



40 DAYS TO GET TO KNOW GOD'S SON!

Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

- John 4 -

"If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'"

- John 7 -

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IN THE BEGINNING.

*"In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.*

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten
from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

- John chapter one -



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EDITOR'S NOTES

This booklet is a compilation of accounts from the four Gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I have consulted several of the best translations from the original materials and adapted wording slightly for flow. The "Old Testament" was written in Hebrew (the language of the Jews), the "New Testament" was written in Greek, the worldwide language of Jesus' day.

Nowhere in the New or Old Testaments do they call themselves the New and Old Testaments. There really is only one "Testament." Everything in the so-called Old Testament prepares the world for the arrival of the Messiah or Savior. God's chosen people (the Jews) were not chosen because they were superior to any other nation, but because Abraham would be God's instrument to bless the rest of the nations for all time.

This one "Testament" reveals how God has provided escape from eternal death, granting access to eternal life through the shedding of the blood of His Son to pay the debt for our sin. Sin is our separation from God and our inability to make things right.

The Gospels (and the rest of the Scriptures) were provided so that we can get an accurate picture of God's mind concerning humanity and our individual souls. Those who look diligently will find what human wisdom alone simply cannot provide.

Dave Nadler
Fourthstream.com

Dore' etchings:

Moses breaking the Ten Commandments in Exodus
King **Solomon's** Wisdom in settling a dispute
King **David's** victory over Goliath in 1 Samuel
Christ nailed to the Cross in the Gospels

OLDER THAN TIME

John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

GOD COMES NEAR

Luke 1:5-66

Many have undertaken to put together an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us. It seemed appropriate for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you might know the precise truth about the things you have been taught.

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. And they had no child, because Elizabeth was unable to have babies, and they were both advanced in years.

Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your request has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will give you a son, and you will name him John. And you will have joy and gladness and many will rejoice at his birth.

For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while still in his mother's womb. And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; with the purpose of making ready a people prepared for the Lord."

And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. And you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their proper time. And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering about his delay in the temple. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept

When is this beginning?

See Hebrews 1:1-4

While men like to portray life as gray, the Bible sees only light and darkness.

Who is the Word? (see p 6. John 1:6-18)

Theophilus was the recipient of Luke's Gospel letter. Luke was a doctor and his goal was to give an accurate, precise account of the facts concerning what was being reported by eyewitnesses about Jesus.

Zacharias was a Jew. The Jews were given the Word of God so that the world could find God. The Jews were chosen by God to display His power to the rest of the world. This selection was based upon God's gracious choice and not because Abraham was better than any other man.

Gabriel is one of three angels mentioned by name in the Bible along with Michael and Lucifer (Satan). They are powerful archangels. Do you believe in angels?

Zacharias was a priest. Most people recognize that Jewish worship of the Living God was sincere and that it has caused far-reaching effects into history.

*Coming to Jerusalem for
his turn to perform priestly
duties in the temple was a big
deal to Zacharias' home
town and family.
To have a priest come out of
the temple unable to speak
would have caused
quite a stir.*

*Mary was probably very
young, what we would
consider a teenager.*

*Elizabeth would
encourage Mary
by her "old age"
pregnancy,
inasmuch as it was
miraculous as well.*

*Mary had never
slept with a man, yet
she was pregnant. This
would be difficult for a
teenaged Jewish girl!*

*Jesus was the cousin
of John who will be called
John the Baptist. He is
spoken of in Isaiah the
prophet in chapter 40.*

*A bond-slave is
one who makes a decision to
be someone's servant by
personal choice.*

making signs to them, and remained unable to speak. And it came about when the days of his priestly service were ended, that he went back home.

And after these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant; and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men."

MARY, THE SERVANT OF GOD

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, a descendant of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you."

But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of greeting this was. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

Mary said, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age, and she who was called childless is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God."

And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord, may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child in your womb! And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said, "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; for behold, from this time on all generations will consider me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him. He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things and sent away the rich empty-handed. He has given help to Israel His servant in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever."

And Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months, and then returned to her home.

Circumcision was the Jewish physical sign that set them apart as the people of God. It was done for physical and spiritual reasons, and was supposed to picture a calloused heart turned to God.

To call their son John was puzzling to everyone else. It evidenced their obedience and released Zacharias' tongue that had been stilled for many months. He was probably the talk of the town!

This child will turn out to be the "deliverer" of Israel and the rest of the world!

How is a man or woman "born of God?"

Jesus (the Son) is an exact representation of the eternal Living God.

The Ten Commandments (the basis of the "Law") were given to reveal the awesome character of God to the Jews and then to the world. The Law was never able to save any person from spiritual death. See Hebrews 10:4.

Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her and they were rejoicing with her.

And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. But his mother answered and said, "No indeed, but he shall be called John."

And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name." And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. He asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, "His name is John." And they were all astonished.

At once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. Fear came on all those living around them, and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. All who heard about it kept them in mind, saying, "What will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

THE LIGHT & THE LIFE

John 1:6-18

There came a man sent from God whose name was John (the Baptist). He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. This was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God; to those who believed in His name, who were born, not of blood lines or by human parentage or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh, and lived among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about Him and cried out, saying "This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me."

For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the heart of the Father, He has explained Him.

THE KING IS BORN

Luke 2:1-40

It came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone was proceeding to their home towns to register for the census. Joseph went up as well from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem. He belonged to the house and family of David, and He went home in to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant.

It came about that while they were there, the days were

DAY TWO 2

*With all the Kings
and nobles who could have
been invited to the birthday
party, God chooses
shepherds!*

*While we speculate about
alien life in the cosmos, the
Bible clearly indicates that
there is angelic life made
up of good angels and evil
angels (demons). They are as
real as we are and able
to exist in parallel
dimensions.*

*The Name of Jesus has
been given all authority and
power. Jesus (reveals His
human birth) Christ (reveals
that He is the Messiah of the
World) our Lord (reveals His
personal relationship with
those who follow Him).*

*God gave the Law
to the Jews through Moses.
There was moral law (the
Ten Commandments) and
many other civil and
ceremonial laws.
The Jews were to
obey these laws for their
protection as well as to make
them distinct among
the other nations.*

completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them to stay at the inn.

And in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. An angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find the baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger."

Suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." And it came about when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."

And they came quickly and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. And when they had seen it firsthand, they related the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as they had been told. When eight days were completed before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every first-born male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice according to what was set out in the Law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

SIMEON

There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devoted, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when His parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,

Joseph and Mary were committed worshippers of the Living God as well as responsible parents. Passover was the chief Jewish celebration where they remembered how God had brought the Jews out of the land of Egypt under the leadership of Moses.



To think of such a young boy teaching and astonishing older, prominent men from the cradle of religious knowledge demonstrates that Christ was not an ordinary young man.

The priests of the Jews were to lead them in worship. The Levites were descended from the tribe of Levi (one of the twelve tribes). This is the "family" from whom the priests were chosen.

then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Now Lord, Let Your bond-servant die in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all nations, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.

And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed - and a sword will pierce even your own soul - to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

ANNA

And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.

At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

THE BOY KING

Luke 2:41-52

DAY THREE 3

Jesus used to go to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; and as they were returning, after spending all seven days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. And His parents were unaware of it, but thought he was in the caravan, and they traveled a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. When they did not find Him they returned to Jerusalem to look for Him.

And it came about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them questions. All who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. And when His parents saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you."

And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for me? Did you not know that I had to be doing my Father's business?" And they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

John the Baptist was the "Elijah" promised to return by the last "Old Testament" prophet Malachi 400 years earlier. He is distinct from the disciple named John who was one of the Twelve and who penned one of the Gospel accounts.

John immediately understood that Christ was the Lamb who would die for the sin of the world. He was, after all, baptizing with water those who knew they were spiritually dead. When he baptized Jesus (something he did not want to do), he saw a dove descending upon Him, and a voice saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased."

Disciples are followers. They follow the teaching and traditions of those they hold in high regard. The Pharisees were the prominent religious party of Jesus' day. They found their identity in Abraham, the father of the Jews - and their righteousness in keeping the Law of Moses.

Information about Christ spread among friends, family, and followers. Three or four years later when He was crucified and raised from the dead, there was hardly a person in all of Israel who did not know who He was.

