Matt. 26:6; Mark 14:3; John 12:3). In both cases Jesus was anointed by a woman and in the home of a man named Simon. In both cases the act was misinterpreted and some were offended.

The following differences establish that these are separate occasions. Luke 7:37 characterizes the woman as a well-known sinner which does not harmonize with the character of Mary of Bethany, whom Jesus praised (10:39,42). In Luke, Simon is called a Pharisee

but in the other texts he is identified as Simon the leper. In Luke, Jesus' feet are anointed, in the other texts his head is anointed. In the text at hand the discussion centers on love and forgiveness, but in the other texts on the sale of the ointment and giving to the poor. The Pharisee is offended by Jesus because he considered that Jesus was permitting Himself to be defiled, or that Jesus did not know what kind of woman was touching Him. On the other occasion Judas is offended at the woman's act because of his greed. Plummer observed:

The conduct of both Jesus and the woman is unlike either fiction or clumsily distorted fact. His gentle severity toward Simon and tender reception of the sinner are as much beyond the reach of invention as the eloquence of her speechless devotion (p. 209).

7:36. The location of the Pharisee's home is not given. Capernaum is the probable location. The homes of the wealthy had several rooms around a courtyard. The courtyard was a favorite place for banquets in the summer. Jesus reclined on his side on a low couch at the table.

The Pharisees were Jewish leaders who insisted on strict observance of the law (Acts 26:5) and of their traditions. They were separatists and often self-righteous.

It was customary to invite traveling teachers to one's home. Simon was curious enough to want to observe Jesus closely and he invited Jesus to a meal in his home. Jesus was not a social separatist. He ate in the home of a tax-collector (5:29) as well as with Pharisees (also 11:37; 14:1).

7:37-38. "Behold" or "And look" calls attention to this unusual incident. The woman is unnamed, unknown. She is not to be identified with Mary of Bethany or Mary Magdalene. She was well-known in town as a sinner. Some assume she was a prostitute. She may have been but the text does not affirm this. She was no longer what she once was. When she heard the preaching of Jesus she had been touched and had repented. Unfortunately her old reputation continued.

For a meal like this a door would be open for unlimited persons to enter and observe the dinner or engage in conversation with those at the meal. R.C. Trench records the report of a traveler in the near East in 1839 when invited to the counsel's house.

In the room where we were received, besides the divan on which we sat, there were seats all around the walls. Many came in and took their place on those side seats, uninvited and yet un-

challenged. They spoke to those at table on business or the news of the day and our host spoke freely to them (p. 302).

The traveler said the same thing happened again in Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, for a well-known sinner to enter into the home of a strict Pharisee expressed determination to approach Jesus. Gratitude to Jesus for forgiveness of her sins impelled her to bring the alabaster jar of perfume. She did not come seeking forgiveness but came as a forgiven sinner full of faith and love. The vessel derived its name from the alabaster stone of which it was usually made. Ancient writers said the vases made of alabaster were the best. The jar had no handles. Its long neck was broken when the precious perfumed oil was needed.

She had previously been saved (7:50). She knew Jesus was in Simon's house and she came to express her appreciation to Jesus. Jesus would have been reclining on a couch leaning on His left elbow, with His feet extending backward on the couch. His sandals would have been removed before reclining. As she planned to anoint His feet she was overcome with emotion and her tears fell on His feet. She wiped His feet with her hair. Unloosing her hair in public and kissing His feet were not usual behavior. She continued to kiss His feet (See Matthew 26:49; Mark 14:45; Luke 15:20; Acts 20:37). She poured the perfumed oil on Jesus' feet.

7:39. Jesus accepted her humble expression of gratitude. The Pharisee disapproved of Jesus. The statement "he said to himself" is a form of conditional sentence that concluded that Jesus was not a prophet and He did not know what kind of a woman she was.

This man shows Simon's contempt for Jesus. He concluded that no true prophet would allow himself to be disgraced by contact with such a sinner. In Simon's mind this proved Jesus was not a prophet. Simon had no understanding of Jesus' mission of bringing sinners to repentance (5:32).

7:40-43. Because Jesus was a true prophet of God, He could and did read Simon's thoughts. Simon thought Jesus could not supernaturally know a person's heart and character. Jesus demonstrated He could read the silent thoughts of Simon's mind. Jesus told Simon He had something to tell him. Simon responded with interest, "Say on, teacher." Hendriksen translated *The Parable of the Two Debtors* which Jesus told as follows:

Two men were in debt to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty. Since they were unable to

pay back what they owed, the moneylender graciously cancelled the debt for both. Now, which of the two will love him most? (p. 407).

A denarius was a Roman coin equivalent to a day's wages for a laborer or a soldier.

Simon's reluctant answer had an air of indifference. "I suppose it was the one who owed the larger debt." The tone of his voice may have expressed the question, "But what does that have to do with anything?" Jesus did not comment on Simon's attitude but told him he had given the correct answer.

7:44-46. Up to this point it seemed as if Jesus paid no attention to the woman. Jesus looked at the woman and asked Simon, "Do you see this woman?" Simon would have liked to have had nothing to do with her but his disapproving heart had been preoccupied with her since she came into the room. Jesus draws a bold contrast between the proud Pharisee and the penitent sinful woman. "The series of contrasts produces a parallelism akin to Hebrew poetry" (Plummer, p. 112).

Even though Jesus was an invited guest, He pointed out that His host had not offered the usual expressions of hospitality. Simon had not provided water for footwashing when Jesus arrived (Gen. 18:4; Jdgs. 19:21). But the woman had wet His feet with her tears. The host had not greeted Him with a kiss (Gen. 29:13; 45:15), but the woman had kissed His feet. Simon had not used cheap olive oil to anoint Jesus' head (Psa. 23:5; 141:5; Matt. 6:17), but the woman used expensive perfumed ointment to anoint His feet.

7:47. Jesus did not mean that her actions earned or won her forgiveness. Rather it is because her many sins were forgiven that she was so grateful and loving to Jesus. Her love is an evidence she had been forgiven. It is the one who is forgiven little (or believes he or she has little sin needing forgiveness) that loves little. Simon's lack of love is an evidence that he has been forgiven little.

7:48-50. Jesus did not grant her forgiveness of her sins at that moment. He announced that her sins had already been forgiven and remained forgiven.

The teaching of Christ had brought her to repentance and to assurance of forgiveness, and this assurance had inspired her with love and gratitude. Jesus now confirms her assurance and publicly declares her forgiveness. He thus lends His authority to

rehabilitate her with society (Plummer, p. 214).

Her love was the result not the cause of her forgiveness.

The Pharisees at the table literally asked their question “within themselves” rather than “among themselves.” (See Luke 5:21.) Their question was not seeking information but was a disapproval. “Who does He think that He is — claiming to forgive sins?” See Luke 5:21; Matthew 13:55; John 6:42,52 for a contemptuous use of “this.” Jesus ignored the Pharisees’ disapproval “but” He spoke to the woman. It was not her love that brought her forgiveness. It was her faith that saved her (Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 8:48; 17:19; 18:42).

Morris stated, “The Greek is literally, ‘go into peace,’ and it may be worth noting that the rabbis held that ‘Go in peace’ was proper in bidding farewell to the dead, but to the living one should say ‘Go into peace’ (*Moed Katan*, 29a) (p. 149).

What a wonderful blessing when a person through a complete trust in Christ and submission to His will finds an inner peace, a wholeness and well-being. Our minds are convinced by the miracles of the Messiah but our hearts are warmed and touched by His mercy.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What was a centurion?
2. What evidence shows the person healed was a servant and not a son of the centurion?
3. What actions show that the centurion had a loving concern for other people?
4. Identify the two groups the centurion sent to Jesus.
5. What was unique about the centurion’s faith?
6. Locate Nain.
7. What motivated Jesus to raise the widow’s son from death?
8. What response did the people make to the miracle of the raising of the young man?
9. What did John mean by his question “Are you he who is to come; or shall we look for another?”
10. What six items does Jesus give as evidence He was the promised Messiah?
11. How was John the Baptist “more than a prophet”?
12. How is “he who is least in the Kingdom” greater than John the Baptist?
13. In what ways are “men of this generation” like children?

THE MESSIAH: MIRACULOUS AND MERCIFUL, LUKE 7:1-50

14. What was the name of the Pharisee who invited Jesus to dinner?
15. What do we know about the identity of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet?
16. What was the point of the parable Jesus told to his host?
17. Was the woman's love the basis for her forgiveness or the result of her forgiveness? Why?

9

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S WORD *LUKE 8:1-56*

Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom of God (8:1). In the Parable of the Sower His word was the seed. For those who received and believed it would bring forth much fruit (8:15). All should listen to His word with obedient hearts (8:18). The closest personal relationship to Jesus comes through hearing and doing the word of God (8:21). Jesus demonstrated the power of His word by commanding the stormy wind and waves to be calm and they instantly were still (8:25). He commanded the demons to leave the Gerasene man (8:32). The daughter of Jairus was resurrected from the dead by the awesome power of Christ's word (8:54-55).

Women Who Supported Jesus — Luke 8:1-3

The financial support of some women provided resources for Jesus and the twelve so they could conduct their itinerant ministry.

8 Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, ²and also some women who had been healed of

evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.

8:1. Some believe that Jesus was forced out of the synagogue so He went to open air preaching. This view is unlikely because during His trial Jesus said, "I have always taught in your synagogues" (John 18:20). Luke frequently mentioned the crowds in this period of Jesus' ministry (7:11,24; 8:4,19,40,45).

Soon after raising Jairus' daughter Jesus went on a preaching tour traveling through the Galilean cities and villages. Jesus preached with authority. The content of his proclamation was good news concerning the kingdom of God which He was about to establish. The key idea of the kingdom is the rule of Christ in the hearts and lives of people. The twelve apostles now regularly accompanied Jesus.

8:2-3. Jesus did not use His miraculous power to meet His personal needs. Some women of means were also with Jesus and the twelve. These women out of their own resources provided for the material needs of the traveling group. Jesus had helped these women by healing them or casting out demons, now as an early ladies' aid society they were helping Him. Luke distinguished between healed of evil spirits and infirmities. This is the only passage which told of how the expenses were met on Jesus' preaching tours.

Some Jewish rabbis refused to teach women and assigned them an inferior place; however, they received support from women and at times took advantage of them (Matt. 28:14; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47). The service of women was important in their relationship with Christ. Some followed Him to the cross (John 19:25) and to His grave (Luke 23:49,55; 24:1-10). Women also played a vital role in the early church (Acts 9:36; 16:14,15,40; 18:26; Rom. 16:1,2; Phil. 4:2,3; II Tim. 1:5).

Because Mary was a common name the addition of Magdalene would help specify which Mary was meant. She was called after her home town, Magdala, which was located on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee, south of Capernaum and north of Tiberias. She is not to be confused with Mary of Bethany (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1) nor with the sinful woman in Luke 7:37. There is no reason for considering her an immoral woman just because she had had seven demons. Mary Magdalene watched the crucifixion (Matt. 27:55-56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25). She observed the burial of His body (Matt. 27:61; Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55) and came with other women that resurrection Sun-

day morning to anoint the body (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10). She was the first recorded witness of the resurrected Christ (John 20:1-18; Mark 16:9).

The Parable of the Sower — Luke 8:4-15

The people thought of the kingdom in material and political terms. Jesus pictured the key characteristics of the kingdom through stories and illustrations called parables. Matthew (13:1-53) and Mark (4:1-34) recorded a whole sermon of kingdom parables. Luke chose to record only the Parable of the Sower.

⁴And when a great crowd came together and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: ⁵“A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. ⁶And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. ⁷And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. ⁸And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold.” As he said this, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

⁹And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, ¹⁰he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. ¹¹Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. ¹²The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved. ¹³And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. ¹⁴And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. ¹⁵And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience.

8:4. Great crowds followed Jesus. They came from many towns. Luke did not identify the location. Matthew and Mark said the sermon in parables was delivered from a boat to a large crowd on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus used parables to teach concerning His kingdom. Those who

genuinely wanted to know God's truth learned vital lessons. The others heard only stories.

8:5-8. The text literally has "the" sower. This emphasizes a person whose business was sowing. Perhaps Jesus could see a sower on the hillside and used him as an object lesson. Their method of sowing was to broadcast seed with dirt. When this writer visited the Sea of Galilee our bus stopped on the hillside west of the sea. In a small area I saw all four kinds of soil mentioned by Jesus in this parable.

Walking paths often went through the fields. The seeds that fell on them could not penetrate these hardened walkways. The seeds that fell on the path were walked on by those passing by and were eaten by birds. Matthew (13:5) and Mark (4:5) have "rocky ground." The statement does not mean ground with stones or rocks in it. The rock was a shelf of rock underlying a thin layer of soil. The seed quickly germinated and started to grow but the roots hit the rock and could not get down to moisture so the hot sun caused the plant to wilt, wither and die. Some of the seed fell in with small thorn plants or thorn seed. These vigorous, prickly plants grew faster than the wheat or barley plants. Taking most of the nourishment from the soil, they choked out the grain.

Most of the grain fell on good soil. The rich, fertile ground provided moisture and nourishment for the plants. An abundant harvest resulted. Matthew (13:8) and Mark (4:8) mentioned thirty fold and sixty fold as well as hundred fold which Luke stated. Luke's shorter account focused on the central point of an abundant crop. One grain of seed produced one hundred grains.

Jesus concluded the parable with a challenge for all to hear the message intended by His words. "He called out" underscores the seriousness of what He said. "Anyone who has an opportunity to hear, let him be careful to *listen*." (On this expression see Matthew 9:15; 13:9,43; Mark 4:9; Luke 14:35).

8:9-10. The disciples included "the twelve" and "those who were about him" (Mark 4:10). Matthew recorded that they also asked why He spoke in parables (13:10). Jesus responded by explaining why He taught in parables and explained the meaning of the Parable of the Sower.

To His believing and teachable disciples He said was given to know "the secrets of the kingdom of God." The word "secrets" is sometimes translated *mysteries*. It does not mean spooky. In the New Testament this word is used to refer to truths which man could not have learned by himself, but God has revealed them so man can know

them. To those who were willing to listen and learn He revealed through His parables important truths concerning His kingdom.

The worldly-minded heard only parables; they did not understand their meaning. In the light of His fuller explanation in Matthew 13:10-17 we know Jesus did not give a fuller revelation of these truths to the multitudes because of their willful rejection of His spiritual message. Jesus abbreviated the words of Isaiah 6:9-10. (See also John 12:40; Acts 28:26-27; Rom. 11:8; II Cor. 3:14.) Lewis Foster explained:

These words do not mean that God desires that some will not understand, but it expresses the sad truth that those who are not willing to dig for the treasure will not find it. Their disinterest in spiritual truths and their concentration on the things of this world keep them from pursuing the deeper lessons of the parables (p. 135).

The religious leaders and the crowds had opportunities to trust and understand Jesus' teachings concerning His Kingdom, but their selfish and materialistic view of religion and life kept them from seeking to truly understand. They heard words but did not understand their intended meaning.

8:11-15. Some modern scholars are right in rejecting allegorical interpretation of the parables, but they are wrong when they say the early church and not Jesus gave the interpretations of the parables which the Gospel writers ascribe to Jesus. We must take Jesus' explanation as final.

Many Bible teachers have called this the Parable of Four Soils or the Parable of the Hearers. However, it is better to stick with the title Jesus used, "Hear then the parable of the sower" (Matt. 13:18). This title seems to point to the parable as an encouragement to those to sow the seed of the gospel to be prepared for various reactions on the part of the hearers including rejections as well as acceptance. The stress on hearing in the context and the explanation given by Jesus focus on how one hears and responds to Christ's teaching. Surely the parable was intended to inform both sowers and hearers.

The word of God is the seed. The word tells about God and is from God (Matt. 15:6; Mark 7:13; Luke 5:1; 8:11,21; 11:28; John 10:35). As God's word created the universe so God's word has power to create newness of life in every person. We have access to God's power through His word (John 15:3; Rom. 1:16; 10:17; Col. 3:16; Heb. 4:12;

James 1:21; I Pet. 1:23-25).

The pathway represents unresponsive hearers. Their hearts, hardened by pride or indifference, do not accept and trust Christ's words. The devil takes the word from their minds before they believe it unto salvation. This happens because they choose not to be open and receptive.

The seeds on the rock represent hearers who at first have an emotional excitement which is only a superficial and shallow enthusiasm. They receive Christ quickly but have no solid basis for faith. It is easy come, easy go. When temptations or hardships and persecutions come they shed their new-found faith. A faith based on feelings is a fragile thing. Real faith must include intelligent conviction.