Jesus was from the country town of Nazareth. His birth and actions fulfilled prophecies that were spoken hundreds and even thousands of years before He was born.

THE LIGHT, THE LIFE, THE LAMB

John 1:19-51

This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" And he confessed, did not deny it, but made it plain, "I am not the Christ."

They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" And he answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him and said to him, "Why are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. It is He who comes after me, the fastener of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan river, where John was baptizing.

The next day John saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is one of whom I spoke: 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be clearly revealed to Israel, I came baptizing in water." John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending like a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' I have seen Him, and tell you for certain that this is the Son of God."

The next day John was standing with two of his own followers, and he looked at Jesus as He walked and said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" His two followers heard him speak and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you want?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means teacher), where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day, for it was late in the day.

One of the two who heard John speak and had followed Him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He found his own brother Simon first and said to him, "We have found the Messiah (Christ)." He brought him to Jesus, and Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

The next day as He purposed to go into Galilee, He found Philip. Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found the one whom Moses and the prophets wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"

Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered Him, "Teacher, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, you believe in Me? You will see greater things than this." And He said to him, "Truly, truly I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

DAY FOUR 4

TOUGH CHOICES

Luke 4:1-13

The Spirit of God was present at Creation and has always been present to do the will of the Father. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all distinct persons, but one in essence.

The devil rebelled against God and successfully tempted Adam and Eve to do the same. He was present to try to kill Christ when He was born, and he is here now to tempt, distract and destroy Christ's mission of giving Himself for mankind.

Satan tempts humans with appeals to our eyes, our destructive passions, and the arrogant pride of life, just as He did with Jesus Christ. As with Adam and Eve, Satan's goal is to pull people away from believing and doing what God's Word commands.

This is the first of over thirty recorded miracles that Christ would perform (He probably engaged in thousands over His three or four year public ministry). Each miracle was accomplished to deliver that particular person, display God's power, and to teach about the healing of the soul.

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry.

And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

And the devil led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."

Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"

And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the highest point of the temple and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You to guard You,' and 'On their hands they will carry You up so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'"

And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."

When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

WHO WILL FOLLOW?

John 2:1-3:21

And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and His disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

Now there were six stone water pots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. Jesus said to them, "Fill the water pots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the headwaiter." And they did as He said, and took it to him.

And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then the wine of a lesser quality; but you have kept the good wine until now." This miracle at Cana in Galilee was the beginning of Jesus' signs. He revealed His glory and His disciples believed in Him.

After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His brothers, and His followers; and stayed there a few days.

*Passover (Exodus 12)
commemorated when God's
Angel "passed over" the
Jews on the night He killed
all the firstborn in Egypt.
It was a perpetual
celebration of remembrance
of deliverance for the
Jewish nation.*

*People would come
from all over the world to
worship the Living God, and
the Jewish religious leaders
had allowed the temple to
become a place of
profiteering.
Money-changers and
sacrifice-sellers had
demeaned the spiritual
sacrifices by their
parasitic greed.*

*Just as the prophet Elisha
had performed signs, Jesus
proved He was from the
Father by the signs which
He accomplished.*

*Apparently it isn't
enough to be religious.
To come to God, a person
needs to experience a
spiritual rebirth. This rebirth
appears to be supernatural,
and blows like the wind into
a person's heart from the
throne of God - through
belief in Christ.*

And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And in the temple He found those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, seated with the money changers.

He made a cutting, whip of cords, and drove them all out of the temple along with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers, and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise."

His disciples remembered it was written, "Zeal for Your house will consume me." The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show us, seeing that You do these things?"

Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said to Him, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. After He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken.

Now when He was in Jerusalem during the Passover feast, many believed in His name, witnessing the signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men. He did not need anyone to explain man to Him for He Himself knew what was in man.

The Blowing of the Wind

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; who came to Him by night and said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You have come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"

"The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?"

"Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and you do not receive our witness. If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven, except He who came down from heaven - even the Son of Man. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life."

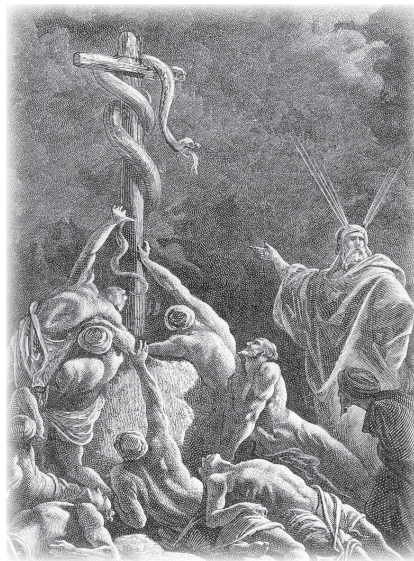
"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal

Read Numbers 21 for the account of the fiery serpents.

In the book of Numbers, the sons of Israel were dying because of a plague of deadly serpents. Moses fashioned a bronze serpent and placed it on a pole and carried it through the camp of the Israelites. Whoever looked at the serpent was spared death.

life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

“And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, because his deeds would be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be revealed as having been accomplished in God.”



Who is this man?!

*Those who
 “love darkness”
 die spiritual and physical
 death. Those who see the
 light of the Living God in
 Christ and are willing to
 come to Him will live.*

*The synagogue was where
 the Jews met publicly for
 worship and readings of the
 Law and the prophets.
 There were synagogues
 throughout the world.*

*This quote is found
 in Isaiah 61. Jesus knew He
 was here to fulfill the words
 of the prophets and the will
 of the Father. He had come to
 bring the light of God back to
 the earth. He knew that this
 could be accomplished only
 through His choice to die
 for the sins of the world.
 Through His death the
 world would find life.*

*Both of these examples (the
 widow and Naaman) were
 Gentiles, and not Jews. The
 fact that Jesus could go from
 awesome to awful so quickly
 is only understood when we
 realize that He had dealt the
 Jewish, religious pride an
 incredible insult.
 Their human, religious,
 and national arrogance
 would eventually result in the
 insane crucifixion of the
 Son of the Living God.*

NOW IT BEGINS

Luke 4:14-30

And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit; and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, and to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”

He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, “Isn't this Joseph's son?” And He said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your home town as well.’” And He said, “Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his home town.”

“But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”

And everyone in the synagogue was filled with rage as they heard these things; and they rose up and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the edge of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, He went His way.

THE SUCCESSFUL HEALER

Matthew 4:23-25

And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

And the news about Him went out into all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, overcome with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.

And great multitudes followed Him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

Jesus' public ministry spanned three or four years. During this time He encountered thousands of people, healed many, and preached the Gospel of the Kingdom to all.

DAY SIX 6

WOMAN AT THE WELL

John 4:1-45

When Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that He was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), He left Judea and headed for Galilee. And He had to pass through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there. Jesus, weary from His journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

There came a Samaritan woman to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

She said to Him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where will you get this living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself along with his sons and his cattle?"

Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, or need to come all the way here to draw." He said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have accurately stated, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you are now with is not your husband; this you have truly spoken."

This Samaritan woman was half Jewish and half Gentile. Jews of Jesus' day saw Samaritans as inferior, and because of this enmity the Samaritans worshipped the Living God in other places rather than Jerusalem.

Jesus, being no respecter of persons, didn't have religious trappings to keep Him from speaking the truth to this "woman at the well." As a result she told her friends and many Samaritans were able to come to Christ.

Living water is an amazing thing in any country at any time in history!

What motivated this woman?

The disciples were taking Christ literally about the subject of food. He explains through the example of hunger (and what is going on with the Samaritans) that His "food" was to do the will of His Father. The will of God was to proclaim spiritual release to a world lost in the darkness of sin and unbelief.

"White fields" describes the appearance of wheat right at its' optimal time for harvest. Jesus' fields (and the disciples') were the grain of His Father's in relationship to people's souls.

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews."

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth."

The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when He comes, He will make all things clear to us." Jesus said to her, "I am He."

And at this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You want?" or, "Why are You speaking with her?"

So the woman left her water pot, and went into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?"

They went out of the city, and were coming to Him. Meanwhile the disciples were saying, "Teacher, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."

Because of this the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did they?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work."

"Do you not say, 'There are four more months, and the harvest comes'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that the one who plants and the one who harvests may rejoice together."

"For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows, and another reaps.' I sent you to harvest that which you have not cultivated; others have worked, and you have entered into their labor."

And from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done." So when the Samaritans came to Him, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

And after the two days He went from there into the region of Galilee. For Jesus Himself made it clear that a prophet has no honor in his own country. So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, because they had seen all the things that He had done in Jerusalem at the feast; for they had also been at the feast.

DAY SEVEN 7

HEART TEACHINGS:

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE ON A BLESSED LIFE

Matthew 5:1-48

These have been called the "be-attitudes." Christ is teaching what it means to care about what God thinks, and how to experience God through a life of dedication. He makes it clear that we must come to God in humility and belief. If we are hungry for God's truth in our lives, we are told we will be satisfied.

Imagine if you could see life 100% from a spiritual perspective. This is what it would look like!

Jesus teaches that those who choose to follow God are like salt and light in a world that is rotting in darkness. The Gospel is the only hope for a man's soul.

The Scribes and Pharisees were influential leaders among the Jews. Jesus immediately began to confront their self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

When Jesus saw the huge crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He began to teach them, saying,

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when men throw insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.

Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand; and it gives light to all who are in the house.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.

Whoever then negates one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

The requirements of God's Law were fulfilled by Christ. The Law reveals sin, sin brings death, and Christ conquered death through His submission to the will of His Father. Christ does what is necessary to fulfill the requirements of God's Law: the spilling of blood to pay for sin.



*Read Exodus 20
and Deuteronomy 10*

Here are a series of clarifying declarations of what the Law given to Moses was always supposed to mean to the heart-follower of the Living God. Christ's standards were much purer than those which the Jews were interpreting and applying from the Law.

Contrasts

"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

"If you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Truly I say to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid the last cent.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.

"And it was said, 'Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce'; but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of moral impurity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

"Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.' But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no; and anything beyond this is evil.

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

"And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat as well. And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes

*Jesus continues to
clarify matters of the heart,
because it is the heart
that condemns or
spares a man.*

*While we are obsessed
with what is fair, the Living
God is focused on what is
just. By giving vengeance and
justice into the hand of God,
we are free to devote our-
selves to doing the will
of God in the world.*

*Prayer is talking with
God. Prayer is to be between
ourselves and God, and this
“Lord’s Prayer” is given to
teach us “to pray” and
not so much how to pray.
Each element reveals reliance
upon God and a heartfelt
relationship with God in
our daily lives. What a
pity when prayer becomes
meaningless repetition.*

*God’s holiness
flowing through us is
much different than becoming
good by religious effort.
To be holy we must
be mature in our thinking,
understanding that God’s
goodness must be placed
within us as we yield
our will to His will.*

*If we live to be noticed by
men we will miss God.
Fasting is a way of
subjecting our bodies and
focusing more of our
attention on God.*

His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

“For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore, you are to be holy, as your heavenly Father is holy.”

DAY EIGHT 8

Matthew 6:1-34

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

“When you give financial gifts, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their full reward. But when you give money back to God, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing that your giving may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“And when you are praying, do not use meaningless, repetitive words, as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need, even before you ask Him.

“Pray, then, in this manner: ‘Our Father, You are in heaven, and Your Name is holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us all we need to sustain us this day.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven those who are indebted to us.

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.’

“For if you forgive men for their sins against you and others, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

“And whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance in order to be noticed fasting by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face so that you may not be identified as one fasting, but to be seen by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Anxiety is one of the number one killers of a spiritual life, and Jesus wants us to give our anxieties to Him.

Often we are just as obsessed with judging others as we are anxious about life. We are told that by placing God as the focus of our lives, other things will be taken care of. Our goal then becomes trusting God and not trusting ourselves.

“Do not accumulate for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

“The lamp of the body is the eye; if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is dark, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

“No one can serve two masters; for he will either hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and earthly possessions.

“For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow, neither do they reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are?

“And which of you by being anxious can add a single day to his life's span? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even King Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these.

“But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith? Do not be anxious then, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we clothe ourselves?’ After all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; but your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

DAY NINE 9

Matthew 7:1-29

“Do not judge or you will be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

“And why do you look at the speck that is in your

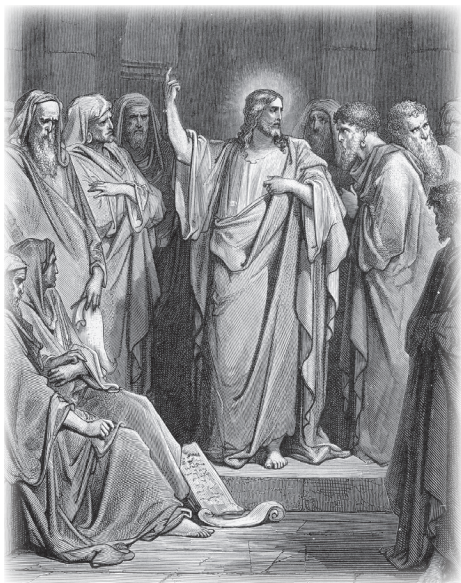
*Apparently God's way
is not the most often
chosen path.*

*False prophets are
people who have impure
motives for following God.
Though their words often
sound correct, they are
rotten to the core.*

*Eternal life is a
God-reality. God gives the
gift of perpetual life to those
who believe in His Son!*

*Building upon these
"teaching words" are like
building on rock. To reject
them is to build our life
upon quicksand.*

*Christ's teaching
apparently stood head
and shoulders above that
of the religious leaders
because of its authority.*



brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and ignore the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

"Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.

"What man is there among you, when his son asks him for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he won't give him a snake, will he? If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

"Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the heart of the Law and the Prophets.

"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. But the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few there are who find it.

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So, then, you will know them by the fruit of their lives.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been built upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and pummeled that house; and it fell, and great was its fall."

When Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not like their teachers.

DAY TEN IO

Demons are servants of Satan and of evil. They existed in Christ's time and they exist now, though sophisticated disguises often veil their presence.

The "Sabbath" was Saturday, the Jewish day of rest. It was also a day of reflection on the Law of God in relationship to how people were living their lives.

Christ's recorded miracles together account for about a month of His four year public ministry. There were thousands of encounters that were never recorded!

Jesus would often withdraw to a quiet and lonely place to pray and spend time alone with His Father.

MIRACLES

Luke 4:31-44

And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And He was teaching them on the Sabbath; and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was filled with authority. And there was a man in the synagogue possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, "Ha! What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are...the Holy One of God!" And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown the man down in their midst, he came out of him without doing him any harm.

And amazement came upon them all, and they began discussing with one another saying, "What is this message? For He commands the unclean spirits with authority and power, and they come out." And the report about Him was circulating into every locality in the surrounding district. And He arose and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's home.

Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever; and they made request of Him on her behalf. And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately arose and waited on them.

And while the sun was setting, all those who had any sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on every one of them, He was healing them. And demons also were coming out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Son of God!" And rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew He was the Messiah.

And when day came, He departed and went to a lonely place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from going away from them. But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose." And He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Jesus came to the Jews first, and then the Word would go to the Gentiles. This man was to obey the law and present himself before the priest. Jesus is demonstrating that He fulfilled the law through everything He did and said.

A centurion was a powerful Roman soldier who commanded one hundred men. They were the policemen of the Roman provinces, and Roman citizens as well.

His great faith was his recognition of God's authority which had been entrusted to, and delegated through Jesus. This Roman Centurion had come to believe in Christ's power by equating His authority with what he saw in his own life.

FAITH ENCOUNTER

Matthew 8:1-13

And when He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came to Him, and bowed down to Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, you can make me clean." And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was healed. And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and present the offering that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."

And when He had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, prevailing upon Him, and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering and in great pain." And He said to him, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

Now when Jesus heard this, He was amazed, and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; let it be done to you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that very hour.

DAY ELEVEN II

38 LONG YEARS

John 5:1-17

*The Jews celebrated feasts
throughout the year that drew
their hearts to worship
Him year round.*

*There were twelve gates
into the city of Jerusalem used for
different purposes, and one was
called the Sheep Gate.*

*This man had probably been
afflicted much or all of his life.
He was hoping in superstition
and/or tradition to save
him from his plight.*

*The Sabbath was a
holy day to the Jews, and the Law
commanded that the Jews would
do no work on Saturdays
(the Sabbath).
This became a way for the Jewish
leaders to discredit Jesus,
because by healing, He was
working on the Sabbath.*

*Somewhat in religious human
nature we focus on gnats (little
things) and swallow camels
(big things). God wants us to
focus on the things that
are truly important.*

*Jesus did not merely claim
to come from God, but to BE
God. The Jews viewed
this as blasphemy.*

After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew - Bethesda, having five columns. Among them lay a multitude of people who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the moving of the waters; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; and whoever stepped in first after the stirring up of the water, was made well from whatever disease that was afflicting him.