The third group of hearers accept Christ's word. They have potential for spiritual growth. But they fill their lives with other things so that Christ is crowded out. Mark listed the thorns — "the cares of the world, and the delight in riches and the desire for other things" (Mark 4:19). Luke also has "pleasures of life." A thing need not be bad in itself, but if it becomes more important to us than Christ is then it has become a thorn. Barclay observed,

A man becomes too busy to pray; he becomes so preoccupied with many things that he forgets to study the word of God: he can become so involved in committees and good works and charitable services that he has left himself no time for Him from whom all love and service come" (*Matthew*, Vol II, pp. 67,68).

This choking may be a slow, gradual but deadly process. Spiritual life requires regular renewal.

The good soil represents the hearers who bear much fruit. Their response to the word includes "hearing the word," "understands it" (Matt. 13:23), "accept it" (Mark 4:20), and "hold it fast." Their heart is interested in knowing and obeying the truth. Through feeding on the word of God they endure by producing fruit of godly living according to the will of God (Acts 17:11; Gal. 5:22,23). Christian maturity is not received instantly but is a growth process. Jesus said, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23). Christ is formed in them (Gal. 4:19) and they have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5). They become partakers of the divine nature (II Pet. 1:3-4).

A Lamp on a Stand — Luke 8:16-18

¹⁶“No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, that those who enter may see the light. ¹⁷For nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light. ¹⁸Take heed then how you hear; for to him who has will more be given, and from him who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”

8:16-18. The purpose of a lamp is to be illuminated so it can provide light. He would probably be thinking of an Herodian lamp which would fit in one's hand. It held oil and had a wick. When the wick was ignited the lamp would provide light. It would defeat the purpose of a lighted lamp to put it under a basket or under a bed.

When people think something is hidden or secret they need to realize that nothing is hidden from God (Matt. 10:26; 12:36; 16:27; Mark 4:22; Luke 12:2; Rom. 2:6,16; I Cor. 4:5; Col. 3:3-4; Rev. 2:23; 20:12-13). On judgment day even things thought to be hidden will be made public.

Verse 18 does not mean that he who has money will make more money. The statement has to do with how willing and careful one is to hear the word of God. When a humble, teachable person has faith and knowledge of God's word he will keep gaining more and more light. When the word of God is given full control in one's life then one has light to share (Psa. 119:105; Matt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:15). The basic principle is that if we use what God gives it will increase. If one is indifferent to what God gives, that person will lose even what he thinks he has.

Plummer said that because the teaching is to be made known it is important it is to be heard with intelligence and a good heart. “Whoever gives a welcome to the word and appropriates it, becomes worthy and capable of receiving more. But by not appropriating truth when we recognize it, we lose our hold of it, and have less power of recognizing it in the future” (p. 223).

Jesus' Mother and Brother — Luke 8:19-21

¹⁹Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him for the crowd. ²⁰And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” ²¹But he said to them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

8:19-21. Mary would have the natural mother's concern for her son. She and Jesus' brothers came to visit Jesus. They were prevented from reaching Him because of the large crowd pressed about Him.

Undoubtedly these brothers of Jesus were children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus. The Roman Catholic view that this could not be true because Mary remained perpetually a virgin has no convincing evidence to support it. (See Matt. 1:25; Luke 1:34.)

Someone informed Jesus that His mother and brothers wanted to see Him. His answer seems cold and unsympathetic at first. But Jesus did not say He rejected His family or that one's family is not important. While He hung on the cross He manifested His concern for His mother's welfare. His teaching of the Word of God as the world's Savior and Messiah took precedence over His family ties. We enter into a close family relationship with Jesus when we *hear* and *do* His word. Our allegiance to Christ must have priority over every earthly tie.

The Stilling of the Storm — Luke 8:22-25

The Sea of Galilee has a special attraction for the Christian. In the spring, when the grass is still green, the deep blue water of the pear-shaped lake fits the description of a sapphire in a setting of emerald. So many striking events in the life of our Lord happened on this lake. As we study the calming of the storm we are captivated by the majesty of the Master.

²²One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, ²³and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a storm of wind came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in danger. ²⁴And they went and woke him saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and raging waves; and they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even wind and water, and they obey him?"

8:22-23. As is often true in Luke, he does not precisely state the time of this event. Mark puts it on the same day as the teaching in parables, including the Sower (Mark 4:35; see also Matt. 12:22,38,46; 13:1 for other events of that day). In the light of this information,

then Jesus and the disciples entered the boat on the northwest part of the sea and started southeast toward the other side. Matthew said that Jesus saw a crowd around him when He instructed the disciples to depart to the other side of the lake (Matt. 8:18). Mark mentioned that it was evening (Mark 4:35). Jesus apparently fell asleep, weary from the demands of His ministry to the multitude. He had had a busy day, full of activity. Jesus' humanity was real. He grew tired, thirsty and sleepy.

"A fierce gale of wind descended upon the lake, and they began to be swamped and be in danger" (NASB). The lake is twelve or thirteen miles long and six or seven miles across and is surrounded by hills and mountains on all sides. The sea is 692 feet below sea level. It is in a deep trough. The chilled air from Mt. Hermon (9,200 feet) in the north rushes through the channels of the ravines and gorges and clashes with the heated air above the surface of the lake. These storms descend very suddenly. The word translated "storm of wind" is literally whirlwind. Violent gusts of wind whipped the lake into a frenzy of angry, unruly waves. The waves were so great that the boat was hidden between the waves (Matt. 8:24). The boat began to fill with water. Even seasoned seamen were afraid, recognizing the real danger to their lives.

8:24-25. Luke omitted the interesting detail that Jesus was sleeping on a cushion in the stern (rear) of the boat (Mark 4:38). The urgent question of the disciples as recorded by Luke is supplemented by Matthew, "Save, Lord" (8:25) and Mark, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" (4:38). The turmoil at sea brought turmoil to their hearts. They were frantic, desperate men. They had to alert Jesus to their plight.

As Lord of all nature Jesus awoke, stood in the boat (Matt. 8:26) and rebuked the wind and the waves. Immediately the whirlwind and the raging waves were calm and quiet. The water did not continue to slosh back and forth. An obvious and awesome miracle had occurred. A Scottish metrical version of Psalm 107 has:

The storm is changed into a calm
At his command and will
So that the waves which raged before
Now quiet are and still.

See Psalms 89:8f; 93:3f; 107:23-30; Isaiah 51:9f.

The disciples did not fully realize and trust Jesus as the divine

Lord. Both before (Matt. 8:26) and after He stilled the storm, Jesus addressed the disciples for their lack of faith. It would have been extremely difficult for them (as it would be for us in the same situation) to understand that Jesus was God in flesh. Miracles like this one helped them come to an unshakable conviction that Jesus was in fact God and man. Some people accept some of Jesus' miracles but stumble at the nature miracles. But if Jesus created the world and its elements and sustains it in its normal, orderly behavior (John 1:3; Col. 1:16,17), then it would be no problem at all to direct the behavior of the elements at any moment. If they had a childlike trust in Him as Lord they would not have needed to fear the storm.

Their response to His miracle and His question was one of awe. This is the usual response to the presence of the supernatural (Isa. 6:5; Ezek. 1:28; Luke 5:8; Rev. 1:17). Filled with reverence and a growing understanding of His divine nature, the disciples say to each other, "Who then is this, . . . ?" Well did the psalmist answer their question,

O LORD God of hosts,
 who is mighty as thou art, O LORD,
 with thy faithfulness round about thee?
 Thou dost rule the raging of the sea;
 when its waves rise, thou stillest them (Psa. 89:8,9).

The question, "Who is Jesus?" is the central issue of the gospels and of our lives. I. Howard Marshall pointed out that the disciples' question is not answered, "but the answer is implicit for the reader who knows his Old Testament: what God did then, Jesus does now" (p. 335).

This event teaches that Jesus was both human (asleep) and divine (stilled the storm). We learn that we must have confidence in Jesus as our divine Lord.

A Demon-Possessed Man Is Freed — Luke 8:26-39

Some deny the reality of demons holding that modern knowledge has disproved such superstitions. Others, some nominal Christians as well as non-Christians, are preoccupied with the world of evil spirits, being more afraid of the power of Satan and demons than they are trustful of God and His power. Rather than accepting either of these extremes we should realize that the devil and demons, evil spirits in the

devil's service, do in fact exist and work in opposition to God. The Bible tells us the truth about the world of evil spirits. The Gospels are historically reliable in describing the events where Jesus cast out demons.

Exorcists, who claimed to cast out demons by omens, charms and the like, practiced black magical arts in Jesus' day, as some have since. Jesus had no part in black magic. As the Son of God He had supernatural power over the spirit world as well as the physical world. Such divine authority is demonstrated in events such as the one involving the Gerasene demoniac.

From the Gospels it is evident that a demon (unclean or evil spirit) could take possession of an individual's personality. The person possessed was not responsible for his or her actions (Matt. 8:31; Mark 3:11). The person could not separate his own identity from the influence of the demon. The demon was a separate spiritual reality who dominated the possessed person, using his or her physical faculties, for example the voice. The Gospel writers distinguish between diseases and demon possession (Matt. 4:24; 8:16; 10:1,8; Mark 1:32,34; 3:15; 6:13; 9:32-33; Luke 6:17-18; 9:1; 10:17-20). Sometimes diseases did accompany demon possession: muteness — Matthew 9:32-33; deafness and muteness — Mark 9:25; blindness and muteness — Matthew 12:22; epilepsy — Matthew 17:15. Demon possession was not a mental or physical illness. Possession by a demon did not mean the person was immoral or sinful.

Are people possessed by demons today? We can not say that this is impossible. The New Testament does not give us guidelines for recognizing demon possession. Jesus and the apostles cast out demons. The commission to all believers centers on preaching the gospel and baptizing believers. We are called to be evangelists, not exorcists. However prayer and the Word of God can free pagans from the power of evil spirits. Christians need not fear they will be possessed by demons. Paul assured us, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37-39).

²⁶Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷And as he stepped out on land there met him a man from the city who had demons; for a long time he had worn no

clothes, and he lived not in a house but among the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech you, do not torment me." ²⁹For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. ³¹And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. ³²Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them leave. ³³Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

³⁴When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ³⁶And those who had seen it told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed. ³⁷Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear; so he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but he sent him away, saying, ³⁹"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

8:26-28. Variations exist in manuscripts concerning the location. The best texts for here and Mark 5:1 have Gerasenes. Gadarenes is the preferred reading in Matthew 8:28. Gerasa, modern Jerash, was located about 30 miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee. Gadara was located five or six miles southeast of the sea. Apparently this area bordering the southeast shore line of the Sea of Galilee was identified by these cities. The area called Galilee was located west of the Sea of Galilee. This event happened on the opposite side of the lake — on the east side. This area was settled mostly by Gentiles.

Jesus and the disciples came by boat to the shore. When Jesus stepped out of the boat onto land, He was met by a man who had for a long time been possessed by demons. Matthew (8:28) mentions two men; Luke and Mark referred to one. No contradiction exists here

because Luke and Mark do not say only one. Apparently they describe the leader of the two. Many tombs are located in the rocks in this area.

The man addressed Jesus as "Son of the Most High God." Plummer held this to be evidence that the man was not a Jew since "the most high" was a name for Jehovah common among the heathen (Gen. 14:20,22; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:24,32; 5:18,21; 7:18,22,25,27; Acts 16:17) (pp. 229-230). How did the demons recognize Jesus? Perhaps they knew Jesus in heaven before Satan and the demons were expelled. The demons begged for mercy that Jesus not torment them.

8:29-31. As Sovereign Lord over all things, Jesus ordered the demon to come out of the man. The man had been bound with hand chains (Acts 12:6f; 21:33; 28:20) and chains on his feet as well (Mark 5:4), but he broke these bonds. "The chains he wrenched apart, and the fetters he broke in pieces: and no one had the strength to subdue him;; (Matt. 8:28). The demon drove the man to live in a normally uninhabited area.

Jesus asked his name. Perhaps Jesus wanted the man to distinguish between himself and the demons controlling him. The Latin word, Legion, is the response. A Roman legion was a force of about 5-6,000 men. The meaning is that the man is inhabited by many evil spirits. Other scriptures give evidence of a person being possessed by multiple evil spirits (Matt. 12:45; Luke 8:2; 11:26). In the rest of this account the plural of demons is used instead of the singular.

The abyss refers to a place of confinement and punishment for the devil and evil spirits (Rev. 9:1-11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3). The demons dread to be sent to this place of punishment.

8:32-33. Mark reported the number of pigs was 2,000 (Mark 5:13). Luke says it was a numerous herd. Jesus granted the wish of the demons to enter the swine. The pigs suddenly rush down the steep slope and are drowned in the lake.

Ethical questions have been raised concerning this event. Some even charge that Jesus was wrong in what He did. Various responses have been offered. Morris asked, "Can anyone seriously hold that the pigs should have been saved and the man left unsaved?" (p. 156). Farrar said, "The freeing of the neighbourhood from the peril and terror of this maniac was a greater benefit to the whole city than the loss of this herd" (quoted by Morris, p. 156). Plummer suggested, "A visible effect of the departure of the demons was necessary to convince the demoniacs and their neighbours of the completeness of the cure. Brutes and private property may be sacrificed, where the sanity and

lives of persons are concerned” (p. 228). It has been suggested that the owners of the pigs were Jews who were violating the law by raising pigs. However no evidence in the text proves the owners were Jews. To prove Jesus guilty of wrong in His action one would have to know things from God’s point of view, which I’m sure is what Jesus did. Convincing evidence establishes that He is Lord and God. We are wise to trust Him.

8:34-36. The pig keepers reported the story of what had happened as they went through the countryside and in the city. Curiosity brought the people out to see for themselves. They found the man who had been possessed sitting instead of being restless and wild, clothed instead of naked, in his right mind instead of raging and terrorizing people. Seeing such an obvious transformation caused them to be afraid in the presence of supernatural power. Those who had witnessed the man’s deliverance told how the man had been healed. The word translated healed can also mean saved, which could refer to the man’s spiritual salvation. But it is a normal word for rescue from any danger or recovery from any affliction (e.g., see Mark 5:23,34; 10:52). Mark added that the people were also informed about the pigs.

8:37-39. Because of their fear they asked Jesus to leave. It is not clear whether they fear the display of supernatural power or whether they feared what further loss they might experience at the hand of His miraculous power. For whatever reason they missed the greatest opportunity in their lives. They thought they would be better off without Jesus. Sadly many people foolishly reason the same way today. Jesus entered the boat and started away. Concerning this request of Jesus to leave, Plummer observed, “There is nothing like it elsewhere in the history of Jesus” (p. 233).

The delivered man begged Jesus to allow him to go with Him. The man wanted to stay with his deliverer. But Jesus refused his request. Jesus had a job for him at home. His witness to Christ’s power to save would be more powerful in his home area because of the undeniable change that was evident in his life which would be obvious to them. Jesus was not allowed to evangelize in the area, but He commissioned the man to tell what great things *God* had done for him. He went throughout the city declaring what *Jesus* had done for him. He knew God was in Christ meeting his needs.

Personal testimonies can be self-centered and self-glorifying rather than pointing people to Christ. There is a danger in excessive subjectivism that calls attention primarily to one’s testimony. In the book of Acts the evangelism pointed primarily to Christ not to self. Yet the

type of witness we observe in the book of Acts is testimony that includes what great things God has done for the person through Jesus Christ.

When Jesus commanded some to be silent (Luke 4:41), why did he ask this man to speak? Apparently in this area the miracles of Jesus did not have the danger of arousing a political, Messianic excitement as was the case in Galilee.

Later Jesus was in the area east of the Lake of Galilee. Great crowds came. Many were healed. The people glorified God, Jesus fed the 4,000 (Matt. 15:29-38). Could it be that this good response was due at least in part to the witness of this man who was freed from the demons?

A Woman Healed and a Girl Raised from the Dead **Luke 8:40-56**

⁴⁰Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. ⁴¹And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus' feet he besought him to come to his house, ⁴²for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As he went, the people pressed round him. ⁴³And a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years and could not be healed by any one, ⁴⁴came up behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment; and immediately her flow of blood ceased. ⁴⁵And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the multitudes surround you and press upon you!" ⁴⁶But Jesus said, "Some one touched me; for I perceive that power has gone forth from me." ⁴⁷And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

⁴⁹While he was still speaking, a man from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." ⁵⁰But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well." ⁵¹And when he came to the house, he permitted no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. ⁵²And all were weeping and bewailing her; but he said, "Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping." ⁵³And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.

⁵⁴But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." ⁵⁵And her spirit returned, and she got up at once; and he directed that something should be given her to eat. ⁵⁶And her parents were amazed; but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

8:40-42a. The "crowd welcomed him" stands in direct contrast to the Gerasenes' request that He "depart from them" (8:37). Jesus did leave from the east side of the Sea of Galilee and apparently crossed the sea to Capernaum (likely site, though not named in the text).

Among those who waited at the seaside (Mark 5:21) for Jesus was Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue. A board of elders governed each synagogue. Jairus, as ruler of the synagogue, supervised the synagogue worship including the selection of those who would lead in prayer, read the scripture and preach. He was to see that order was maintained. This position commanded respect in a Jewish community. Since this event probably occurred in Capernaum, Jairus no doubt had heard of Jesus' miracles, perhaps even had witnessed some of them.

Jairus showed his faith and respect for Jesus as he came and fell at Jesus' feet, fervently pleading with Him to come to his house. The crisis was urgent. His only daughter who was twelve years old "was dying." Mark said "at the point of death" (Mark 5:23). Luke and Mark record that the man came and reported his daughter was about to die. Then friends came reporting that she had died. In Matthew's abbreviated account he recorded only the later report that she had died.

Immediately Jesus started with Jairus toward his house (Mark 5:24). His disciples went with Him (Matt. 9:19).

8:42b-44. Progress was slow due to the great crowd pressing about Him (Mark 5:24). In this crowd a desperate woman felt anonymous and hoped to be healed without being noticed. She had a condition of continual hemorrhage for twelve years. Perhaps she had a tumor in her womb which resulted in an excessive loss of blood causing severe weakness. Surgery was not available then to correct the problem. Only Mark mentioned that she "had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was no better but rather grew worse" (Mark 5:26). Luke merely stated that hers was an incurable case defying doctor's skill.

Since she had heard reports of Jesus' miracles, her faith led her to work her way through the crowd until she was behind Jesus. When near enough she touched the tassel on his outer robe (Num. 15:38,

Deut. 22:12).

She did not come openly because of her shame and embarrassment. Her condition made her ceremonially unclean (Lev. 15:19-33). The intimate nature of her problem explains her shyness. We have to admire the strength of her faith believing she could be healed merely by touching His garment. Perhaps what she failed to realize was that she could not escape the Master's notice. Immediately the bleeding stopped and "she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease" (Mark 5:29).

8:45-48. Jesus was not unaware of what had happened. He knew of the woman's faith. He knew that power had gone from Him in the healing of her body. The crowd had no clue this had happened.

Jesus abruptly stopped. The crowd bumped against Him. Jesus asked, "Who was it that touched me?" All denied that they had specifically touched Him. Because the jostling crowd pressed all about Him, Peter and the disciples wondered why He asked, "Who touched me?" (Mark 5:31).

Jesus declared that He knew someone had touched Him and that power had gone from Him to the person. It was a deliberate touch, not an accidental one. He had not asked for information but He wanted to lead the woman to publicly declare her faith so He could publicly announce her cure.

Realizing she could no longer maintain secrecy, trembling she came and fell at Jesus' feet and stated why she had touched Him and declared that she had been immediately healed. She had been a ceremonial outcast, discouraged and lonely, but to Jesus she was not an unimportant person.

Jesus made it clear that it was her faith in Him, not the touch of the garment, that healed her. In gentle kindness, Jesus reassured her, confirmed her healing, and sent her away with peace in her heart. There are no "little people" in Jesus' eyes.

8:49-53. The delay must have frustrated Jairus. Yet on the other hand, the miraculous healing of the woman may have strengthened his faith in Christ.

While Jesus spoke these last words to the healed woman, a person came from Jairus' house bearing sad news that the child had already died. They reasoned that it was too late. They need not impose on Jesus' time now.

Instead of panic and fear Jesus calmly assured all the people that all would be well if they would "only believe." The girl could be made well again. Jesus is not teaching that salvation is by "faith only" as

some have used the verse to teach. He is saying that in this situation, faith will be the basis for this girl's restoration to life and health.

Upon reaching Jairus' house Jesus took only the father and mother and the three apostles, Peter, James and John into the room. He did not want a crowd, but took the three apostles to serve as witnesses. On several occasions Jesus took only these three apostles with Him.

Perhaps this conversation with the mourners took place as Jesus entered the house, or the mourners were already in the house but not in the room with the dead body (Matt. 9:25; Mark 5:40). Some say the mourners were insincere. Of course their scorn at Jesus' words was inappropriate. The "tumult" of the wailing and the sounds of the musicians may seem wrong to us today but their culture had a noisy way of expressing grief.

Some suggest that the girl was only in a trance or a coma and not really dead. Luke 8:53 shows she was actually dead. Jesus used the word "sleep" here as He did in the case of Lazarus to mean not permanently dead (John 11:11-14). Death would not be the final outcome.

Being positive she was dead, the mourners mocked and laughed in loud derision at Jesus. They neither understood nor believed the power of God would be exercised by Jesus.

8:54-56. Jesus put the mourners who scorned Him out of the house (Matt. 9:25; Mark 5:40). He did not show His power to mockers.

In the room with the mother and father and the three disciples Jesus manifested dignity and tenderness as He raised her from death. When Jesus took her by the hand and said, "Child, arise," her life returned as her spirit rejoined her body. "Immediately the girl got up and walked" (Mark 5:42). Out of consideration for the girl, as proof of her resurrection, and perhaps to give the mother something to do with her hands, Jesus asked that the mother give her food to eat. Jesus was sensitive to practical concerns.

Jesus told the amazed and astonished parents not to tell this miracle. Of course some people would know. Jesus did not want it broadcast widely. Already crowds were following Him. He wanted to teach learners without being thronged by sign-seekers.

Several lessons can be learned from this story. Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood knew who could help them. They went to Jesus for help. Jairus was not too proud to ask for help. The woman was not too ashamed to go for help.

One cannot become a Christian until he or she admits the need for

help and is lost. A Christian must continually look to Jesus for power and wisdom to cope with life's problems. Our own strength and resources are insufficient. We must trust in the Lord.

They trusted Jesus' power to help. The woman was healed because of her faith, Jairus' daughter was raised because of Jairus' faith. We can acknowledge the power of God, but we must really trust Him, not just say He is powerful.

Jesus is willing and able to help us. He is the only savior for lost souls, the only hope of the hopeless, the only way to a worthwhile life.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Name three women who helped support Jesus and the twelve in their travels.
2. Identify the four kinds of soil described in the Parable of the Sower.
3. What does the word "secrets" mean in 8:10?
4. What does the seed represent?
5. Identify the kind of hearer represented by each of the four kinds of soil.
6. What are the three things that choke out the word in a person's life?
7. Explain Jesus' response to His mother and brothers.
8. Locate and describe the Sea of Galilee.
9. Describe the kind of storms that came upon the sea.
10. How does the stilling of the storm show both Jesus' humanity and His deity?
11. How are we to understand the accounts of demon possession in the New Testament?
12. What are demons and what happened when they possessed people?
13. Locate the event involving the Gerasene demoniac.
14. How would the demon know Jesus?
15. What is the significance in the name Legion?
16. What response can be given to the ethical questions that have been raised concerning this miracle? (e.g. Was it right to kill the pigs?)
17. Why did Jesus not let the man freed of the demons come and follow Him?
18. What is the probable city where Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue?

TWENTY-SIX LESSONS ON LUKE

19. What was the role of the ruler of the synagogue?
20. Why did the woman not come publicly to be healed?
21. What are some reasons why Jesus insisted on identifying the healed woman?
22. Was the girl dead or only asleep?
23. State some lessons that can be learned from the story involving the healed woman and Jairus' daughter.

10

JESUS, THE CHRIST OF GOD *LUKE 9:1-62*

The identity of Jesus is the crucial issue of the Gospels. It is the most important issue of life. Jesus was the Messianic King foretold in the Old Testament. In this chapter Luke records Peter's confession of Christ, Christ's prediction of His death and resurrection, miracles which demonstrated His messiahship and lessons Jesus taught about true discipleship.

The Mission of the Twelve — Luke 9:1-6

9 And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, ²and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal. ³And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. ⁴And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. ⁵And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." ⁶And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

9:1-2. Luke identified the apostles as "the Twelve." Jesus gave the

apostles both the power to work miracles and also the authority to do so. Power refers to the strength or power to do something. Authority designates the right to exercise the power. These works of might and mercy extended the work of Christ and authenticated their message. The power to cast out demons is separated from the healing of diseases. (See Luke 4:40-41; 6:17-18; 7:21; 8:2; 13:32.)

Jesus commissioned the apostles with instructions to teach and to minister on His behalf to the souls and bodies of men. Matthew added they were to raise the dead (10:8). Mark recorded that Jesus sent the apostles two by two (6:7).

The theme of their preaching was the kingdom of God. They were to declare that God's desire and plan is to rule in the hearts and lives of men. The word for preaching means to proclaim as a herald on the authority of a king. They were to declare the rule of God, particularly in the rule of the Messiah-king. Mark included the instruction to teach repentance (6:12).

9:3-6. No special preparations were necessary. They were to concentrate on the task at hand. They were to travel light so they could be free to go as far and as fast as necessary. Money and bread were not needed because "The laborer is worthy of his food" (Matt. 10:10, ASV). God would provide their needs. The staff was a traveler's walking stick. A problem is presented by the text in Mark 6:8 where disciples are told to take nothing except a staff. Morris said, "Various attempts have been made at harmonizing the two . . . But so far no explanation seems really satisfactory. Perhaps both ways of putting it mean 'Go as you are'. Jesus is instructing them to make no special preparation for the this trip" (p. 163). The bag was a provisions bag for travelers. The task was urgent. They were simply to go. "They have to go just as they are and trust to God that He will provide whatever is needful while they are engaged in accomplishing their task" (Geldenhuys, p. 266).

Time was not to be wasted moving from house to house seeking better accommodations. They were to stay in the home hospitable enough to provide lodging, evangelizing a village or an area from this fixed center. See Luke 10:5-7 for similar instructions to the Seventy. The church in the New Testament often met in a home (Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phile. 2).

Shaking the dust off their feet when they were rejected dramatized the lost opportunity and the seriousness of the refusal. It symbolized that those refusing to hear had nothing in common with the evangelists. Paul and Barnabas did this in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts

13:51). The apostles obeyed Jesus' command and instructions and covered considerable territory. Several weeks may have been spent evangelizing the Galilean villages. Concern for both soul and body was evident in Christ's ministry and has continued in Christian missions. Morris observed, "We should perhaps add that the instructions given here are not to be regarded as applying universally. At a later time Jesus could command His followers to take purse, bag and sword (22:36). These instructions are for this one trip" (pp. 164-165).

Herod's Fears — Luke 9:7-9

After recording the apostles' evangelism in Galilee, Luke briefly notes what the ruler of Galilee thought about Jesus.

⁷Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, ⁸by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen. ⁹Herod said, "John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see him.

9:7-9. Luke gives Herod's official title, *tetrarch* (Luke 3:1,19; 9:7; Acts 13:1). Mark (6:14) and Matthew (14:9) designate him as *king*. Popularly Herod Antipas was viewed as king but technically he was not. From 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 he ruled as tetrarch over Galilee and Perea. He was a son of Herod the Great. He was interested in the reports and opinions about Jesus and the apostles. He was puzzled and perplexed at all that was being done by Jesus and His apostles. "Antipas was utterly at a loss as to what he was to think of Jesus" (Plummer, p. 241).

Several opinions about Jesus were afloat. One view was that Jesus was John (the Baptist) returned to life. Matthew and Mark indicate that this was Herod's personal opinion. Even though John had not worked miracles yet he had such an impact that many thought he was a prophet who had come back to life and was working miracles. Others thought that Jesus was Elijah. A reappearance of Elijah would not be a resurrection, since he had not died. (See Mal. 4:5; Isa. 40:3. See comments on Luke 1:76; 7:27.) A third view was that another of the prophets had risen from the dead.

Herod mused to himself, "John I caused to be beheaded, but *who is this* about whom I hear such things?" His conscience was bothering him, his mind was wrestling with the most important question, "Who

is Jesus?" "He continued seeking to see him" is a more exact translation. He knew John personally so seeing Jesus could help him decide that question. His desire to see Jesus was fulfilled during Jesus' trials, but Jesus chose not to communicate with him (Luke 23:8-12). Matthew and Mark recorded the details of John's beheading (Matt. 14:1-11; Mark 6:17-29).

The Feeding of the Five Thousand — Luke 9:10-17

The only miracles recorded in all four Gospels are the feeding of the five thousand and the resurrection of Jesus. The miraculous feeding of the large crowd demonstrated Jesus' deity, and it was used by Jesus as a basis for teaching that He was the Bread of Life. It is helpful to study the other accounts of this miracle (Matt. 14; Mark 6; John 6).

¹⁰On their return the apostles told him what they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida. ¹¹When the crowds learned it, they followed him; and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and cured those who had need of healing. ¹²Now the day began to wear away; and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away, to go into the villages and country round about, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a lonely place." ¹³But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish — unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." ¹⁴For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each." ¹⁵And they did so, and made them all sit down. ¹⁶And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ¹⁷And all ate and were satisfied. And they took up what was left over, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

9:10. The apostles returned to Jesus from their evangelistic tour. Many things had happened. John had been murdered. Matthew said Jesus retired with the Twelve to a deserted place after he heard of John's death. The people felt leaderless with John gone. The crowds were excited by Jesus' miracles. Expectations were stirred by the apostles' preaching of the kingdom. It was spring of the year, as the passover was near (John 6:4). This was about one year before our

Lord's death.

Jesus said to the apostles, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while." Mark added, "For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat" (Mark 6:31). The site of their retreat was near Bethsaida. Bethsaida Julius was a town on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee east of the Jordan's inlet to the sea. The town was built by Philip the Tetrarch and named for Julia the daughter of Caesar (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18,28).

9:11-12. Mark recorded, "And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves. Now many saw them going, and knew them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns, and got there ahead of them. As he went ashore he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:32-34). Luke's account is brief. Even though Jesus and the apostles were seeking a quiet retreat, Jesus welcomed the people and gave His time and attention to teach them and to heal their sick.

When it grew late in the day, nearing the usual time for the evening meal, the Twelve approached Jesus requesting that He dismiss the crowds, sending them away so that they could go to the villages and hamlets and find lodging and food because they were in an uninhabited area. This fact and the mention of going into the hills (John 6:3) indicate that Jesus fed the people a mile or two southeast of Bethsaida Julius.

9:13-15. Jesus put the responsibility back upon the apostles. "*You* give them something to eat" (emphasis in original). Some think this means to give the people spiritual food. It seems more likely He meant physical food. He intended to show His divine power by doing what was humanly impossible. John gave a more detailed record, "Jesus said to Philip, 'How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?' This he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, 'Two hundred denarii [200 days' wages] would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what are they among so many?' " (John 6:5-9). Bread and fish was the common food in this area. The lad's lunch consisted of five barley cakes and two small fish.

The crowd numbered about five thousand adult males not counting the women and children (Matt. 14:21). Jesus directed that the crowd be seated in groups of fifty and hundred on the green grass

(Mark 6:39-40). Winter is the rainy season. Green grass could have been plentiful in the spring. In Palestine it does not rain from June through September so green grass would have been unavailable later. The spaces between the groups made the serving more convenient.

9:16-17. As the Host at this meal Jesus looked into heaven and gave the blessing ("thanks" John 6:11). Jesus regularly gave thanks before meals (Matt. 14:19; 15:36; 26:27; Mark 6:41; 8:6; 14:23; Luke 9:16; 22:17,19; 24:30,35; John 6:11,13; I Cor. 11:24; also see Acts 27:35; Rom. 14:6). Often the host would break the bread during this prayer then distribute it to others. Jesus gave the food to the apostles who in turn distributed it to the assembled crowd. The people had a full meal and were satisfied. The abundance was such that twelve baskets of leftovers were collected. Jesus was not wasteful. The baskets were wicker baskets that could be carried on the back to hold provisions.

Some try to explain the miracle by spiritualizing it. They say the people were filled with Jesus' teaching. When a Sunday School teacher suggested this view, a small boy asked, "What about the twelve baskets of leftovers?" The Gospels present the physical miracle of the feeding of the five thousand as an actual historical event. Another naturalistic explanation is that the people were selfish but when the disciples laid before them the lad's lunch then they were all motivated to share their own small provisions and in the end there was more than enough for everyone (Barclay, p. 118). Neither of these explanations fit the plain words of the Gospel texts and both assume a prejudice against miracles. But if God exists, He can certainly work miracles if He chooses. Far better evidence exists for accepting the historical truthfulness of the Gospels than for the view that miracles can't happen. The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is a dramatic demonstration of Jesus' divine power.

Peter's Confession and Christ's Announcement **Luke 9:18-22**

Luke omits the dismissal of the disciples and the crowd, the storm and walking on the water, the Sermon on the Bread of Life, the Syro-phoenician woman, the healing of the deaf and mute man, the feeding of the four thousand and the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida Julias at least five months later (Matt. 14:22-16:12; Mark 6:45-8:26; John 6:14-71).