And a certain man was there who had been sick thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you wish to get well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Arise, take up your pallet, and walk." And immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and began to walk.

Now it was the Sabbath on that day. Therefore the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet." But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Take up your pallet and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your pallet, and walk?'" But he who was healed did not know who it was; for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may befall you." The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."

JESUS WHO?

John 5:18-47

For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing by Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in the same way. For the Father

*Jesus offers everlasting life,
and claims that His voice will call
the living and the dead to eternal
life or eternal death.*

*Christ and His claims must
be considered and either accepted
or rejected. Neutrality appears
not to be a valid choice.*

loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these He will show Him, that you may be amazed. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and will come out of their graves; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

"If I alone give witness of Myself, My testimony is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the testimony which He bears of Me is true. You have inquired with John (the Baptist) and he has given witness to the truth. But the witness which I receive is not from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. John the Baptist was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for awhile in his light. But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, testify of Me, that the Father has sent Me."

"And the Father who sent Me has given witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and they testify of Me. But you are unwilling to come to Me that you may have life."

"I do not receive glory from men; but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another shall come in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe when you receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

DAY TWELVE 12

WORKS OF THE WORD

Mark 1:29-2:12

Demons live and move and exist among us now as they did during Jesus' public ministry. Demons are one-third of the angels who fell when they followed Lucifer in rebellion against the Living God.

Lepers were outcasts, and this man believes that Jesus has the authority to cleanse him and restore his broken relationships. Jesus did just that!



Jesus was more than a healer of physical maladies. He came to deliver men, heart and soul. His miracles were a means to a much more important goal.

Early in the morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there. And Simon and his companions hunted for Him; and they found Him, and said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." And He said to them, "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, in order that I may preach there also; for that is what I came out for."

And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons. And a leper came to Him, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying to Him, "If You are willing, you can make me clean." And moved with compassion, He stretched out His hand, and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, and He said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.

And when He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, people heard that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them. And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. And being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." But there were some of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak this way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning this way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Arise, take up your pallet and walk'? But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" - He said to the paralytic - "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose and immediately took up his cot and went out in the sight of all; so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

DAY THIRTEEN I3

THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:1-34

After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). And a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. And Jesus went up on the mountain and sat with His disciples.

Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these people may eat?" He was saying this to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.

Philip answered Him, "Two hundred days pay worth of bread is not sufficient for them, even for everyone to receive just a little." One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but how can this be enough for so many people?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." It was a large grassy area. So the men who sat down were about five thousand.

Jesus took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed the bread to those who were seated; and also gave them as much of the fish as they wanted. And when they were full, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost." And they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with pieces from the five barley loaves, left over by those who had eaten. When the people saw the sign which He had performed they said, "Truly this is the Prophet who is supposed to come into the world." Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain to be by Himself.

Now when evening came His disciples went down to the sea, and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. And the sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they beheld Jesus walking on the sea and drawing closer to the boat; and they were frightened. But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." They received Him into the boat and immediately the boat came ashore at their destination.

The next day the multitude that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except

Jesus spent much of His three or four year public ministry around the sea of Galilee, many miles from Jerusalem.

Passover was the chief feast of the Jews. It was a time of reflection and commemoration of God delivering Israel out of Egypt.

This meal was truly miraculous and set the stage for many things that Jesus' followers needed to be taught. The disciples were amazed by so much materializing from what they knew to be far too little.

Every impulse of man is to focus on what we can see. Jesus came to make clear that we are to live for unseen things, yet they are every bit as real!

"Son of Man" is a prophetic term that indicates Jesus' identity with humanity, but also carries traces of His oneness with God. In order to save mankind, Jesus became one of us.

If there was a way to eat bread that would keep them alive forever, then they wanted it!

The Jews knew that Jesus was claiming incredible things about Himself, and it offended them that a mere son of a carpenter would make such a claims.

one, and that Jesus had not entered with His followers into the boat, but that His disciples had gone away alone. There came other small boats from Tiberias near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks.

When the multitude saw that Jesus or His followers were no longer there, they got into small boats, and came to Capernaum, looking for Jesus. And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Teacher, when did You get here?" Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal of favor and truth."

They said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." They said to Him, "What do You do for a sign, that we may see it, and believe You? What work do You perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'"

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." They said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread forever."

John 6:35-71

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you, that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but I will raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks upon the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

The Jews therefore were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." And they were saying, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? Why is He saying, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"

Even His followers struggled with Jesus' words. Once again He drew their attention to where He had come from. This is what made the fulfillment of all of Jesus' words possible.

This had a negative effect upon Jesus' followers. Peter, however, submits to what to him is becoming obvious.

The Spirit is alive in people who embrace Christ as the Deliverer of our eternal soul. He then sends the gift of His Spirit to help us communicate with Him and to be obedient to His words.

Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'They shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh."

The Jews therefore began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Jesus therefore said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who partakes of Me shall live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever."

These things He said in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum. Many of His disciples, when they heard Him say this, said, "This is a difficult statement; who can accept it?" But Jesus, conscious that His followers grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? What will happen if you see the Son of Man ascending where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father." As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose the twelve of you, and yet one of you is a devil?" He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

*Yeast is put into bread to
make it rise, and if this yeast
(leaven) is good, the bread is
good. If it is bad it spoils the loaf.*

*Jesus' ongoing conflict
with the Pharisees and their
teachings continues. Apparently
they expected to be feared in
human ways that needed to
supercede fear and reverence for
God, who truly wields all
ultimate authority
and power.*

*To see and hear the testimony
of Jesus (the One God has
sent), and reject it, is
blaspheming against
the Holy Spirit.*

*There are many valid
questions in life, but they should
all be subjected to greater
issues of the soul.*

DAY FOURTEEN 14

THE READY HEART

Luke 12:1-32

Under these circumstances, after so many thousands had gathered that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

"Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. And everyone who will speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him."

"And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not become anxious about how or what you should speak in your defense, or what you should say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

And someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbiter over you?" And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a certain rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' And he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and in them I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; relax, eat, drink and be

Fear and anxiety are two very potent human tendencies. Jesus is trying to give His followers perspective on life issues when compared to the eternity that lay ahead for those who embraced the Son of God!

The Kingdom of the Father has been given to the Son and to His followers.

Jesus taught over and over that He would return. His followers are to be ready!

merry.” “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ This is like the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

And He said to His disciples, “For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; and they have no storeroom nor barn; and yet God feeds them. How much more valuable you are than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a single day to the length of his life? If you cannot do even a very little thing, why are you anxious about other matters?

“Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither work or make cloth for clothing; but I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so arrays the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you, O men of little faith!

“And do not live for what you will eat, and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. But seek for His kingdom first, and these other things shall be added to you. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.”

Luke 12:33-59

“Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

“Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lighted. Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from a wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are the workers the master finds on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will dress himself to serve, and have them sit at the table, and will come up and wait on them. Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them prepared, blessed are those servants. And be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.”

And Peter said, “Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?” And the Lord said, “Who is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their portions at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

“But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master will be a

*The choice concerning
Christ will not be unanimous,
and will even divide families.*

*We are to watch the
“spiritual weather,” compare
it to what we read in the
Scriptures, and be ready!*

long time in coming,’ and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; the 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 cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with unbelievers. And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

“I have come to rain fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? On the contrary, I came to bring division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two, and two against three. They will be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

And He was also saying to the multitudes, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming,’ and so it rains. And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, ‘It will be a hot day,’ and it turns out that way. You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time? And why do you not judge what is right on your own initiative? For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the judge, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, in order that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the police, and the police throw you into prison. I say to you, you shall not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent.”

Reclining at the table occurred because they probably sat on cushions on the floor. It was a social event as well as a meal.

Tax-gatherers during this time were fellow-Jews who were hired by the Romans to exact tribute or taxes. They often were incredibly corrupt and added excess charges to tax bills. You can imagine why they were listed with other undesirables.