¹⁸Now it happened that as he was praying alone the disciples were with him; and he asked them, "Who do the people say that I am?" ¹⁹And they answered, "John the Baptist; but others say, Elijah; and others, that one of the old prophets has risen" ²⁰And he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." ²¹But he charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, ²²saying, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

9:18-20. This incident occurred in Caesarea Philippi, near the foot of Mt. Hermon, north of Galilee (Matt. 16:13; Mark 8:27). Jesus is praying privately, even though the disciples are present with Him. See a similar statement in Mark 4:10. Now was the time for important teaching concerning His identity and His mission. Jesus takes the initiative and asks the disciples, "Who do the people say that I am?" Their answers are similar to the reports that Herod had received (9:7-9).

Jesus asked the apostles, "But who do *you* say I am?" (emphasis in the Greek original). He wanted them to state their personal conviction about Him. A person may know much true information about Jesus and not be a believer. "Who is Jesus?" is a crucial question which all must answer. Peter spoke up, apparently speaking for the others, "The Christ of God." *Christ* is Greek for *Messiah*. It literally means the anointed one. In the Old Testament repeatedly God had promised He would send a redeemer who would be a prophet, priest and king. Matthew recorded a more complete answer, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). Peter recognized Jesus was the promised divine deliverer.

9:21-22. Jesus "gave them strict orders" (NEB) not to tell others that He was the Messiah. This was to be kept quiet, not because it was false, but because it was true. But the time was not right to reveal this truth. The term *Messiah* was emotionally charged and represented to the Jews a political and military deliverer (John 6:15). A public announcement at this time would have made it much more difficult to teach the spiritual nature of His kingdom. When the time was right, Jesus made the confession of His messiahship to the religious authorities (Matt. 26:63-64; Luke 22:66-70).

Jesus gave His first clear announcement to the apostles of His death and resurrection. This was at least six months before He was killed. Two other similar predictions are recorded by Luke (9:43-45;

18:31-34). The following verses show early intimations of tragedy ahead: Matthew 5:11,12; 7:13-27; 10:21-25,38-40; Mark 2:20; 3:4,6; Luke 2:34-35; 4:24,29; John 1:5,10,11; 1:29; 2:17,20; 3:14,19; 5:18; 6:51-58. The term *Son of Man* is a synonym for Messiah. Some interpret it as pointing to Jesus' identification with humanity. Generally the title conveys the idea of divine, kingly rule and power. The verb translated *must* expresses the divine purpose of God, which of necessity must come to pass (13:33; 17:25; 22:37; 24:7,26,44; Acts 17:3). God's word declared in the Scripture must come to pass (18:31; 24:46).

That Jesus would suffer many things may be a general summary of the whole of His sufferings and death. The leaders of the Jews, without adequate investigation of the evidence for His Messianic claims, officially rejected Him. Being the Messiah meant he would die. But just as certain as that He would be killed, He would rise from the dead on the third day. See Matthew 16:13-21 and Mark 8:27-31 for more detailed accounts.

Conditions of Discipleship — Luke 9:23-27

After predicting His own cross, Jesus predicted another kind of cross for those who would follow Him. "Their cross was not literal and their sufferings not atoning. But it was (and is) real" (Morris, p. 170).

²³And he said to all, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. ²⁵For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. ²⁷But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

9:23-25. Jesus did not mean denying oneself some luxury for a time, but rather being willing to deny one's right to do as he or she pleases. It means saying "No" to one's own ambitions and selfish desires. Wholehearted surrender to Christ's will is required of His followers. In the first century the cross was not a pretty symbol to wear as jewelry. To them it meant a torturous death. The commitment

Christ requires is so deep and complete that one must have daily readiness for martyrdom. We must not only be willing to die, but we must daily offer our service to Christ in total submission to His rule. Following Jesus requires surrender to His Spirit and willingness to obey His commands in all things. Still, we do not stand before God as righteous by our own deeds, but in the righteousness of Christ accounted to us because we believe and follow Him.

Self-worship is a deadly cancer. Self-rule is the desire to be outside the law of obedience. Self-interest is the desire to be outside the law of sacrifice. Self-complacency is the desire to be outside the law of fellowship. Christ cures this cancer when we say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Some have given an unhealthy and unbiblical emphasis to loving oneself. We are not to hate ourselves. It is not wrong to have a proper self-respect and self-esteem. We gain this through understanding we are created by God and redeemed by Christ. We find our true selves when we lose ourselves in service to God and others.

Pursuing only personal pleasures at the expense of one's spiritual life will mean the loss of a worthwhile life here and the precious fellowship with God in heaven. Losing one's selfish desires in complete dedication in service to Christ means finding the best that life has to offer. We show how much we value our lives by what we are willing to exchange for our lives. Many exchange their hours, days and years for little or nothing of lasting value. What a person is, is more important than what he or she has. If one owned all the material possessions in the world but lost his eternal soul, he would be the loser. Eternal lostness from the presence of God is a horrible price to pay. It may seem like a bad bargain to give one's whole life to Christ, but those who do so will find that in giving themselves to God they have found the greatest profit possible.

9:26-27. If anyone is ashamed of Jesus and of His Word, Jesus will refuse to own that person as His when He comes in divine glory as judge of men's eternal destinies. We must not be intimidated by the world's wisdom and standards so that we are ashamed to stand up for Christ and the Bible. We need to fear God's rejection more than we fear the rejection of the world.

Some of those standing and listening to His voice would not die until they had seen the kingdom of God. This most likely refers to the establishment of the church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). This

would have been less than a year away.

The Transfiguration — Luke 9:28-36

This revelation of glory was an encouragement to Christ and to the three disciples that eternal glory and the cross are not incompatible. Over thirty years later eyewitness Peter gave his testimony about the transfiguration. "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,' we heard this voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain" (II Pet. 1:16-18).

²⁸Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white. ³⁰And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Elijah, ³¹who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, and when they wakened they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah — not knowing what he said. ³⁴As he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" ³⁶And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silence and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

9:28-29. Luke dates the transfiguration "about eight days" after Peter's confession. Matthew 17:1 and Mark 9:2 have "a high mountain." Jesus took only Peter, James and John with Him up the mountain "to pray."

While Jesus was praying, His appearance was changed and His clothing became brilliant and gleaming like light. His face "shone like the sun" (Matt. 17:2). His clothing was whiter than any laundryman could bleach them (Mark 9:3). His divine glory was flashing forth.

9:30-31. We are not told how Moses and Elijah were identified,

perhaps the conversation revealed their identities. They were representatives of the law and the prophets. The departure from the earth of these two was unusual. Elijah did not die but was taken into heaven (II Kgs. 2:11). Moses was buried by God (Deut. 34:6; Jude 9). The topic of conversation was Jesus' departure (*exodus*, literal Greek) soon to occur in Jerusalem. Peter used this same word when speaking of his own death (II Pet. 1:15). They discussed heaven's viewpoint on His death.

9:32-33. The bright light awakened the disciples from deep sleep. They saw the Lord's glory and Moses and Elijah. As the two were about to depart, Peter spoke. He wanted to extend the good experience. He suggested building three booths. The word means shelter or temporary hut or tent. They were not worship centers as the word tabernacle conveys, but temporary dwellings.

9:34-36. The cloud was associated with the presence of God in Exodus 24:15-18 and 40:29-34, as it is here. It is not exactly clear who entered the cloud. The *Revised Standard Version* gives the impression that the disciples entered the cloud and were afraid. It is certain that the disciples were the ones afraid. It is not certain that the *they* who entered the cloud meant only Jesus, Moses and Elijah or if it also included the three disciples. It is most likely that it meant the former. The disciples were afraid when they saw the others enveloped by the cloud.

The voice of God spoke out of the cloud. The message is similar to what God said at Jesus' baptism. At the baptism, God spoke to Jesus, "Thou art my beloved Son, with thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22). At the transfiguration, the message is directed to the disciples with Jesus spoken of in third person, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to Him." God affirmed Jesus' deity and messiahship. God chose Jesus to follow the path of suffering the death as the Messianic Savior (Luke 23:35). Jesus was superior to the law and the prophets. God was saying that men now need to hear, trust and obey Jesus as their absolute Lord in all things.

After God had spoken, the disciples found Jesus *alone*. What a powerful demonstration of His unique supremacy. Mark's record helps us understand why they kept silence. "He charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man should have risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves questioning what the rising from the dead meant" (Mark 9:9-10). The keeping of an important secret increases the excitement and power of the eventual telling of it. This was no doubt true of this event (II Pet. 1:16-19).

For persons being taken into heaven in the clouds, see Daniel 7:13; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Acts 1:9; I Thess. 4:17; Rev. 1:17; 11:12; 14:14-16.

The Demon-Possessed Boy — Luke 9:37-45

After the mountain-top experience, the disciples' failure to cast out the demon possessing a boy stands in sharp contrast (Matt. 17:14-18; Mark 9:14-29).

³⁷On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. ³⁸And behold, a man from the crowd cried, "Teacher, I beg you to look upon my son, for he is my only child; ³⁹and behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him till he foams, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. ⁴⁰And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." ⁴¹Jesus answered, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." ⁴²While he was coming, the demon tore him and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. ⁴³And all were astonished at the majesty of God.

But while they were all marveling at everything he did, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁴"Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men." ⁴⁵But they did not understand this saying and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

9:37-40. Jesus and the three apostles stayed overnight on the mountain after the transfiguration. A great crowd was waiting for Jesus when He came down. A father shouted to Jesus that He give special attention to his son, his only child, who was troubled by an evil spirit. The spirit caused the boy to exhibit symptoms similar to those in epilepsy. The man reported to Jesus that he had pleaded with Jesus' disciples to cast out the evil spirit but they had been unable to do so. Did the disciples to whom the father referred include the nine apostles? The apostles had been given power to cast out demons (Mark 6:12-13; Luke 9:1-6). If the apostles had failed in this case, and this may be true, it was an exception to the usual.

9:41-43a. Jesus expressed sadness at the lack of faith on the part of the people. Jesus' statement appears to be addressed to the father and to the crowd including the disciples. The father may have come just to see what the disciples could do but without a real trust in the power of

God. The crowd may have shared the same mind-set. The disciples may have wavered in their confidence in God's power to work through them. Mark recorded an interesting exchange between the father and Jesus which Luke omitted: " 'But if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us.' And Jesus said to him, 'If you can! All things are possible to him who believes.' Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, 'I believe; help my unbelief!' " (Mark 9:22b-24).

Jesus requested the boy be brought to Him. "The demon dashed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion" (NASB). Jesus dismissed the spirit. He healed the boy. Then he gave the only son back to his father. All those present were amazed at the glorious manifestation of God's power.

9:43b-45. Even though Jesus worked divine miracles, that did not mean He would use His divine power to avoid the path of suffering. Jesus expected His disciples to give strict attention to His prediction. He wanted them to remember these words even if they did not understand them at that time. The meaning was concealed from them. "They were not allowed to understand the saying then, in order that they might remember it afterwards, and see that Jesus had met His suffering with full knowledge and free will" (Plummer, p. 256). "On the other side of the cross it must have been terribly difficult to grasp the truth that Jesus' Messiahship meant His death" (Morris, p. 175).

Who Is the Greatest — Luke 9:46-50

This conversation took place after Jesus and the disciples returned from Caesarea Philippi to Capernaum (Matt. 17:24; Mark 9:33). The disciples needed the lessons Jesus taught on humility and tolerance.

⁴⁶And an argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. ⁴⁷But when Jesus perceived the thought of their hearts, he took a child and put him by his side, ⁴⁸and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me; for he who is least among you all is the one who is great."

⁴⁹John answered, "Master, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us."

⁵⁰But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid him; for he that is not against you is for you."

9:46-48. The apostles were thinking of themselves and their self-importance. They did not yet understand Jesus' way of self-sacrifice.

They were arguing about who was the greatest among the apostles. C.S. Lewis observed, "Pride is *essentially* competitive Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man." People are proud of being richer or better-looking than others. "It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest" (*Mere Christianity*, pp. 109-110).

The discussion among the apostles was stated, "Who is the greatest?" but in their hearts they were thinking, "Am I not the greatest?" (Plummer, p. 257). The word for greatness here concerns position and prestige.

Jesus used a child for an object lesson. Several times Jesus referred to children in His teaching (Luke 10:21; 17:2; 18:16). The apostles were around Him, but Jesus put the child at His side, the place of honor. True disciples welcome little children because they belong to Christ. One who welcomes little children welcomes Christ. When one welcomes Christ, he welcomes God. The person who considers others better than self is like Christ. The truly humble person is the great person. Jesus did not use the comparative term, greatest. There is no place in the kingdom for those who want to be over others, to be above others. We are to compare ourselves to Christ not to one another (II Cor. 10:12).

9:49-50. The apostle John told Jesus that they had told a man to stop who was casting out demons in Jesus' name, because he was not one of the disciples accompanying Jesus. The idea of the text is that they were persistent in their efforts to stop him. It is ironic that they did this in the light of the disciples' failure to cast out the demon possessing the boy.

Jesus told the disciples they should not forbid the unnamed miracle worker. In this context Jesus spoke of those who sincerely confessed Christ, "He that is not against you is for you." In a later context when Jesus spoke of those who were open in their opposition to Him, He said, "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" (Luke 11:23). We must be patient and tolerant with those who are serving Christ but do not see eye-to-eye with us in everything. However in dealing with Satan and those opposing Christ there can be no neutrality and no compromise. We must take our stand for Christ.

Opposition in a Samaritan Village — Luke 9:51-56

Most of the narrative found in Luke 9:51-18:14 is found only in

Luke's Gospel, Luke frequently mentioned that Jesus was headed to Jerusalem (9:51,53; 13:22,33; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11,28). Jesus' journey from Galilee did end in Jerusalem but it was a circuitous route. Luke was speaking of different passages: in Luke 9, from Galilee; in Luke 13, from Perea; in Luke 17, from eastern Samaria where He hid briefly after raising Lazarus at Bethany; in Luke 19:11, from the southern border of Galilee to Jericho; in Luke 19:28, from Jericho. He actually arrived at Jerusalem three different times.

⁵¹When the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him; ⁵³but the people would not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶And they went on to another village.

9:51-53. Jesus was in charge of His schedule. Some things were not to be done because it was not yet time (John 7:6) and other things He said must occur because the time had come (Matt. 26:18). He knew His remaining days on earth were few. He started His journey to Jerusalem with fixed purpose knowing full well the danger and death which awaited Him. "To be received up" translates a phrase which means "the days of His receiving up." The verb form is used in Acts to refer to the ascension. Luke apparently used it here to mean the completion of Jesus' death and resurrection, finalized by His ascension into heaven.

Luke did not record the names of the messengers who were sent by Jesus into a Samaritan village to prepare for their arrival. The Samaritans did not want to have anything to do with Jesus because He was headed toward Jerusalem. "Their feud with the Jews was so bitter that they would not help anyone travel to Jerusalem." "Josephus tells us that Samaritans were not adverse to ill-treating pilgrims going up to Jerusalem, even to the extent of murdering them on occasion" (Morris, p. 179). Often Galileans headed to Jerusalem would by-pass Samaria, going east of the Jordan River through Perea. Other references to the Samaritans in the Gospels are as follows: Matthew 10:5; Luke 10:33; 17:16; John 4:9,39; 8:48.

9:54-56. James and John exhibited their fiery disposition by asking Jesus to call down fire and destroy the village. Mark called James and

John “sons of thunder” (3:17). The unfriendly reaction was not to be met with retaliation. Revenge is not a Christian response (Matt. 5:38-42; Rom. 12:14-21). The statement, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of; for the Son of man came not to destroy men’s lives but to save them” is not in the earliest manuscripts. Geldenhuys held that this saying is authentic oral tradition which was included in later texts of Luke’s Gospel (p. 294). Jesus and His company went to another village for lodging.

The Cost of Discipleship — Luke 9:57-62

Jesus taught three would-be disciples the high cost of discipleship.

⁵⁷As they were going along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” ⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.” ⁵⁹To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰But he said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” ⁶¹Another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” ⁶²Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

9:57-58. A would-be follower professed unlimited allegiance to Jesus. Matthew reported that he was a scribe (8:19). Jesus detected an overconfidence and a naive idea of the sacrifice such a profession included. Instead of relying on the emotions of the moment, Jesus wanted the man to count the high cost of discipleship. Frequently being rejected and constantly seeking souls, Jesus’ life was one of being on the move. Jesus was not complaining but He wanted the man to know what it meant to be a committed follower of His.

9:59-60. Jesus invited another to be His constant follower. He said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” What did he mean? The man’s father probably was not dead. The man wanted to delay discipleship until after his father’s death. An Arab declined an offer of a scholarship to an English university, saying, “I will take it after I have buried my father.” His father was then forty years old. (Barclay, *Luke*, p. 133).

The probable meaning is “Let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead.” Allegiance to Christ must come before allegiance to family. Jesus was not being brutal about family responsibilities but

rather was teaching about what is top priority. If one does not respond to God's call at a crucial moment he or she may never respond. The man needed to decide right then to go everywhere publishing the good news of the kingdom.

9:61-62. Having a difficult time breaking with his past, this man wanted to enjoy family and friends before coming with Jesus. The plows used in Jesus' day needed one's full attention. Momentary inattention would result in the plow being out of the ground. In Christ's kingdom half-hearted service will not do. Unconditional commitment to the rule of Christ is an essential requirement for being His follower.

Jesus did not beg anyone to follow Him. He did make clear the high cost of discipleship. We must give up our selfishness; we must offer ourselves as a sacrifice; we must submit in total surrender to Christ as Lord in all things.

Childlike trust in Jesus, hating and turning from one's sins, baptism in water, daily serving the King. The price is right! Buy it!

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What authority did Jesus give to the twelve?
2. They were sent out to do what two things?
3. Why were they to stay in the house where they entered?
4. Identify Herod the Tetrarch.
5. Jesus and the apostles withdrew to near Bethsaida. Locate this Bethsaida.
6. Give the book and chapter where the feeding of the 5000 is recorded in all four Gospels.
7. What did Jesus do before He multiplied the loaves and fishes?
8. What was Jesus doing just before He asked the disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"
9. Explain what Peter's confession "the Christ of God" meant.
10. Why did Jesus charge them not to tell He was the Christ?
11. List the demands of discipleship stated by Jesus in 9:23-24.
12. When would people see the kingdom of God predicted in 9:27?
13. What was the significance of Moses and Elijah being with Jesus at the transfiguration?
14. What was the significance of the transfiguration?
15. What are demons or evil spirits?
16. How did James and John respond to an inhospitable Samaritan village?
17. What did Jesus mean "Leave the dead to bury their own dead"?

11

PERSONAL SERVICE FOR THE KING *LUKE 10:1-42*

Three forms of personal service for the King are described in chapter ten. The seventy disciples served by preaching. The Good Samaritan served through showing mercy. Mary's service was by listening to the words of Christ.

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy — Luke 10:1-16

Jesus had not yet visited many of the towns and villages He wanted to visit before His final arrival in Jerusalem (9:51). He sent a large group of disciples to herald his arrival in these towns and villages.

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come. ²And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' ⁶And if a son of peace is there, your peace

shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you. ⁷And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages; do not go from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you; ⁹heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ¹¹'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you; nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' ¹²I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

¹³'Woe to you, Chorazin! woe to you, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴But it shall be more tolerable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ¹⁵And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.

¹⁶'He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.'

10:1-2. Jesus selected seventy special disciples. The number seventy is found in the seventy elders appointed by Moses (Num. 11;16-25), in the traditional number of nations on earth (Gen. 10), and in the seventy bullocks traditionally offered at the Feast of Tabernacles (Plummer, p. 269). Some early manuscripts have the number 72 instead of 70 which explains why some translations have the number 72, for example, the *New International Version*. The evidence for each reading is about equal, so one cannot be dogmatic about deciding between them. Variations exist in the Old Testament text in Numbers 11 as well as here and in Luke 10:17.

The fifth century church historian, Eusebius, said "There exists no catalog of the seventy." He said traditions included the names of Barnabas, Cephas, Matthias, Joseph, Barsabbas named Justus (*Ecclesiastical History*, 1.12.1).

The instructions to the Seventy have much in common with those given to the Twelve, but they come from two separate occasions. The Seventy did not constitute a permanent group or office in the early church. No further mention of them as a group is found in the New Testament. The instructions to this larger group are recorded more fully than the instructions to the Twelve. The mission of the Seventy was temporary. It was for the purpose of preparing the towns for the coming of the Lord and acceptance of His rule in their lives.

Jesus sent them two by two into the towns of Perea and Judea where he was about to go. This afforded mutual support and reinforcement in their witness. In another context Jesus said, "Every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses" (Matt. 18:16). See Mark 6:7; Luke 7:19; Acts 13:2; 15:39-40; 17:14; 19:22.

The harvest of men and women to be won to faith in Jesus as the Christ is enormous, but the number of laborers telling the good news is very small. Jesus urged his disciples to pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to raise up and send out evangelistic workers (Matt. 9:37-39; John 4:35). Because of the vast numbers of unreached peoples in the world, more vocational and volunteer workers are needed. God's plan is that Christians pray to the Father for additional workers. Often earnest prayers lead those who pray to become the feet in fulfillment of their prayers. The Lord is requested to send them forth "with haste and urgency . . . The verb expresses either pressing need, or the directness with which they are sent to their destination" (Plummer, p. 272).

10:3-7. Jesus did not promise the disciples a life of ease. As defenseless lambs He sent them into a world with many dangers as fierce as wild wolves. Those who minister for Christ will fall victim to the wiles of the world if they do not look to God for strength. They were not to take extra provisions or extra equipment for their journey. The *purse* was a money bag and the *bag* was a traveler's bag. Plummer summarized Jesus' charge, "Take with you none of the things which travelers commonly regard as indispensable. Your wants will be supplied" (p. 273). The time was urgent. They should go as they are, trusting God to take care of them. They should not be delayed by the long, elaborate oriental greetings.

They were to give a greeting of peace when they entered a house. "Son of Peace" is a Hebraism meaning a peaceable person. "Son of" is often used to mean one possesses a given characteristic (Matt. 23:15; John 17:12; Eph. 2:3; 5:6). They were not to give their blessing to those who were not ready to receive it.

They were to remain in the house that welcomed them. They were to receive what was provided. "They are to consider themselves as members of the family, not as intruders; for their food and shelter are salary and not alms" (Plummer, p. 274). The statement "The laborer deserves his wages" is quoted by Paul in I Timothy 5:18. See also I Corinthians 9:24. They were not to feel they were a burden to their hosts nor were they to seek more comfortable housing or food. "The

labourer is worthy of his hire, but the servant of a crucified master cannot be a seeker for luxury" (Barclay, *Luke*, p. 136).

10:8-12. Plummer suggested that verses 5-7 apply to single dwellings and verses 8-12 apply to towns. (p. 275). Christian workers who are guests in many homes need to heed Jesus' instruction to be neither greedy nor picky. In addition to healing the sick, they were to continually announce that the kingdom of God had come near to them. Compare Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15.

If a town rejected these preachers, they were to publicly wipe the dust off their feet, giving public warning that those people had chosen not to identify with the people and rule of God. Rejecting God's messengers meant rejection of God. The cities that had the greater opportunity of hearing gospel preaching will bear heavier condemnation in judgment than even the wicked city of Sodom. *On the day of judgment* read Matthew 7:22; 21:34; II Thessalonians 1:10; II Timothy 1:12,18; 4:8.

10:13-16. *Woe* expresses deep sadness and regret. Chorazin (mentioned only here and in Matthew 11:21) was located two miles north of Capernaum. Bethsaida, probably part of Capernaum, was the home of Peter, Andrew and Philip. It is not to be confused with Bethsaida Julias. Tyre and Sidon were leading cities in Phoenicia. They were 35 and 50 miles from Capernaum. They were centers of commerce and wickedness. They were unresponsive to the preaching of the Old Testament prophets (Isa. 23, Ezek. 26-28). Jesus had briefly visited their area (Matt. 15:21; Mark 7:24,31). The Gospels do not record any of the miracles Jesus worked in Chorazin or this Bethsaida. No history can be exhaustive. The Gospels do not record all that Jesus did or said. Materials were included that provided a basis for the readers for believing that Jesus is the Son of God (John 20:30-31; 21:25). The inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon did not have the opportunities for repentance that people in these cities had. The principle is — the greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility.

Capernaum, called Jesus' "own city" (Matt. 9:1), was not guaranteed a place in heaven just because of its abundant opportunities to profit from the time Jesus spent there (Matt. 4:18-22; 8:5-17; 11:23; John 2:12). The use of *Hades* in verse 15 parallels "on that day" in 10:12 and "at the judgment" in 10:14. "In all these cases, condemnation is demanded" (Foster, p. 171).

Jesus emphasized the seriousness of rejecting the gospel message. Those who reject Christ's messengers reject Christ. Those who reject Christ reject God. The privilege of hearing God's Word must not be

taken lightly. Terrible consequences await those who reject the invitation of the King. See Matthew 7:21-23; 10:40; John 13:20; II Thessalonians 1:7-9.

The Return of the Seventy — Luke 10:17-24

We are not told how long the Seventy were gone or the location where the preaching teams returned to Jesus.

¹⁷The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" ¹⁸And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

²¹In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will. ²²All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

²³Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! ²⁴For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

10:17-20. They were overjoyed that they were able to cast out demons in Jesus' name. The Twelve had been given this power when Jesus sent them out (9:1), but He made no mention of this power in His instructions to the Seventy. It may have been an unexpected benefit.

They spoke of the defeat of demons. Jesus spoke of the overthrow of Satan, himself. Some hold that Jesus saw Satan overthrown in the casting out of demons by the disciples. Others believe Jesus referred to the expelling of Satan from heaven before the world was created. The promise of authority over "serpents and scorpions" may be a figurative promise of spiritual victories. One must seek to understand if the author of a statement intended it to be literal or figurative. Study Matthew 16:6-12; 18:9; 19:24; Luke 18:52; John 2:19-21; 6:51.

They would have victory over the power of the enemy, Satan (Matt. 23:25; Rom. 16:20; I Pet. 5:8). Paul assured Christians they were "more than conquerors" over spiritual and physical foes through Christ (Rom. 8:31-39).

The greatest cause for continual rejoicing is not that you can expel demons but that your soul is redeemed for eternity. Ability to work miracles does not ensure salvation (Matt. 7:21-23). We can have the abundant joy that comes from assurance of salvation, possessing all the privileges of God's eternal kingdom. Sir James Simpson, discoverer of chloroform, was asked what was his greatest discovery. He responded, "My greatest discovery was when I discovered that Jesus Christ is my Saviour" (Barclay, *Luke*, p. 138).

10:21-24. Their joy moved Jesus to a prayer of rejoicing and thanksgiving. He thanks His Father that His truth has been unrecognized by those who prided themselves on their superior intellect but plain to those humble enough to listen to and accept God's revealed wisdom. "Intellectual gifts, so far from being necessary, are often a hindrance" (Plummer, p. 281). Arrogance and pride keep many from learning from God because they are not listening, being "wise in their own conceits" (Rom. 12:25, KJV). See also John 7:49; 9:40; Romans 1:22; 12:16; I Corinthians 1:18-31; II Corinthians 4:3-4. Jesus is not disparaging human intellect or learning. He gave this gift to man. He is saying God's truth is hidden to those whose intellectual pride keeps them from listening to, trusting in, and obeying God's wisdom.

God, the Father, is the only one who understands who Jesus really is. No one has an accurate understanding of God except Jesus and those who learn from Jesus. See Matthew 11:17; 26:63-65; Mark 13:32; 14:61-64; Luke 22:70; John 1:14,18; 3:35; 6:46; 8:19; 10:15,29,30; 14:9; 16:15; 17:5,10. "It is through Jesus and only through Jesus that men come to know the Father as He is" (Morris, p. 186).

Privately He told the disciples that they had a high honor and blessing in personally seeing and knowing the long awaited Messiah and Savior. Peter wrote, "The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy

Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look" (I Pet. 1:10-12).

The Parable of the Good Samaritan — Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is one of Jesus' best-known and widely-loved parables. It is recorded only by Luke.

²⁵And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" ²⁷And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live."

²⁹But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, ³⁴and went to him and bound up his wounds pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

10:25-28. Apparently Jesus was teaching a group of people, and a lawyer stood up to be recognized and to ask a question. The words *lawyer* and *scribe* are interchangeable (Matt. 22:35 and Mark 12:28). A lawyer was not an attorney but rather a scholar, teacher and interpreter of the law of Moses, especially the first five books of the Old Testament. He put Jesus to the test. He did not ask out of sense of spiritual need for information as much as he wanted to see how Jesus would answer. Religious leaders too often engage in "theological fencing," debating ideas endlessly without really seeking God's truth on

the matter. We should not judge the lawyer too harshly because another scribe questioned Jesus to test Him and Jesus told this man he was not far from the kingdom (Matt. 22:35, Mark 12:34).

The lawyer's question about eternal life identifies him with the Pharisees who believed in the resurrection from the dead. He saw salvation as a matter of works. He had no understanding of the concept of grace which Jesus brought.

Jesus answered a question with a question, as He often did. Jesus turned it back to him, "You know the Law. How does the Law answer your question?" Orthodox Jews wore leather boxes on their wrists, called phylacteries. These contained scripture passages from Exodus 13 and Deuteronomy 6 and 11. Some say it was easy for him to quote memorized verses to Jesus. However he showed spiritual understanding of the law beyond most of the Jewish leaders to select the two commands which Jesus said were the greatest commandments (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:36).

Jesus commended his answer as correct. If the lawyer really understood these commands and continually practiced them he would have eternal life. This would not mean he would then *earn* salvation. Those who were saved under the law because of their faith and obedience were saved by the grace of God. They did not merit salvation. We must recognize that this answer was given before Christ's death and the new age of the gospel plan of salvation.

10:29-32. Jesus' response reached the conscience of the lawyer and he grew defensive. Desiring to justify himself, he asked, "Who is my neighbor?" It is easier to discuss love or give a lecture on love than it is to practice love. He may have been reasoning this way, "This raises problems. How do you define neighbor? The one who lives next door to you? Those in your community? Your fellow Jews? The rabbis can not agree on this. Where do you draw the limits on loving your neighbor? These are heavy questions that we may never be able to answer."

Jesus refused to engage in an endless philosophical debate. Some have complained that Jesus did not directly answer the lawyer's question. But real love does not ask for limits but only for opportunity. Love does not ask the lawyer's question (Hunter, p. 72). Jesus told the parable to illustrate how one who has the real spirit of love behaves in his relationships with other persons.

We are not told but it is safe to assume that the traveler was a Jew. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho had a steep descent. It was narrow and rocky with many turns. It dropped over 3,000 feet in about

twenty miles. It was a desolate, wilderness area. Robbers often hid behind rocks or in caves and suddenly overpowered travelers. Josephus said it was called the "Bloody Way" (*Antiquities*, xx.6.1). The robbers violently beat the traveler, stripped him of his possessions and left him "half dead."

A priest happened to pass along the road. Priests were descendants of Aaron who were in charge of temple worship. These may have been some of the excuses he used to justify his hurrying past on the other side of the road. He may have felt too busy to stop. It was too dangerous, if he stopped the robbers might beat him next. He may have felt he didn't have the equipment or financial means to help. Perhaps someone better able to help will come along. He may be dead and touching him would make the priest ceremonially unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11). No one would know of his neglect of duty. A Levite came by, and perhaps using the same kinds of excuses as the priest, also passed by on the other side. Levites were members of the tribe of Levi who had responsibilities of caring for the temple but were not priests. Edersheim, a Jewish Christian, observed: "It was the principle of questioning, 'Who is my neighbour?' which led both priest and Levite to such heartless conduct Thus Judaism (in the persons of its chief representatives) had, by its exclusive attention to the letter, come to destroy the spirit of the Law" (vol. II, p. 238). It is easy to congratulate oneself on not doing bad things, while giving no attention to the good things that are left undone.

10:33-35. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews as semi-heathen. Samaritan was a byword of contempt to hurl as an insult (John 8:48). Josephus said the Samaritans would often refuse hospitality to Jews going to the feasts at Jerusalem, sometimes murdering them (*Antiquities*, xx.6.1, see Luke 9:53). He could have reasoned that the man is a Jew who hates me, why should I help him? He might have feared reprisals from fellow Samaritans for helping a Jew. This Samaritan stranger rose above his culture. He could have had many of the same excuses as the priest and Levite. His compassion for a fellow human being in need overcame any excuses. He went to the man and cared for his wounds. Oil and wine were used as remedies (Gen. 28:18; Josh. 9:13; Isa. 1:6; Mark 6:13; James 5:14). The wounded man was put on his beast while the Samaritan walked to the inn. A *denarius* represented a day's wages. He deposited two days' wages with the innkeeper for the man's care with assurance he would repay any extra expense when he returned that way.

10:36-37. Jesus asked the lawyer which man treated the man as a

neighbor. The lawyer had the insight and honesty to respond, "The one who showed mercy on him."

"Go and do likewise" was Jesus' simple, powerful conclusion. Love does not ask where it can stop but what can it give. Love acts in the other person's best interests. Love without expression in action is dead. We are not loving or merciful because we talk about it. It must be demonstrated in our attitudes and actions. See Matthew 5:43-45; 7:12; Romans 12:20-21.