Eye Witnesses of His Authority

DAY FIFTEEN 15

HARD TIMES AHEAD

Matthew 9:1-38

And getting into a boat, He crossed over (to the other side of the sea of Galilee), and came to His own city. And they brought to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed. Seeing their faith Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven." And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes." And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, and walk'? But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" - then He said to the paralytic - "Rise, take up your bed, and go home." And he rose, and went home. But when the multitudes saw this, they were filled with awe, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

And as Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew, sitting in the tax office; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he rose, and followed Him. And it happened that as He was reclining at the table in the house, many tax-gatherers and "undesirables" came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?" But when He heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Fasting was and still is a way to draw close to God. Jesus is the Bridegroom and His followers are His Bride. Wineskins are a picture of what is new (Christ) and what is old (religion).

Synagogue officials had positions of prestige and authority in Israel.

The synagogue was where copies of the Word of God (the Law and the Prophets) were kept.

All Jewish worship that took place apart from the Temple in Jerusalem occurred in these local synagogues.

Jesus is the Great Shepherd of the sheep and His heart breaks over the bondage and lack of guidance under which these sheep were living.

Then the disciples of John (the Baptist) came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" Jesus said to them, "The wedding party of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. But no one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results. Nor do men put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."

And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, and saying, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" And after He had come into the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "Let it be done to you according to your faith." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See to it that you let no one know about this." But they went out, and spread the news about Him in all that land.

And as they were going out, behold, a man unable to speak, demon-possessed, was brought to Him. And after the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the multitudes were in amazement, saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore earnestly ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

*The "Sent Ones"
were given a mission and the
privilege of carrying Christ's
authority that had been given
to Him from His Father.
They were called apostles.*

*The term "man of peace" is a
curious one. Apparently the
disciples were to look for men
and women who had some
sort of hunger and concept
of what it meant to look for
and find peace. Such people
would provide fertile ground
for the Good News.*

*There are two classrooms
and ideologies from which all
schools of thought originate.
There is the teaching of idola-
try (Satan) and the teaching
of the Living God (Christ).*

Matthew 10:1-23

And having called His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: the first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-gatherer; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, freely give. Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support.

"And into whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is noble-minded in it; and stay there until you go away. And as you enter the household, give it your greeting. And if the house is worthy, let your greeting of peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your greeting of peace return to you. And whoever does not receive you or listen to your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off of your feet. Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the courts, and whip you in their synagogues; and you shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you speaking, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. And brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death.

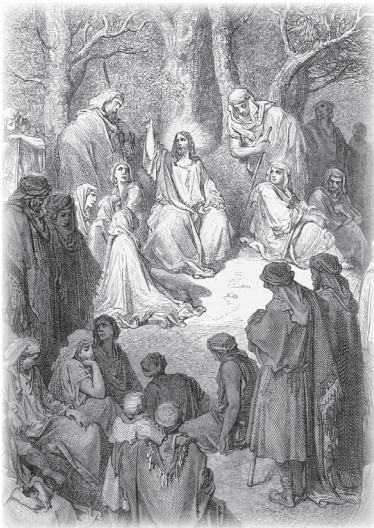
"And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be delivered. But whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes."

DAY SIXTEEN 16

TRAVELING COMPANIONS

Matthew 10:24-42

Jesus is Teacher to those who follow Him. We either become like Him or like Beelzebul (Satan). We will become like our teacher.



It appears that whoever chooses to follow Christ will make sacrifices on some pretty basic and significant levels. The King becomes the focus of a Christ-Follower's life.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave as his master. If they have called the head of the house Satan, how much more the members of his household! Do not fear them, for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows. Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”

“The one who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it. He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you he shall not lose his reward.”

SEED & SOILS

Mark 4:1-5:43

And He began to teach again by the sea. And such a very great group of people gathered to Him that He got into a boat in the sea and sat down; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching, "Listen to this. Behold, the sower went out to sow; and it came about that as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up. And other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil. And after the sun had risen in the sky, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it produced no crop. And other seeds fell into the good soil and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundred times as much." And He was saying, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

And as soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables. And He was saying to them, "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but those who are outside get everything in parables, in order that while seeing, they may see and not perceive; and while hearing, they may hear and not understand unless they return and be forgiven."

And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? And if you don't, how will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. And in a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, and the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And there are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it, and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundred times as much."

And He was saying to them, "A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the stand? For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it should come to light. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear."

And He was saying to them, "Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it shall be measured to you; and

*Speaking in parables
was one of the primary ways
Christ communicated truth.
Parables were word pictures
or stories that illustrated
some principle or truth.*

*He would drive
home His point by giving
a basic story to teach complex
and soul-changing
concepts.*

*This particular parable
is sweeping in its scope and
application. Jesus is explain-
ing how the Kingdom takes root
in the world, and also how His
Kingdom can come to nothing
because of adversity or
hardness of heart.*

*As Jesus taught in
parables, He gave timeless
pictures of the
Kingdom.*

more shall be given you besides. For whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.”

And He was saying, “The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts up and grows - how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. But when the crop is ready, he immediately brings in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

And He said, “How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds which are planted, yet when it is sown, grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade.”

And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them as they were able to hear it; and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own followers.

DAY SEVENTEEN



*Walking on the water
sealed it for the followers of
Christ. He was able to do
everything in the face
of anything.*



CHAINS IN LIFE & DEATH

Mark 4:35-5:43

And on that day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us go over to the other side.” And leaving the multitude, His followers took Him along with them, just as He was, in the boat; and other boats were with Him. And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. And He Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are about to lose our lives?” And being awakened, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. And He said to them, “Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith?” And they became very afraid and said to one another, “Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, and he made his home among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; because he had

*Demons are very real,
and they are the servants of Satan,
who is the immortal enemy
of Jesus Christ. These fallen
angels act both individually
and together; and sometimes
are banded together to torment
people or cities.*

*“Legion” probably stood for
one hundred or “many.”*

*God works through
physicians to heal. But
there is also a supernatural
component to healing.
Both should be considered
when we are sick.*

*Jesus was probably
wearing the coat of a teacher
or “rabbi.” This garment had
design aspects that made it
unique, probably including
fringed edges.*

often been bound with shackles and chains, and had torn them apart and broke the shackles in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. And constantly night and day, among the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out and gashing himself with stones.

And seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; and crying out with a loud voice, he said, “What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!” For He had been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he said to Him, “My name is Legion; for we are many.” And he began to earnestly ask Him not to send them out of the country.

Now there were about two thousand swine close by feeding on the mountain. And the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us into the swine so that we may enter them. And He gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and they were drowned in the sea. Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country. And the people came to see what had happened. And they came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had the “legion”; and they became frightened. And those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and they told them all about the swine. And they began to beg Him to leave their region.

And as He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was pressing Him that he might accompany Him. And He did not let him, but He said to him, “Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.” And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

And when Jesus had crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered about Him; and He stayed by the seashore. And one of the synagogue officials named Jairus came up, and when he saw Him, fell at His feet, and prevailed upon Him, saying, “My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, that she may get well and live.” And He went off with him; and a huge crowd was following Him and pressing in on Him.

In the multitude was a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years, and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse. After hearing about Jesus she came up in the crowd behind Him, and touched His cloak. For she thought, “If I just touch His garments, I will get well.”

And immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and

This is a remarkable occurrence! To have the authority to reverse physical death on numerous occasions made it quite clear that Jesus wielded an incredible power. Not since the dawn of time had any man displayed such power!

she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. And Jesus immediately perceived that the power proceeding from Him had gone out. He turned around to the crowd and said, "Who touched My garments?" And His disciples said to Him, "You see all the people pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" And He looked around to see the woman who had done this.

But the woman fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, healed of your affliction."

While He was still speaking, they came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?" But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid any longer, just believe." And He allowed no one to follow Him, except Peter and James and John the brother of James. And they came to the house of the synagogue official; and He saw a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing. Entering He said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child has not died, but is asleep."

And they began laughing at Him. But putting them all out of the room, He took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and entered the room where the child was. And taking the child by the hand, He said to her, "Little girl, I say to you, arise!" Immediately the girl rose and began to walk; for she was twelve years old. And they were completely astounded. He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this; and said that she should be given something to eat.