Someone summarized the parable as follows: The robbers practiced the *Iron Rule* — "What is yours is mine and I intend to get it." The priest and the Levite practiced the *Brass Rule* — "What is mine is mine and I intend to keep it." The Samaritan practiced the *Golden Rule* — "What is mine is yours and I intend to give it to you." Our Lord challenges us to be a neighbor to every person in need.

Jesus in the Home of Martha and Mary — Luke 10:38-42

This interesting story of an incident in the home of Martha and Mary gives insight into their personalities and emphasizes the priority of listening to the Word of God.

³⁸Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; ⁴²one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

10:38-39. Luke does not tell when this visit occurred nor does he name the village. We know the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus was in Bethany (John 11:1; 12:1-3). Bethany was located about two miles east of Jerusalem on the east side of the Mount of Olives. The present name of the city is a form of Lazarus' name. Generally in the Gospels Martha is listed before Mary (10:38-39; John 11:4,19-20; 12:2-3). John 11:1 is an exception. Martha welcomed Jesus into *her* home (10:38). Martha may have been the older or the one who generally took the lead (Hendriksen, pp. 597-598).

Mary "sat at the Lord's feet." This was a way of figuratively

stating that she was a pupil learning from Jesus as teacher. Paul had been educated "at the feet of Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3). Later this same Mary would anoint Jesus' feet (John 12:3; Matt. 26:6-7; Mark 14:3). The tense of the verb indicates that she continued to listen to His teaching.

10:40-42. Martha was *distracted* by her serving, literally, "pulled in different directions." "But Martha was being distracted about all that had to be done. Suddenly she came to him and asked, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work all by myself? Tell her to take hold and help me" (Hendriksen's translation, pp. 598-599). Martha wanted to be the proper hostess. Mary wanted to be a proper listener. Martha was impatient and showed her temper in complaining to Jesus. Do you think she was out there rattling the pots to try to get their attention and make Mary feel guilty and Jesus feel sorry for her before she marched in and addressed Jesus? She felt Mary should have helped but was continuing to neglect her duty. She is annoyed with her sister. But she also is frustrated that Jesus has allowed Mary to sit there. How often do we see people who are frustrated with a person address their complaint to another person rather than speaking directly to the one with whom they are upset.

The repetition of Martha's name softened His rebuke as it expressed affection and tender regard for her as well. Jesus taught that we are not to be anxious (Matt. 6:25,28,31,34; Luke 12:11,22,26). She was distracted in mind and outwardly upset. She was upset because she had so much to do, but she was the one who chose to do so much.

Jesus said, "One thing is needful." Did He mean, "One dish or portion of food is sufficient. A full course meal is not necessary"? Or "The important priority is the spiritual one rather than the physical one"? Jesus approved Mary's action of listening to His words. He disapproved of Martha's anxiety about household duties. It is a lesson in priorities. The most difficult decisions in life are not between the good and the bad but between the good and the best. We must determine that we will put Jesus and His Word first in our lives (Matt. 6:33).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How did the commission to the Seventy differ from the commission given to the Twelve in Luke 9?
2. What does Jesus ask His followers to do about the shortage of workers for the harvest?

TWENTY-SIX LESSONS ON LUKE

3. Why were the Seventy disciples not to take extra provisions or equipment for their journey?
4. What did Jesus mean "the laborer deserves his wages"?
5. What contrast is drawn between Chorazin and Bethsaida and Tyre and Sidon?
6. What joy did Jesus say was greater than that of casting out demons?
7. Why is God's revelation rejected by the "wise" and accepted by "babes"?
8. Who alone is capable of revealing who God is?
9. Identify the lawyer.
10. Why did Jesus commend the lawyer?
11. Why did the lawyer ask, "Who is my neighbor?"
12. Identify the priest and the Levite.
13. What excuses could the Samaritan have given for not helping the wounded traveler?
14. What did Jesus mean, "Go and do likewise"?
15. In what city did Martha and Mary live?
16. Contrast the behavior of Martha and Mary.
17. What did Jesus mean, "One thing is needful"?

TRUE SPIRITUAL POWER
LUKE 11:1-54

Jesus taught His followers to keep in touch with God's power through prayer. Some of the people accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul, prince of demons. He answered this accusation affirming the true source of His spiritual power. He exposed them as an evil, sign-seeking generation.

While dining in a Pharisee's home He discussed the evils of hypocrisy in contrast to godliness.

Teaching on Prayer — Luke 11:1-13

As Shakespeare's *Hamlet* rises to its climax, the king who had murdered his brother, weary of the terrifying torture of a guilty conscience, sought relief in an unaccustomed manner. He attempted to pray. His effort was futile. He rose from his knees in despair and cried out,

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;
Words without thoughts never to heaven go

(Hamlet, III, iii, 97).

The negro spiritual well stated our need:

Not my brother, not my sister,
But it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer.

It is often true, "We do not know how to pray as we ought" (Rom. 8:26).

11 He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ²And he said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. ³Give us each day our daily bread; ⁴and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation.' "

⁵And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹²or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

11:1-4. Since the disciples were subject to the same human weaknesses as we, it should be no surprise that one day when Jesus had finished praying, one of the disciples asked, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." We do not know how John the Baptist taught his disciples concerning prayer.

This prayer may appropriately be called "The Lord's Prayer" because our Lord taught it. It may also be called "The Model Prayer" because it is a pattern to guide our prayers. It has also been called "The Disciple's Prayer" because Jesus taught it to His disciples and

only a disciple of Christ can truly pray this prayer. In Matthew's record of this prayer Jesus introduced it, "Pray then like this" (Matt. 6:9). Here in Luke 11:2, our Lord introduced it, "When you pray, say." Often the prayer is quoted in unison in church worship. This is not wrong as long as minds and hearts are praying the prayer, not just mindlessly mouthing words. The pronouns are all plural suggesting a group prayer. The prayer is valuable in teaching us how to pray by providing a pattern of elements that should be in our prayers. The prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 should be studied as a parallel to Luke's text of the prayer.

Christians can approach God as our personal father in heaven. God is approachable but He also is to be hallowed. *Hallowed* means revered, honored and respected as the Lord of the Universe. Honoring His name means honoring all He is and has revealed of Himself. *Name* represents the person. God is not a vague, abstract ideal. He is a real, existing, divine person. We can know Him and have fellowship with Him.

The request that God's kingdom come is defined by the parallel expression in Matthew's text, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). The kingdom of God is the rule of God in the lives of His people (Wilson, p. 176). In one sense the kingdom came when the church was established on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Yet God's rule has not been accepted by the majority of people alive today. Those who have accepted Christ need to pray that His will may be their will increasingly as they surrender and submit more fully to the lordship of Christ.

We are to look continually to God for the provision of our daily needs. We must acknowledge our total dependence upon God and trust and pray that He will keep giving us what we need to live for Him in this world.

People in today's world have lost a reverence for God and consequently they have lost a recognition of themselves as sinners. The closer one comes to God, the more conscious he is of his own sin. John wrote to Christians, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:8,9). Following this prayer in Matthew, our Lord added, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14-15; see 18:22-35; Mark 11:25; Luke 17:3-4; Eph. 4:32).

“Lead us not into temptation” is a request for God’s help that we may be victorious over temptation. It is a prayer that we will have the constant desire to flee temptation (I Cor. 6:18; 10:14; I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 2:22). God does not tempt man to sin (James 1:13). God does not allow us to be tempted beyond our power to resist (I Cor. 10:13). Prayer to God for victory can drive the temptation to sin from one’s heart.

11:5-8. Some may have been thinking “I have prayed many times for the same thing, but received no answer.” Jesus told “this simple story to encourage them to continue in humble, fervent, believing, and patient prayer” (Taylor, p. 243). This parable of The Friend at Midnight and the parable of The Unrighteous Judge (18:1-8) both teach persistence in prayer.

A traveler arrived late at a friend’s house. Sometimes people traveled at night to avoid the heat. The friend had no food in the cupboard. No 24-hour convenience store was available for securing a snack. At midnight he went to his neighbor’s home and asked for three loaves (rolls) of bread for his unexpected guest. The man of the house asked not to be bothered. The door was shut. The whole household was asleep on a mat on the floor. Evidently it was a one-room house. To get up would disturb everybody. Those who have slept with restless children can sympathize with the man. He said that he could not get up and grant the request.

The man would not take “No” for an answer. The man of the house finally got up and gave him what he needed. He did not do it because of friendship. He did it because of the friend’s *importunity*, literally shamelessness.

In interpreting the parable we must not make the man of the house represent God or the friend’s type of request represent the method of prayer. We are to wait on God in reverence and faith, trusting that in His wisdom and mercy He will answer our prayer at the right time and in the best way. If a surly man ultimately yields to the shameless insistence of the friend at midnight, much more will our gracious God grant the request of His humble child (Taylor, p. 246). Our heavenly Father, perfect in wisdom and love, will be even more attentive to the request of His children who are really in need. Persistence and patience in prayer is to help us become more holy and submitted to the will of God. It is not to badger an unwilling God into helping us. The text is clear that God is willing to help. The following verses give more understanding of what is involved in prayer.

11:9-13. Jesus made application of the truth illustrated in the

parable by exhorting to persistence. The three commands have increasing intensity and all stress continued activity. Continue to ask, to seek, to find. Asking implies consciousness of need and continuing to make specific requests. Seeking adds action to asking. When we pray we must do our part to bring about the fulfillment of our request. Knocking indicates perseverance. Paul said, "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance" (Eph. 6:18). "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2). "Pray constantly" (I Thess. 5:17).

Persistence in prayer does not indicate a lack of faith that God can grant our request. It helps us purify our motives and desires. An important aspect of prayer is the bringing of our will into harmony with the will of God. "True prayer is neither unheard nor unheeded. It is always answered in the way God sees is best" (Morris, p. 196). Our gracious heavenly Father grants fulfillment of our needs as we are patient and persevering in prayer.

The questions in Luke 11:11-12 expect negative answers. "A stone for a loaf" and "A scorpion for a fish" were proverbs. Plummer said, "The meaning here is, that in answer to prayer God gives neither what is useless (a stone) nor what is harmful (a serpent or scorpion)" (p. 300). If fathers who are evil give good gifts to their children, how much more will a good God give what is best for His children. Even some Christians do not trust the goodness of God as they should.

God gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask for Him to come into their lives. One asks for the Holy Spirit by loving and believing in Jesus (John 7:37-39; 14:23), by repenting of sin and by being baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; 5:32; John 3:3-5). What a wonderful privilege to have the Spirit of God to dwell in us personally, helping us turn away from selfish and sinful attitudes and actions and creating the mind and spirit of Christ in our personalities! (Rom. 8:11-17; I Cor. 6:19; Gal. 2:20; 5:16-25; Eph. 3:16-21; Phil. 2:5; Titus 3:4-7).

The Holy Spirit is not a power to be manipulated or used to one's advantage. He is a divine person who wants to make us into new creatures (II Cor. 5:17). As we surrender to the Holy Spirit, Christ's way of thinking becomes our way of thinking. Increasingly His motives, will and goals will be our motives, will and goals. His values and priorities are ours. Peter said, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these

you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:3-4).

A Charge of Blasphemy — Luke 11:14-26

The enemies of Jesus acknowledged that He expelled demons but they said He did it by Satan's power not God's. Their charge was an effort to discredit Jesus.

¹⁴Now he was casting out a demon that was dumb; when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the people marveled. ¹⁵But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons"; ¹⁶while others, to test him, sought from him a sign from heaven. ¹⁷But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. ¹⁸And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. ¹⁹And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. ²⁰But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²¹When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; ²²but when one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoil. ²³He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

²⁴"When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest; and finding none he said, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' ²⁵And when he comes he finds it swept and put in order. ²⁶Then he goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

11:14-16. Jesus cast a demon out of a man. The evil spirit had caused the man to be unable to speak. After the demon was gone, the man spoke again. While the people marvelled, some criticized. Luke does not identify the attackers. Matthew 12:22-30 and Mark 3:22-27 may be parallel accounts of the same event. Matthew said the charge of blasphemy was made by Pharisees. Mark identified them as scribes from Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles His enemies said to Jesus, "You have a demon" (John 7:20); "You are a Samaritan and have a

demon" (John 8:48). At the Feast of Dedication, they accused, "He has a demon and is mad" (John 10:20).

The best reading of the text is Beelzebul. The Latin Vulgate had Beelzebub. Morris said, "Our best understanding of the evidence seems to be that the Jews took this name of a heathen god and understood it in terms of the similar sounding Hebrew, 'lord of dung.' They applied it to a prominent demon, perhaps to Satan himself. Jesus clearly understood it as referring to Satan." (p. 197).

Others, who are not identified, tested Him, asking for a sign from heaven. They were challenging His credentials for ministry. They wanted an indisputable evidence of God's approval. After Jesus had fed the 5000, when the people asked for a sign so they could believe, they mentioned that their fathers received manna "from heaven" (John 6:30-31). It was characteristic of the Jews to demand signs (I Cor. 1:22). Unbelievers are often unimpressed by the miracles presented by Christ. They say they will not believe unless their kind of miracle is presented. Jesus responded to this request in 11:29-32.

11:17-19. Jesus supernaturally knew their thinking (Luke 5:22; 6:8; John 2:25; 21:17). Jesus began His response by stating that a kingdom or house divided against itself falls. Internal division brings defeat. If Satan is fighting against his emissaries, the demons, then Satan is opposing himself. He exposed the absurdity of their accusation.

Some of the Pharisees claimed to be able to cast out demons (Acts 19:13,14). Foster said, "Jesus did not say they were successful in what they were doing, but they claimed to be driving out demons and doing it in the name of God — not Satan. This made them stand as judges condemning the Pharisees for their accusation against Jesus, because Jesus was successful in just what they were claiming to do, and God, not Satan, was the authority for such a warfare" (pp. 182-183). *Sons* may refer to actual sons or it may refer to their followers or disciples.

11:20-23. "The Finger of God" (Exod. 8:19; Psa. 8:3) means the power of God. Matthew has "the Spirit of God" (Matt. 12:28). If Jesus actually cast demons out by the power of God then this was indisputable that God's kingdom had arrived. Their charges were absolutely false. Jesus' power over Satan demonstrated the reality of His kingdom and messiahship.

Jesus said a strong man secures his house and possessions. These are safe until a stronger one overpowers him. Then he is defenseless and his possessions are taken away. Jesus is the Stronger One who had overpowered Satan. Jesus pictured "the complete inability of Satan to

stand in the face of God" (Morris, p. 198). Marshall observed that Luke's picture involved a battle and Mark's a burglary (p. 478).

In regard to allegiance to God or Satan, neutrality and compromise are impossible. You are on one side or the other. Those who choose not to follow Christ are really on Satan's side. One either submits to or rejects the rule of Christ. (See Matt. 12:30; Mark 3:28. See notes on Luke 9:50.)

11:24-26. Plummer commented, "The case of a demoniac who is cured and then allows himself to become repossessed is made a parable to illustrate the case of a sinner who repents of his sins, but makes no effort to acquire holiness. Such an one proves the impossibility of being neutral. He flees from Satan without Christ, and thus falls more hopelessly into the power of Satan again" (p. 304). Demons "dreaded to be without a body to occupy, and they dreaded the confinement of the abyss (Luke 8:31)" (Foster, p. 183). The person who makes moral reforms in his life but does not invite the Spirit of God into his heart, leaves himself open to even greater evil than he had before.

Barclay drew three conclusions: "You cannot leave a man's soul empty." "You can never erect a real religion on negatives." "The best way to avoid the evil is to do the good" (pp. 152-153). Hendriksen made this application, "'I don't smoke; I don't drink; I don't swear. Hallelujah, I'm a Christian.' If a telephone pole could talk, it might say the same thing. But a series of zeros does not make a Christian. A million negatives do not produce even one positive. We pity the man with an empty *mind*. But what about the person with an empty *heart* . . . and an empty *life*?" (p. 632).

True Blessedness — Luke 11:27-28

²⁷As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" ²⁸But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

11:27-28. A woman interrupted His teaching by pronouncing a blessing on Jesus' mother. It is true that Mary was highly favored (Luke 1:42,48). But it is also true that the mother of Jesus needed Him as Savior as much as any one else. See Matthew 12:48-50; Mark 3:34-35; Luke 8:19-21.

Rather in Jesus' response "does not question the truth of the

preceding statement, but emphasizes the greater relevance of what follows" (Reiling and Swellengrebel as quoted by Morris, p. 200). Her statement was inadequate because it failed to put things in the true perspective. What really matters is what God has said. Jesus spoke the Word of God (John 3:34; 14:10). The Bible is the Word of God (II Tim. 3:16).

While never disrespectful of His mother, Jesus always emphasized that spiritual kinship took precedence over physical kinship. "His answer points out that there is something far more important than to be His mother — something within the reach of all, to be instructed by Him and to be obedient to the word of God preached by Him. Spiritual relationship to Him is of much greater importance than natural relationship" (Geldenhuys, p. 331).

We are tempted to be more impressed by and trust more in the words and wisdom of men than we are to fix our attention and trust in the word and wisdom of God. Study these passages on the importance of knowing and keeping the Word of God: Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:46-49; John 12:47-50; 14:23-24; 15:3,10; 17:17; Romans 1:16; 10:17; 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11; Ephesians 5:25-26; Colossians 3:16-17; II Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:12; 5:12-14; James 1:21-22; I Peter 1:22-25; I John 5:2-3; Revelation 1:3.

The Sign of Jonah — Luke 11:29-32

²⁹When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah. ³⁰For as Jonah became a sign to the men of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be to this generation. ³¹The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. ³²The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

11:29-32. Jesus responded to those who asked for "a sign from heaven" (11:15). They were evil in their sign-seeking because they would not accept the miracles Jesus performed as signs of His deity. They insisted on seeing another miracle or they wanted Him to work a miracle of their own choice. Jesus did not do miracles on demand. His miracles were adequate evidences of His deity. They did not need

more signs. They needed to believe and repent.

“No sign shall be given except the sign of Jonah” emphasizes the importance of the sign of Jesus’ resurrection. The statement is not to be pressed into meaning Jesus did no other signs. See Mark 2:10; John 10:37-38; 14:11; Acts 2:22. The greatest evidence of Jesus’ deity is that after they crucified and buried Him, He arose on the third day.

Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites because he emerged alive after three days inside a large fish (Jonah 1). Jesus will be a sign to His generation because God will raise Him from the dead. The view that the sign was the preaching of Jesus is a doubtful position.

The Queen of Sheba (Southern Arabia, modern Yemen) made a long journey to hear the wisdom of Solomon (I Kgs. 10:1-10). Her example condemned the men of Jesus’ generation who refused to listen to the wisdom of Jesus. Jesus was greater than Solomon.

The men of Nineveh will also condemn those who rejected Jesus for they repented at Jonah’s preaching. Many were bypassing the privilege of learning the Word of God from Jesus. The gospel of Christ is greater than the preaching of Jonah.

Light and Darkness — Luke 11:33-36

³³“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel, but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light. ³⁴Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. ³⁵Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. ³⁶If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”

11:33-36. Jesus often used light and darkness to illustrate His teaching (Matt. 5:15-16; 6:21-22; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16-18; John 3:19-21). Jesus did not hide the light of His gospel but declared it freely.

When one’s attitude is right and pure then he will accept the light of Christ. A wrong attitude and spirit will keep one from accepting the light of Christ. Rejection of spiritual light brings one into greater darkness. When the gospel is preached and people refuse to trust, repent and obey — how great is the darkness.

When the eye is healthy and functioning properly the whole body benefits. A person with an honest and sincere heart seeking to know the truth of God will not be disappointed (John 7:17). He will see clearly the truth of God as a person with healthy eyes can see in the light of day.

When a person's eyesight is bad the whole body suffers. Unbelieving, hard and rebellious hearts are dark hearts. God's light is shut out. A heart of trust, repentance and obedience to the Word of God is a healthy heart that can enable one to see the light of God. Foster summarized, "Jesus was, in effect, telling them they did not need more light, they needed good eyes" (p. 185).

The Hypocrisy of the Scribes and the Pharisees Luke 11:37-54

Some people say they quit the church because of the hypocrites in the church. This is not a new problem. Before quitting on Jesus because of hypocrites, one should hear what Jesus said about hypocrites. In this passage and in others Jesus denounced hypocrisy (Matt. 23:1-36; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47).

³⁷While he was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him; so he went in and sat at table. ³⁸The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. ³⁹And the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of extortion and wickedness. ⁴⁰You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you.

⁴²"But woe to you Pharisees! for you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. ⁴³Woe to you Pharisees! for you love the best seat in the synagogues and salutations in the market places. ⁴⁴Woe to you; for you are like graves which are not seen, and men walk over them without knowing it."

⁴⁵One of the lawyers answered him, "Teacher, in saying this you reproach us also." ⁴⁶And he said, "Woe to you lawyers also! for you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. ⁴⁷Woe to you! for you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. ⁴⁸So you are witnesses and consent to the deeds of your fathers; for they killed them, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' ⁵⁰that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation, ⁵¹from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it shall be required

of this generation. ⁵²Woe to you lawyers! for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering."

⁵³As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard, and to provoke him to speak of many things, ⁵⁴lying to wait for him, to catch at something he might say.

11:37-41. After Jesus finished teaching he was invited by a Pharisee to come to his home for lunch. Several scribes and Pharisees were invited as well (11:45,53). Did Jesus accept because He wanted to say some serious things to them?

The Pharisee was not concerned about personal hygiene. He was shocked that Jesus did not follow the elaborate ceremonial washing which the rabbis had prescribed in detail (*Mishnah*). See Matthew 15:1-20 and Mark 7:1-23. Jesus did not feel obligated to keep these manmade rules even though the scribes and Pharisees tried to bind them on all (Mark 7:3).

Jesus exposed the external righteousness of the Pharisees. They wanted to appear religious by keeping rules and regulations taught by the rabbis. But at the same time they were full of sin in their attitude and heart. They had missed the Old Testament teaching that God is interested in godliness of the heart as well as in external actions (Isa. 1:10-17; 58:4-8; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8). They had overlooked the more important part of the law "justice and mercy and faith" (Matt. 23:23).

They made a foolish choice. Did not the God who made the world and man's body also make the soul? What a perverted sense of values to be so concerned about outward bodily actions while the soul is filled with wickedness! When one gives alms it must be with the right spirit of true love. When the heart is clean, all else will be clean. One can stand in a "clean" relationship with God, without the observance of rules for ceremonial cleansing.

11:42-44. *Woe* expressed deep sorrow and regret. It is not a minor oversight which is at issue. Motivated by concern for their souls, Jesus expressed these woes to show the terribleness of their hypocritical behavior.

They obeyed the law in their tithing (Lev. 27:30-33; Deut. 14:22-29). They overdid it by meticulously tithing garden vegetables. This was not required by the law. The *Mishnah* excluded rue from the tithe. They were right in giving tithes but they were wrong in neglecting justice and the love of God.

Often the religious leaders were zealous not for God's honor but for their own. They loved the seats of higher honor in the synagogue. Such honored seats were in front of the synagogue facing the people, where they could be seen by all.

If one touched a grave containing a dead body he was ceremonially unclean for seven days (Num. 19:16). The graves were whitewashed to alert those who walked by. As a person could become ceremonially unclean by accidentally walking over a grave, so people became morally unclean through the influence of the Pharisees. Their outward piety did not cancel hearts of pride, contempt and dishonesty.

11:45-48. A *lawyer* was a scholar and teacher of the law. Because most of the lawyers were Pharisees, a lawyer said that Jesus insulted them also. Jesus pronounced a woe on the lawyers for overburdening people with impossible demands which even they did not keep, being "experts in evasion" (Barclay, *Luke* p. 161). "The *burdens hard to bear* were the scribal interpretations of the Law and the traditions of the elders. These were taken with the utmost seriousness. The Mishnah lays it down that it is more important to observe the scribal interpretation than the Law itself (*Sanhedrin* 1:3)" (Morris, p. 205).

He stated a woe on them for building tombs honoring the prophets when in fact they had never condemned their fathers for killing the prophets. With their lives they rejected the message of the prophets so they in reality were consenting to the misdeeds of their fathers.

11:49-52. In citing the Wisdom of God Jesus was quoting no known written source, but He was summarizing God's wisdom on this topic. It was God's purpose and plan to send special messengers, prophets and apostles, through whom He revealed his word and will to man even though He knew some would be persecuted and killed. Jesus' generation bore greater responsibility because they had the opportunity and privilege of seeing the fulfillment of the messianic promises in Jesus yet they shared the same unbelieving attitude as their fathers. Abel was the first man to die (Gen. 4:8). Zechariah was the last recorded prophet killed as the books were arranged in the usual Hebrew order (II Chron. 24:20-22).

Those whose job it was to teach and explain the Word of God had actually taken away the true meaning of Scripture, which is the key to all knowledge. By their complicated methods of interpretation they had convinced the ordinary man he could not understand Scripture. In their hypocrisy they had missed the true meaning of God's Word. How ironic — teachers of God's law who could not themselves enter into a true knowledge and understanding of God's Word but also

hindered those in their day from understanding Scripture.

11:53-54. The scribes and Pharisees stepped up the intensity of their opposition to Jesus. They used provoking questions and comments to try to entrap Him into saying something they could use against Him.

True spiritual power comes from God. Christians have access to God's power through prayer. Jesus demonstrated true spiritual power over the forces of Satan. Jesus predicted His resurrection which would display God's true power. True spiritual power is opposed by hypocritical, legalistic religious leaders. True spiritual power comes to those who submit their minds, wills and lives to the rule of Christ. See Luke 6:11; 19:47-48; 20:19-20; 22:2.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How should Christians use the prayer Jesus taught in 11:2-4?
2. Explain *hallowed*.
3. How can God's kingdom yet come if it came on the Day of Pentecost?
4. How serious is an unforgiving attitude toward one's fellowman?
5. Explain "Lead us not into temptation."
6. What is the lesson in the parable of The Friend at Midnight?
7. Why does persistence in prayer not indicate a lack of faith?
8. What contrast does Jesus make between earthly fathers and the Heavenly Father?
9. How does one ask for the Holy Spirit?
10. Did Beelzebul mean Satan?
11. Does Jesus admit that the sons of the Pharisees actually cast out demons?
12. Explain "the Finger of God."
13. Why is it impossible to be neutral in regard to God and Satan?
14. Why is an empty life dangerous?
15. Why is knowing and keeping the Word of God supremely important?
16. What future event would be "the Sign of Jonah"?
17. Why will the men of Nineveh condemn those in Jesus' generation?
18. What does a single or healthy eye represent?
19. How may we respond to those who say they quit church because of the hypocrites in the church?
20. What is the danger of an external righteousness which is un-

TRUE SPIRITUAL POWER, LUKE 11:1-54

concerned with the heart?

21. Explain the meaning of *woe*.
22. What were the "burdens hard to bear"?
23. What are the serious consequences of being a false teacher?

THE FOLLY OF FORGETTING GOD
LUKE 12:1-59

Jesus made this great evangelistic appeal before a multitude of many thousand. In His sermon He challenged people to make a decision and take a stand with Him. Many forget about God because of fear of men, greed, worry, laziness and unfaithfulness. "What do you think of Christ?" was the burning issue of that day as it is in our day. Jesus answered some of the hindrances and excuses that people use to explain their failure to prepare to meet their God.

The material in this chapter fits logically together as a whole and is in harmony with the historical setting pictured by Luke. Yet some are of the opinion that the chapter contains Luke's collection of teachings which Jesus gave on various occasions. Parts of the chapter are found in the same or similar form in other places in the Gospels — Matthew 5:25-26; 6:19-21,25-34; 10:26-36; 16:2-3; 24:43-51. No doubt Jesus repeated many of His teachings in the same or similar words on many occasions. Luke left the impression that Jesus spoke these words on the same occasion. (See Geldenhuys, pp. 350-351.)

Hypocrisy and the Fear of Men — Luke 12:1-12

The fear of men causes some people to pretend to be good, when in

reality they have forgotten pleasing God because they are more interested in pleasing men.

12 In the meantime, when so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together that they trod upon one another, he began to say to his disciples first, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. ²Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ³Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

“⁴I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. ⁵But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear him! ⁶Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. ⁷Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

“⁸And I tell you, every one who acknowledges me before men, the Son of man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; ⁹but he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. ¹⁰And every one who speaks a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. ¹¹And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you are to answer or what you are to say; ¹²for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

12:1-3. *In the meantime* states a close connection with the previous circumstances, rather than indicating time. Literally the *many thousands* is ten thousand, but it often means a large crowd. Jesus wanted the crowd to hear His words but He addressed the disciples first. *Leaven* was yeast which penetrated and permeated the lump of dough. Jesus warned His followers to avoid the corrupting influence of the Pharisees, which He identified as hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy is saying and pretending one is holy while his behavior contradicts his words. Nothing is so exhausting and destructive to self-respect as insincerity. How sad when people are more interested in impressing men than they are to honor God!

Hypocrisy is a foolish policy because nothing is hid from God. We cannot fool God. The truth will be fully disclosed by God in the final judgment. The hypocrite will be stripped of his masks and pretense.

Plummer said, "Hypocrisy is useless, for one day there will be a merciless exposure. It is not only wicked, but senseless" (p. 318). Important announcements were sometimes made from housetops so all could hear.

12:4-7. Seth Wilson said in a class lecture one day, "When you take away the fear of God from men they will show what kind of cruel animals they can be." Recent preachers and teachers have stressed the love of God more than the wrath of God. It has been unpopular to stress the need to fear God. This de-emphasis on fearing God has contributed to the psychological maladjustment of many Christians. Having no fear of a righteous God they cover an ungodly lifestyle with a hypocritical facade. Our generation needs to be taught that, "The fear of the *Lord* is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10, NASB). Paul said, "Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1). Read these scriptures which teach the fear a Christian is to have: Luke 23:40; Acts 10:35; Romans 3:18; 11:20; 13:7; Ephesians 5:21,24,33; 6:5-9; Philippians 2:12; I Timothy 5:20; Hebrews 4:1; I Peter 1:17; 2:17; 3:15; Revelation 11:18; 14:7; 19:5.

We must have a clear understanding of reality. The fear of men must not be our primary motivation. Such fear leads to hypocrisy and phony religion (John 12:42; Gal. 2:12). Men can only end one's earthly life. They can not destroy one's eternal spirit. It is far more important that we fear, respect, honor and seek to please God rather than man.

The clean and right fear of God is not the terror that a girl feels when she is walking down a street at night and feels a rough hand grab her shoulder. It is not a terror fearing that a cruel God hates us and seeks to do us harm. The fear of God recognizes that God is the sovereign God of this universe and our lives. He is in charge. We need to honor Him and love Him as Father who cares about what is best for us. Those who have accepted His plan of salvation have a profound respect for Him and know they rest in His saving grace.

God is to be feared and respected because He is the judge of the eternal destinies of men. Satan does not send people to hell. He will spend eternity there and take as many with him as he can. We are not to fear Satan but to resist him (James 4:7; I Pet. 5:9). We are to fear God who is in charge of eternity. The word *hell* indicates the eternal punishment which awaits those who reject God.

God is the most important being in the universe, yet every person among the more than five billion on the earth is precious in His eyes.

God does not overlook the death of a single insignificant bird like a sparrow. He certainly does not overlook a single human being. Even though the numbers of hairs on a person's head changes greatly every day, God knows the exact count. He cares about even this detail. Each person is of infinite worth to God. If we remember Whose we are it will make a difference in how we live. Self-esteem and self-worth do not come from self-love. They came from knowing we are created by God, loved by God, redeemed by God, and made into a new creature for service and fellowship with Him. It is only when we know these things that we can truly know who we are and then live the only life worth living.

12:8-12. *Acknowledge or confess* means to agree. Confessing Christ means to agree with and accept the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah and the Son of God. It expresses one's trust, commitment and allegiance to Him. Confession includes but is not limited to confession before baptism. (Acts 8:39, KJV, is not in the earliest manuscripts, but apparently was a practice of the early church.) It is a daily responsibility for the believer to express his faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32-33; Luke 9:26; Acts 4:17-20; 5:27-29). A believer who confesses Christ regardless of the consequences will have the eternal victory, Christ's approval of him as His disciple before the Father.

Our eternal destiny is tied to our attitude toward Jesus. One denies Christ by disowning Him by stating unbelief in His claims and disavowing that he is a follower in Jesus. Those also deny Jesus who claim they can revise His teaching in the light of modern thinking, for example explaining away His miracles and His deity. We must not let the fear of men or the wisdom of this world lead us to deny our Lord.

It was no small thing to speak against Jesus when He lived on earth, although it may be forgiven when one comes to faith in Him through the fuller revelation of Him in the ministry of the Holy Spirit (I Pet. 1:12). But if one rejects the revelation of the gospel given through the Holy Spirit he has turned his back on the last hope. Sometimes the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is called "The Unpardonable Sin." It is better understood as "The Sin That Will Not Be Forgiven." It is not God's ability to forgive that is at issue, but rather the person's ability to believe and repent. Read also Matthew 10:31-32; Mark 3:28-30.

Jesus here spoke about the attitude of heart and life that rejects the revelation given through the Holy Spirit because of a deliberate preference of darkness to light. Plummer stated, "Grace, like bodily food, may be rejected until the power to receive it perishes" (p. 320).

Read Hebrews 6:4-8; 10:26-31; I John 5:16. The person described in Luke 12:10 is the person who can no longer believe and repent, and consequently he will not be forgiven.