DAY EIGHTEEN 18

DEBT & DEBTORS

Luke 7:36-50

It is interesting that Jesus made a direct correlation between forgiveness and gratefulness. It is almost as if being forgiven is a prerequisite to being grateful, and that being grateful has a lot to do with how we treat our fellow man.

One of the Pharisees was asking Him to dinner. And He entered the Pharisee's house, and sat at the table. And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was having dinner in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of expensive perfume, and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with her hair, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume.

Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something

The religious leaders had developed quite a complex system of observances which they placed on the same level as the Word of God (and sometimes above it). This resulted in serving God with their lips, but their hearts were carried away by their traditions.

to say to you.” And he replied, “Say it, Teacher.”

“A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred days’ wages, and the other fifty. When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them will love him more?” Simon answered and said, “I suppose the one whom he forgave more.” And He said to him, “You have weighed and discerned correctly.”

And 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. You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.” And He said to her, “Your sins have been forgiven.”

And those who were sitting at the table with Him began to say to themselves, “Who is this man who even forgives sins?” And He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

DAY NINETEEN 19

WATER WALK

Matthew 14:22-15:21

And immediately He made the disciples get into the boat, and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. He then went up to the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. But the boat was already many hundreds of yards away from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were frightened, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out because of their fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” And He said, “Come!” And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”

And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped. And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, “You are certainly God’s Son!”

And when they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. And when the men of that area recognized Him,

This conflict with the religious leaders gets more intense and Jesus begins to point directly to their hypocrisy.

The Jews had hyper laws about avoiding contact with dead bodies, so when Jesus told them they were like pretty, painted tombs on the outside, but dead on the inside, he gave a solemn picture of the condition of the Jewish leaders' hearts.

they sent into all the surrounding district and brought to Him all who were sick; and they began to earnestly ask that they might just touch the fringe of His coat; and all who touched it were cured.

DECISION TIME

Mark 7:1-37

The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered together around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of His followers were eating their bread with "impure" or unwashed hands. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, observing the traditions of the elders. And when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves. There are many other things which they have established to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.)

And the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?" And He said to them, "Isaiah was right when he foretold of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching as truth the teachings of men.' Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."

He was also saying to them, "You nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death'; but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, anything of mine you might have been helped by is unavailable because it has been given to God,' you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; and in so doing invalidate the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down. You do many things like this."

He called the multitude to Him again, and began saying to them, "Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a man which going into him can pollute him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear."

After leaving the multitude He entered the house, and His followers questioned Him about the parable. And He said to

The Jews had been given specific health laws and ceremonies to set them apart and to keep them healthy and pure. This was being twisted by the Jewish leaders into a system of man-made religious purity.

Jesus declared "all foods clean" and in effect undercut a significant part of the leaders' influence over the people.

This Gentile woman recognized the humbled position that her sin brought upon her. This amazed Christ, because the people who should have understood this didn't. Here was a woman far closer to the Kingdom of God than even a thousand religious and self-righteous Jews.

them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from the outside cannot defile him; because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" In doing so He declared all foods ceremonially clean.

And He was saying, "What proceeds out of the man is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and pollute a man."

VISITING THE GENTILES

From there He went away to the region of Tyre. And when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know about it; yet He could not escape notice. But after hearing He was there, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race.

She kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And He was saying to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs." And He said to her, "Because of this answer go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." Going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, and the demon had left her.

And again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis. And they brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they prevailed upon Him to lay His hand upon him. He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva, and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, "Ephphatha!" which means, "Be opened!" And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly. And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it. And they were utterly astonished, saying, "He has done all things well; He even makes the deaf hear, and the non-speaking able to speak."

DAY TWENTY 20

FEEDING FOUR THOUSAND PEOPLE

Mark 8:1-38

Herod was a Jewish puppet-King for the Roman Empire. They basically allowed him to be in power as a part of the pesky business of managing the troublesome Jews. This made Herod a distasteful, powerful ruler.

Jesus was masterful when choosing metaphors and examples. Often water, food, drink, and relationships became carriers for principles that would project timeless pictures for men and women from every nation and race in every century. After all, who can't relate to being hungry!?

In those days there was a huge group of people and they had nothing to eat. He called His disciples and said to them, "I feel compassion for the multitude because they have remained with Me three days, and they have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their home, they will pass out on the way; and some of them have come from quite a distance."

And His disciples answered Him, "Where will anyone be able to find enough food to satisfy these men with bread in such a desolate place?" And He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven." And He directed the multitude to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving the food to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people. They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well. And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces. And there were about four thousand people with Him; and He sent them away.

And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples, and came to the district of Dalmanutha. And the Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, asking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him. And sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation look for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation."

And leaving them, He sailed again to the other side. And they had forgotten to take bread; and had no more than one loaf in the boat with them. And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." And they began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread.

And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember, when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they

*Wherever you see the name
“Christ” it means “Deliverer” or
“Messiah.” It comes from a word
that means “to smear” - in this
case Christ’s blood is smeared
over the doorposts of our hearts,
just like during Passover when
Moses brought the Sons of Israel
out of the land of Egypt.*

*This story is found
in the book of Exodus.*

said to Him, “Seven.” And He was saying to them, “Do you not yet understand?”

They came to Bethsaida and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. And taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes, and laying His hands upon him, He asked him, “Do you see anything?” And he looked up and said, “I see men, for I am seeing them like trees, walking around.” He again laid His hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he began to see everything clearly. And He sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”

WHO DO PEOPLE SAY THAT I AM?

And Jesus and His disciples went out to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, “Who do people say that I am?” And they told Him, saying, “John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets.” And He continued, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Messiah.” And He warned them not to tell this to anyone.

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He was stating things plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, and said, “Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”

And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s shall save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

DAY TWENTY-ONE 21

*To be transfigured
included several things.
It appears that Christ was
shining like the sun, lifted up
in the air, and that He
appeared with two people
who had already been dead
for hundreds of years.*

*Moses was the "Law-giver"
and Elijah was the prophet
who was swept up into
heaven without
experiencing death.*

*The tabernacles
or "booths" were
reminiscent of when
the Jews celebrated God's
wilderness dwelling place as
He brought them out of the
land of Egypt into the
Promised land.*

*John the Baptist was
beheaded at the whim of
Herod's wife's daughter. He
never saw the end of what
God had begun through him.
Jesus said that John was the
"Elijah" that would precede
Himself. This was spoken
hundreds of years earlier by
Isaiah the prophet.*



UP IN THE AIR

Matthew 15:29-31

Leaving there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up to the mountain, He was sitting there. And great multitudes came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, handicapped, blind, unable to speak, as well as many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them, so that the crowd was amazed as they saw the silent begin speaking, the handicapped restored, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel!

And sending away the multitudes, He got into the boat, and came to the region of Magadan.

Matthew 17:1-13

And six days later Jesus took Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. And Peter responded and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and amazingly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" And when the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were very afraid. And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid."

And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, except Jesus. And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead." And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you, that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

*These are all cities
who witnessed firsthand the
amazing power of God in
Christ. Many turned a
deaf spiritual ear despite
God's powerful voice
among them.*

*Jesus had a very
special relationship with the
Father. We can come to Jesus
and find the Father without
jumping through any
religious "hoops."
All we have to do is bear the
burden of believing in the
One whom He has sent.*

COME TO ME

Matthew 11:20-30

Then He began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you.

"And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to Hell; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."

At that time Jesus answered and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You hid these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for it was pleasing in Your sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.

"Come to Me all who are weary, carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

DAY TWENTY-TWO 22

LIVING WATER

John 7:1-36

*The “feast of booths”
was one of the major
celebrations of the Hebrew
calendar, commemorating
God’s deliverance of the
nation from the powerful
hand of Pharaoh,
King of Egypt.*

*Jesus needed to be
killed because He was
undermining everything the
religious leaders held near
and dear. The people wanted
political freedom much more
than soul freedom, so they,
too, would be willing
to crucify Him.*

*While human
education was revered
then, as it is now, it was not
essential to becoming a
servant of Christ’s.*

After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee; for He was unwilling to move about the region of Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.

Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was at hand. His blood brothers therefore said to Him, “Leave here, and go into Judea, so Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. For no one does anything in secret when he himself wishes to be known publicly. If You are going to do these things, show Yourself to the world.” For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

Jesus said to them, “My time is not yet at hand, but your time is always opportune. The world cannot hate you; but it hates Me because I tell the truth about it, that its deeds are evil. Go up to the feast yourselves; I am not going up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.” And having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.