Some hold that in Luke 12:11-12 Jesus promises Holy Spirit assistance to believers in general. From this context and the parallel passages, a better view is that Jesus here promised Holy Spirit inspiration to the apostles (Matt. 10:19-20; Mark 13:11-13; Luke 21:12-15; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:8-13). When the apostles declared the gospel message they were guided by the Holy Spirit so that they stated the truth that God wanted stated. The Holy Spirit guided them not only before human authorities but also in their preaching and in the writing of the Gospels. The message of the apostles carried the authority of God because it was God's Word given to them by the Holy Spirit. It is a message we can trust because it was God-given.

The Parable of the Rich Fool — Luke 12:13-21

God has said greed and covetousness is wrong! Many times God severely disciplined and punished persons for greed. Achan and his family were stoned because he saved treasure for himself that God said to destroy (Josh. 7:1-21). David's coveting of Bathsheba brought much death and trouble (II Sam. 11:2-5). Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, coveted and took garments from Naaman, which Elisha had refused. He was punished with leprosy (II Kgs. 5:20-27). Ananias and Sapphira lied to Peter when they said they gave to the church all the money from a field they sold. Both were stricken dead (Acts 5:1-11).

Jesus said, "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). *Mammon* is an Aramaic word for riches. In explaining the Parable of the Sower, Jesus warned that the "cares of this life, deceitfulness of riches, and lust for other things" can choke faith and the Word of God out of people's lives (Mark 4:19). Thieves or the greedy will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:10). Paul said we must "put to death" "covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered from the faith and pierced their heart with many pangs" (I Tim. 6:9-10). An elder is not to be a "lover of money" (I Tim. 3:3). Elders or deacons are not to be "greedy for gain" (Titus 1:7; I Tim. 3:8). Christians are instructed not to keep company with a Christian who persists in greed (I Cor. 5:11).

¹³One of the multitude said to him, "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." ¹⁴But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" ¹⁵And he said to them, "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." ¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; ¹⁷and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸And he said, 'I will do this; I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' ²⁰But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

12:13-14. Jesus faced a problem common to speakers — a person in His audience was not listening to Him. Jesus had just stressed the folly of worry and the value of each person before God. A man in the crowd could think only about his inheritance. He seemed to request a decision against his brother and in his favor. This man was convinced he was being cheated. He may have been a younger brother upset because his older brother got twice as much (Deut. 21:15-17). Plummer observed:

We are not told whether the man was making an unjust claim on his brother or not; probably not; but he was certainly making an unjust claim on Jesus, whose work did not include settling disputes about property. The man grasped at any means of obtaining what he desired, invading Christ's time (p. 322).

Jesus refused the request. The form of address, "Man," was "far from cordial." As Morris said, "He came to bring men to God, not to bring property to men" (p. 212). His priority was to minister to spiritual needs. Jesus refrained from invading the responsibilities of established authorities.

12:15. Jesus used this interruption as an occasion to teach true values concerning material things. Though Jesus did not grant his request, He did minister to the man's real need. "His real problem was not for help to gain a bigger inheritance, but to overcome selfishness and materialism" (Foster, p. 190). "Jesus, knowing what is at the root of the brother's unreasonable request takes the opportunity of warn-

ing the whole multitude against this prevalent and subtle sin" (Plummer, p. 323).

Jesus issued a serious warning to "Guard yourselves" (TEV) against covetousness or greed. Greed desires to have more and more and more for oneself. It is subtle and deceptive, therefore most do not recognize it as a sin.

Greed desires the possessions belonging to one's neighbors. It is preoccupied with material things without regard to spiritual values. It is right before God to work for a living to provide for one's family. It is wrong when we allow this desire to earn money to become dominant, crowding God and ethics out. The love of money is "the root of all evils" (I Tim. 6:10).

Greed is idolatry (Col. 3:5). Seth Wilson observed, "A covetous man is an idolator simply because he loves, trusts and serves money more than he does God; he transfers to riches the love, desire, joy, trust, and the labor that he ought to have toward God, and makes money his god" (p. 282). We are guilty of this sin when we think more about getting money than about pleasing God, when we are more interested in earthly possessions than in growth in God's righteousness, when our thoughts, words and actions are all directed to pleasing ourselves rather than serving Christ and others.

12:16-19. Earthly goods are not the essentials of life. The real essentials are the things that keep the soul and God together (Wilson, p. 279). Real meaning in life is found in relationships, not in things. To live for material things is to miss out on what really matters in life.

Jesus often used a parable to answer a question and to emphasize His point. Someone has called this "The Successful Farmer Who Was a Failure." The farmer is not criticized for gaining his wealth unjustly nor for being rich. Several godly men in the Bible were rich — Abraham (Gen. 13:2), Solomon (I Kgs. 3:10-13), Job (Job 42:12). Being rich or being poor in itself does not make one righteous. Whether rich or poor the godly man has the right view of money and material things.

Selfishness was this rich man's fatal flaw. He used eight *I*'s and four *my*'s (in the Greek text). (Compare I Sam. 25:11.) He wanted to enjoy his wealth. The rich fool did not really know himself because he thought life consisted of creature comforts. He had no concern for the needs of others. His preoccupation with himself cheated him of the fulfillment that comes from generously giving to others. He did not see beyond himself. He did not take into account the reality of the spiritual world. He did not thank or glorify God.

12:20-21. The man was a fool because he felt no need of God. He foolishly thought that the future of his body and soul was in his own hands. This construction of the verb was commonly used by the rabbis to express an action of God. "God requires your soul." "Man whose life hangs by a thread and who may be called upon at any time to give account of himself is a fool if he relies on material things" (Morris, p. 213). The order of the original text is significant — "the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" (ASV). The rhetorical question emphasized the folly of being preoccupied with material things in this life because when one dies he loses all control over these things. Honestly facing death helps us put earthly things in proper perspective.

Those who greedily get all the material things they can for themselves are in the same category with the rich fool. Though they may be rich in money and material things they are bankrupt in the things that really matter. "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psa. 37:4).

A Warning Against Worry — Luke 12:22-34

Greed and worry betray a lack of trust in God. The Hebrew writer said, "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never fail you nor forsake you' " (Heb. 13:5).

²²And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat, nor about your body, what you shall put on. ²³For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his span of life? ²⁶If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸But if God so clothes the grass which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O men of little faith! ²⁹And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind. ³⁰For all the nations of the world seek these things; and your Father knows that you need them.

³¹Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well.

³²“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

12:22-26. He spoke this teaching directly to the disciples. *Thought* (KJV) in the 17th century meant anxiety or worry. Believers are not to worry about food and clothing. Worry about these indicates a lack of trust in the God who provides them. Jesus here did not forbid reasonable forethought for providing for physical needs (I Thess. 4:11-12; Eph. 4:28; I Tim. 5:8).

Ravens, largest of the crow family, are scavenger birds. They do not have the responsibilities of farming yet God provides for their food. If God cares for even these unclean birds (Lev. 11:13-19), how much more does He care for His children!

The word translated *span of life* can refer to age (John 9:21) or to stature (Luke 19:3). Worry does not add a half-step to one’s life or add 18 inches to one’s height. Since human effort can not accomplish such a small thing, one should trust the God who can take care of all of our needs. We are subject to our Creator.

12:27-28. *Lilies* may be a general term referring to all the beautiful flowers gracing the landscape. *Consider* calls for giving close and careful attention. The flowers “do not manufacture cloth as men do, but God clothes them with a beauty that even Solomon’s gorgeous robes could not match If God does all this for the flowers that disappear so quickly, *how much more* will He clothe His people?” (Morris, pp. 214-215). The short life of the flower reminds us that our stay in this world is also short.

Because trees were few in Palestine, grass was often used as fuel. An outdoor oven would be heated by burning grass inside. When the oven was hot, bread was placed inside for baking. Jesus used these illustrations from their daily life to teach the brevity of our lives and our dependence upon God.

12:29-31. Followers of Christ are not to set their hearts on food or clothing. These are not the most important things in life, yet many make it their priority to seek these and other material things.

The Christian is not to be of double mind, wasting energies worrying. Worry is a wrong focus. It is wrong to let what might happen tomorrow tear you apart today. It is useless to be overly concerned

about that which you can do nothing. Those who trust God know they do not have to be anxious about their material needs because they trust in the providential care of a God who knows what they need.

Believers continue to make it their number one priority to submit to the rule of God in their hearts and lives. Those who honor God by consistently putting Christ first in their lives will find their lives enriched spiritually and their needs for food and clothing will also be met (Matt. 6:31-33; Mark 10:29-30; Luke 22:35).

When you give yourself to obeying the will of God you invest in the eternal treasures and you will also find your needs met in the best life in this world.

12:32-34. The tender designation, *little flock*, is found only here in the New Testament. The Good Shepherd genuinely cares about His followers (John 10:13-15). Those who continually seek the kingdom have it given them as a gift. When we are discouraged we need to find reassurance in this promise of Christ.

Christians in the early church did not sell all their possessions (Acts 12:12). Morris observed, "Jesus is not excluding private property; but He is emphasizing that true believers must not be dominated by their possessions. Trust in riches prevents trust in God" (p. 216).

Material blessings are not to be grasped with greed but are to be used in an unselfish spirit of giving (I Cor. 16:2-3; II Cor. 8:19; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 4:28).

The real riches in life are not temporal. They are forever. Hendriksen said, "Heavenly treasures are moth-proof and burglar-proof" (p. 671). We must heed the warning not to forget God because of a focus on money (Luke 3:22; 6:30; 7:5; 11:41; 14:13-14; 16:9; 18:22; 19:8). God has built into the fabric of reality His approval of generous givers and His condemnation of the greedy. It is true as someone stated, "What we go after here will determine where we go hereafter."

Be Watchful and Be Faithful — Luke 12:35-48

The things of this world are temporary but the coming of the Son of man is certain. Rather than being diverted by worldly things, we must be loyal to Christ looking forward to His coming by a daily faithfulness.

³⁵"Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, ³⁶and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the marriage

feast, so that they may open to him at once when he comes and knocks. ³⁷Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those servants! ³⁹But know this, that if the householder had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an unexpected hour."

⁴¹Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?" ⁴²And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? ⁴³Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing. ⁴⁴Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. ⁴⁵But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, ⁴⁶the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will punish him, and put him with the unfaithful. ⁴⁷And that servant who knew his master's will, but did not make ready or act according to his will, shall receive a severe beating. ⁴⁸But he who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, shall receive a light beating. Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more."

12:35-37. An emphasis is placed on *you* be ready. When one needed to be prepared for quick movement, the long flowing garment needed to be gathered up under the belt. The lamp was a pan of oil with a wick in it. Jesus pictured servants awaiting the return of the master who had been attending a wedding. They needed to be ready at all times so that when he did return they would be prepared to serve Him. In response to the faithfulness of the servants the master will honor and serve them.

12:38-40. It is important that Christ's followers be ready whenever He returns. Plummer stated, "The first watch is not mentioned, because then the wedding feast was going on. These are probably the two last of the *three* Jewish watches (Jdgs. 7:19), not the two middle watches of the Roman *four* (Mark 13:35; Acts 12:4)" (p. 331). The prepared person will receive the blessing when our Lord returns (I Thess. 5:1-10; Rev. 3:21).

The home owner could have prevented the robbery if he had known when the thief was coming. The image of the coming of a thief is frequently used to illustrate unannounced and unexpected events (Matt. 24:40-44; I Thess. 5:2; II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15).

Jesus did not announce the exact time of His second coming. He said, "But of that day and hour no one knows not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only" (Matt. 24:36). Do not believe those who claim to know the date of the second coming. According to Jesus these persons are mistaken. Rather than listen to the date-setters, we need to listen to Jesus and be ready for His return at all times.

12:41-44. The promise of blessings and the parable about readiness prompted Peter to ask Jesus if these words were limited to the apostles or if they applied to others as well. Jesus did not directly answer his question. He responded with a question and another parable. The steward was a capable slave who was the manager of the household. His responsibilities included seeing that all had needed food available to them. While the owner was away for a period of time, a wise and faithful steward would not grow lazy and irresponsible. When the owner returns unexpectedly he will find the steward faithfully doing his job.

12:45-48. But a steward may not fulfill his trust. While the owner prolonged his absence, the steward misused his authority by mistreating the servants under him and getting drunk. The owner returned unannounced and unexpected. He punished the unfaithful steward.

Deliberate disobedience will be severely punished. Those who have not had as much privilege or opportunity as others will not experience the same degree of torment. Some mistakenly argue that if one remains ignorant of God, then he can not be held accountable. Deliberate ignorance does not leave one guiltless (Rom. 1:18-32; 2:14-16). The elaborate doctrine of many degrees of punishment in hell is based more on Dante's *Inferno*, than on the Bible. The Bible does deal with the subject (Matt. 10:15; 11:22-24; Luke 10:12-14; 23:34; Acts 3:17; I Tim. 1:13). Those who have misused great opportunities, privileges and responsibilities, will experience greater spiritual torment than those who have not had such privilege.

A spiritual leader can be a wise and faithful steward or an unfaithful one. Religious leaders who live as if they are not accountable to God will bring terrible punishment upon themselves. What a horrible abuse of the trust given by God!

Decide Now! — Luke 12:49-59

In this sermon Jesus has shown the folly of forgetting about God. In His conclusion He drives home the necessity of making a decision about Him.

⁴⁹“I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! ⁵⁰I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished! ⁵¹Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; ⁵²for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; ⁵³they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

⁵⁴He also said to the multitudes, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming’; and so it happens. ⁵⁵And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat’; and it happens. ⁵⁶You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

⁵⁷“And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? ⁵⁸As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. ⁵⁹I tell you, you will never get out till you have paid the very last copper.”

12:49-50. Fire not only destroys but it also refines. *Fire* here seems to represent division or judgment. Jesus is a burning and divisive issue. You can not escape Him. His role as Savior could not be accomplished except through His suffering and death. He is ready for His saving work to be done.

He changed from the image of fire to the image of baptism. Christ would be immersed and engulfed by His sufferings ending in His death (Mark 10:38-39). With deep emotion Jesus expressed His anguish of soul, longing that His redemptive work could be accomplished. “What constraint I am under until the ordeal is over!” (NEB).

12:51-53. The Jews expected the Messiah to bring a reign of peace. Jesus came to bring a spiritual peace, but it was not a peace at any price. It was not to be a total absence of conflict or opposition. Jesus

answered His own question about His bringing peace with an emphatic, "No." He did not want to leave a false impression that following Him meant the absence of difficulties. Many hated and opposed Jesus. We must choose for or against Jesus. Choosing to follow Him would at times include being hated and opposed (John 15:18-19). Just before His death Jesus told the apostles, "The hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:2-3).

Truth divides. Those who accept are opposed by those who reject. The truth of a holy God makes powerful criticisms of sinful men. Those who reject this truth become defensive. The cross helps us understand the radical demands Jesus made of His disciples (Luke 9:23; 14:27). The division often occurs in families.

12:54-56. Jesus addressed the crowd. He said they can read the signs that forecast the weather. The cloud in the west brings rain from the Mediterranean Sea. The south wind brings scorching heat from the desert. Jesus called them hypocrites. They were able to think intelligently about something superficial such as the weather, but on something as significant as salvation they did not think clearly. It was because of their spiritual blindness and unbelief that they refused to accept the miraculous evidences that established Jesus' messiahship and deity. Arndt said, "They were unable to see the true character of the times because they did not want to see it" (p. 325).

12:57-59. Jesus appealed to them to make right judgments concerning their decision about their relationship with God. He wanted each individual to make his peace with God. In legal disputes it is better to settle "out of court" than to persist in a hopeless case. We need to settle our account with God and accept His grace while the opportunity is available. It is urgent that we decide for God now because we could never on our own pay the debt for our sins.

When we have made our decision for Christ we need to daily renew our focus and commitment to Him. It is terrible folly to forget God.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Present a case for the view that the teaching in Luke 12 was given in one teaching session.
2. What is hypocrisy? Why is it harmful?
3. What does it mean to fear God?

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4. What illustrations did Jesus give to teach the value God places on each individual?
5. Explain confessing Christ.
6. Discuss the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.
7. What did Jesus promise the Holy Spirit would do for the apostles?
8. What are the results of greed?
9. What was the real problem of the man who interrupted Jesus' teaching?
10. What was the rich farmer's fatal flaw?
11. Define worry.
12. Identify ravens and lilies.
13. What does the grass being burned in the oven illustrate?
14. What should be the number one priority for the Christian?
15. Does Jesus expect us to sell all our possessions? Why?
16. Contrast real riches with earthly riches.
17. What did Jesus mean by "gird himself" in 12:37?
18. How is the coming of a thief like the second coming of Jesus?
19. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Stewards?
20. What did Jesus mean when He said He brought division?
21. Jesus contrasted their ability to forecast the weather with their inability to do what?

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