But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He went up, not publicly, but in secret. The Jews were looking for Him at the feast, and were saying, “Where is He?” And there was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him. Some were saying, “He is a good man” and others were saying, “No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray.” Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

But in the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach. The Jews were astonished, saying, “How has this man become educated, having never been formally trained?” Jesus answered them, and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know the teaching, whether it is from God, or whether I speak from Myself. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory, but the one who

Circumcision was the sign of the covenant that God gave to Abraham. This made the Jews physically different from all the other nations.

Abraham was saved by faith and not by circumcision. So the "law of faith" eclipses the external sign of the covenant: circumcision.

The Sabbath was the day each week that the Jews were to rest and reflect on what God was doing in their lives. The religious Jews were so hard-hearted that they were defining Jesus' healing of others as "work" on the "Sabbath."

The Jews were living in every nation under heaven. This was a result of the two captivities (Assyrian and Babylonian) six hundred years earlier. This

is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

The multitude answered, "You are possessed by a demon! Who is plotting to kill You?" Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one deed, and you are all amazed. Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath? Do not judge according to appearance, but with righteous judgment."

Therefore some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is this not the man whom they are plotting to kill? He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Messiah, do they? We know where this man is from; but when the Christ does come, no one knows where He is from."

YOU KNOW ME!

Jesus therefore cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. I know Him; because I am from Him, and He sent Me." They were seeking therefore to seize Him; and no man laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

But many of the multitude believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Messiah comes, He won't perform more signs than the ones which this man has, will He?" The Pharisees heard the multitude muttering these things about Him; and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. Therefore Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I will return to the One who sent Me. You will look for Me, and shall not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come."

The Jews therefore said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we shall not find Him? He is not intending to go to the dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? What does He mean when He says, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come?'"

*The prophet...Elijah
would return before the
Messiah (Malachi 5).*

*The Messiah...the Anointed
One would deliver Israel.*

*This is the same
Nicodemus who came to
Jesus at night in John 3. He
was a leader of the Jews.*

John 7:37-53

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'" But He was speaking of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet poured out, because Jesus had not yet ascended to the Father and been glorified.

When some of the multitude heard these words they were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet." Others were saying, "This is the Messiah." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was from?"

So there arose a division in the multitude because of Him. And some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him. The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" The officers answered, "We have never heard anyone speak like this man speaks." The Pharisees therefore answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you? None of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? But this Law-ignorant multitude is accursed."

Nicodemus said to them (this is the same man who had come to Him before at night, and he was one of the religious leaders), "Our Law does not judge a man, unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?" They answered and said to him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search the Scriptures and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee." And everyone went to his home.

Following Two by Two.

DAY TWENTY-THREE 23

GOD IS INVOLVED

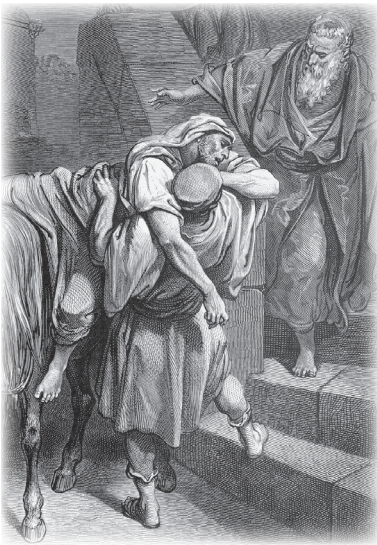
Luke 10:1-11:13

Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore implore the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. Go your ways; I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no wallet, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way. And whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' And if a man of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him; but if not, it will return to you. And stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.

"And whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city."

And the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over

*The twelve disciples
had now become a group of
seventy. They went out as
partners, teaching the
Good News of the
Kingdom as they
traveled.*



*A Levite would have been
a "holy man" from the tribe
of the priesthood, and
as such, principled.*

*A Samaritan was not a
"pure Jew" and was the last
person any self-respecting Jew
would even want to touch.*

all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You hid these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for it was pleasing in Your sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him."

And turning to the disciples, He said privately, "Blessed are your eyes which see the things you see, for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them."

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up to test Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" And he answered and said, "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." And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied and said, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went off leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him, and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own animal, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

"And on the next day he took out two days' wages and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you.' Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

MARTHA'S HOUSE

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. And she had a sister named Mary, who was listening to the Lord's word, seated at His feet. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him, and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

And it came about that after He was finished praying in a certain place, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, may Your great Name be revered. May Your kingdom come. Give us each day the bread we need to sustain us. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

And He said to them, "Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, 'Friend, loan me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has dropped in from a journey, and I have nothing to offer him'; and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.'

"I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened. Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

DAY TWENTY-FOUR 24

WORTHLESS WOMAN

John 8:1-32



*These men probably
left oldest to youngest,
because of their wisdom,
according to their age.
Note Leviticus 20:10.*

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. They set her in the center of the entire group and said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what do You say?"

And they were saying this, testing Him, in order that they might have basis for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground. But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And when they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, still in the spot where she had been.

And straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" And she said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more."

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You are bearing witness of Yourself; your witness is not true." Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of myself, My witness is true; for I know where I came from, and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from, or where I am going. You people judge based upon outward appearance; I am not judging anyone. But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and He who sent me. Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. I testify of Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies of Me."

And so they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me, nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also." These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come. He said again to them

*Following Jesus
has little to do with being
religious and a lot to do with
hearing His voice. This is what
being a "disciple" is all about.
Believe - know the truth - and
experience true freedom!*

"I am going away, and you shall search for Me, and shall die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."

The Jews then said, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. This is why I said to you that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He you shall die in your sins." And so they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you from the beginning? I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world." They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father.

Jesus therefore said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know it is Me, and that I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

CONFLICT WITH THE KING

John 8:33-59

They answered Him, "We are Abraham's offspring, and have never been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham's offspring; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."

They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; Abraham did not do this. You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of an adulterous, sinful relationship; we have one Father, even God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because

Jesus taught that if our Father was not the Living God, then the Devil was still our father. God has chosen to bring us from the Kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light.

Jesus was equating Himself with His Father, "Yahweh." By doing so He was alienating the religious leaders because of His "blasphemy."

you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies. But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? The one who belongs to God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

The Jews answered and said to Him, "Are we not accurate when we say that You are a Samaritan and that you are possessed by a demon?" Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. But I do not pursue My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You are demon-possessed. Abraham and the prophets all died and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he shall never taste death.' Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; who do You represent Yourself to be?"

Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I said that I do not know Him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know Him, and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." The Jews therefore said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.

DAY TWENTY-FIVE 25

FACTS ARE FACTS

John 9:1-33

And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

When He had said this, He spit on the ground, and made

clay of the spit, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." And so he went away and washed, and came back able to see.

The neighbors and those who previously knew him as a beggar, were saying, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Others were saying, "It is Him," and others were saying, "No, but he just looks like him." He kept saying, "It is me." Therefore they were saying to him, "How were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam, and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received my sight." And they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought the man who was formerly blind to the Pharisees. It had been a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees also were asking him how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see." So some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them.

They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet." The Jews did not believe it was true, that he had been blind, and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How is he now able to see?"

His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he shall speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, "He is old enough to answer for himself; ask him."

So they called the man who had been blind a second time, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether or not He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know: I was blind, and now I see." They said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not wish to become His

Being "put out" of the synagogue had massive religious and social implications. It was probably one of the worst things that could be done to a person in Israel.

This takes the feel and form of an intense interrogation because of what was at stake. The people and the religious leaders were divided among themselves about who Jesus was.

disciples too, do you?" And they discounted him, and said, "You are His follower, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where He is from."

The man answered and said to them, "Well, this is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him. Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."

They answered and said to him, "You were born entirely in your sins, and are you teaching us?" And they put him out. Jesus heard that they had put him out; and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered and said, "And who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him.

And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind. The Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Being "put out" is equivalent to being shunned or denied access. It would be the ultimate social "casting out."

DAY TWENTY-SIX 26

SIGNS & TROUBLES

Luke 11:14-48

And He was casting out a demon. And it came about that when the demon had gone out, the non-speaking man spoke; and the multitudes were astonished. But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." And others, to test Him, were demanding a sign from heaven. But He knew their thoughts, and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is overrun; and a house divided against itself falls. And if Satan is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if by Beelzebul I cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own home-
stead,

Christ (and the rest of the Scriptures) not only acknowledge the existence of Satan but also his involvement in the affairs of men. He appears able to influence people in very significant ways.

*There is much
“foretelling” of what is yet
to come in the Bible. Nations
and peoples will be moved
into specific roles for the
events of the “end of time!”*

*The account of
Jonah and the Ninevites is
found in the book of
Jonah the Prophet.*

*The Scribes and Pharisees
were two religious orders
that had much to lose if Jesus
continued to oppose them and
meddle in their established
system of leadership. This is
why Jesus was so direct (and
sometimes harsh) with them
- by their example they were
leading many people astray.*

*Tithes were percentages
or portions of what the Jews
earned through industry and
commerce. Tithes were given
to demonstrate love for God
and to underwrite the work
of God in the world.*

his possessions are undisturbed. But when someone stronger attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away his reliable, tested armor, and distributes what he has taken in battle. He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters. When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through non-living places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it returns, it finds it swept and put in order. Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.”

And it came about while He said these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice, and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that carried You, and the breasts at which You nursed.” But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it.”

THIS GENERATION

And as the crowds were increasing, He began to say, “This generation is a wicked generation; it looks for a sign, and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so shall the Son of Man be to this generation. The Queen of the South shall rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar, nor under a basket, but on the lamp stand, in order that those who enter may see the light. The lamp of your body is your eye; when your eye is clear, your whole body is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Watch out that the light in you may not be darkness. If your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it shall be completely illuminated, as a lamp shines on you with its rays of light.”

INTENSE LUNCH

After He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and joined Him at the table. And when the Pharisee saw Jesus come to the table, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal. But the Lord said to him, “You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside you are full of robbery and wickedness. You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? But give what is within as gifts back to God, and then all things are clean for you. But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things

*In the past, the
leaders of the Jews had
often persecuted the prophets
because they simply did not
like what the prophets told
them. Apparently they were
now involved in building
monuments to the very men
their predecessors
had persecuted and
even killed.*

you should have done without neglecting the others.

“Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the front seats in the synagogues, and the respectful greetings in the market places. Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it.” And one of the lawyers said to Him in reply, “Teacher, when You say this, you insult us too.” But He said, “Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the loads with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build monuments to the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. Consequently, you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs.”

Luke 11:49-54

“For this reason also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, in order that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation. From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.

“Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering you hindered.” And when He left there, the Scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, plotting against Him, to catch Him in something He might say.

The teacher teaches.

DAY TWENTY-SEVEN 27

LOST AND FOUND

Luke 14:25-15:24

Being a disciple or a "Christ-Follower" involves commitment of heart and soul. To follow Christ is to give Him Lordship over all areas of our lives.

Gratefulness is a huge part of the Kingdom of God.

A Christ-follower does so by heart, and if the Kingdom is not a treasure there is little hope of being captured by it.

Large groups of people were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

"Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and carefully determine whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? While the other is still far off, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace. So too, no one can be My follower who does not give up all his own possessions. Salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Now all the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." And He told them this parable. "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep!' In the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."

"Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search

The prodigal son becomes grateful for his position as a son, even though he has squandered his inheritance. His father recognizes his change of heart and welcomes him back home with open arms!



carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!' In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

THE WANDERING SON

And He said, "A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them. And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with wild living.

"Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to have needs. And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; take me on as one of your hired men.'

"And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the choice calf, kill it, and let us eat and rejoice; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things might be. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the choice calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.'

"But the oldest son became angry, and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began prevailing upon him. But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a choice calf, that I might celebrate with my friends; but when this son of yours returned, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you

*Our debt to God is huge,
and He is keenly aware of what
we value and what we don't.
God knows we cannot serve Him
AND possessions. This is a major
stumbling block for humans in
every culture and every century!*

killed the choice calf for him.'

And he said to him, 'My child, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has again begun to live, and was lost and has been found.' "

DEBTS & DEBTORS

Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this steward was reported to be squandering his possessions. And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. I know what I will do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, people will receive me into their homes.'

"And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

"And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the possessions of unrighteousness; that when it fails you, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous possessions, who will entrust the true riches to you? And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and possessions."

Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. The Law

and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.

“Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

“Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, throttling life and living in splendor every day. And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.

“And in Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm is in place, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’

“And he said, ‘Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, that he may warn them, so that they also do not come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ But he said, ‘No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

This is not an actual interaction. It is a parable. Jesus spoke in parables to veil meaning and at the same time clarify what He was attempting to teach. This parable is using an impossible situation to make clear what is possible!

DAY TWENTY-EIGHT 28

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:1-42

Jesus is the perfect picture of leadership. He cares for His sheep. He protects them from predators. He wants His sheep to experience true peace and rest.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the resting place of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. When he sends out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will run from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”

Jesus spoke to them in this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was referring to. Jesus therefore said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and runs, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them. He runs because he is hired, and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, which are not of this group of sheep; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd.

“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

There arose a division again among the Jews because of these words. And many of them were saying, “He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?” Others were saying, “These are not the sayings of a demon-possessed man. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?”

At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in

The Feast of Dedication (or “Lights”) commemorates victory and independence under Judas Maccabeus in 160 B.C. The roots are in the deliverance God provided for Israel through Esther and Mordecai. The feast lasts eight days, and is known today as Hanukkah.

*God has been speaking
to humanity since His first act
of creation. Astronomy, nature
and animals, the oceans, and
people...from the vastness of
space to the complexity of our
DNA - our Father is speaking.*

*As powerful as His voice
comes through the things we
have just listed, Jesus, God's
Son is the crowning jewel of
His communication
with mankind!*

the portico of Solomon. The Jews therefore gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these works testify of who I am.

"But you do not believe, because you are not one of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), why do you say of Him, whom the Father set apart and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

"If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works I do, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father."

Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him and He eluded their grasp. He went away again beyond the Jordan to where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there. And many came to Him and were saying, "While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true." And many believed in Him there.

DAY TWENTY-NINE 29

RAISING LAZARUS

John 11:1-42

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. And it was the same Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. The sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." But when Jesus heard it, He said, "This sickness will not result in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

God seems to be quite comfortable answering people's hard questions. There really is a difference between asking questions and questioning God. Thomas goes through quite a process in dealing with his doubts about Jesus. Jesus seems to patiently and directly lead Him through, until he comes to the point of admitting that He is his King and his God.

To imagine God's Son having friends is a tough concept to grasp, but apparently this family: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus; become special companions of Jesus. They seem to be a part of His close circle of friendship relationships along with Peter, James, and John. Friendship and companionship were something God chose to enjoy - if not need, during His stay upon the earth.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When He heard that he was sick, He stayed two days longer in the place where He was. After this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi (teacher), the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and You are going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

After that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going to him, that I may awaken him out of sleep." The disciples then said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. Then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him."

Thomas then said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go so that we may die with Him." When Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming she went to meet Him; but Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother shall rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, the One who comes into the world." And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister, saying discreetly, "The Teacher is here, and is asking for you." And when she heard it, she arose quickly, and came to Him.

Now Jesus had not yet arrived at the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him. The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep. When Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were so concerned with their national pride and their need to exist that they were blind to the truly miraculous authority that Jesus possessed. In some senses their power and position made them insane.

As Christ's conflict with the religious leaders intensified the danger of His being prematurely taken to be crowned or crucified increased. Therefore He spent more time in outlying areas.

with her weeping as well, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. And so the Jews were saying, "Behold how He loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have kept this man from dying as well?"

Jesus therefore was again deeply moved inside, and He came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time the smell of death will be strong, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You heard Me. And I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that You sent Me."

And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." He who had died came out, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Many of the Jews who had come to Mary and witnessed what He had done believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done. Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is necessary for you that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation should not perish."

Now he did not say this on his own initiative; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered everywhere. So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.

Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and He stayed there with the disciples. Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover, to purify themselves. Therefore they were searching for Jesus, and were saying to one another, as they stood in the temple, "Do you think He will show up at the feast?" Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, so they could seize Him.

DAY THIRTY 30

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

Matthew 21:1-32

Many things that Jesus said and did directly fulfilled words and prophecies of the Jewish prophets.

Donkeys and colts were ridden by royalty, and by riding into Jerusalem in this manner, Jesus is revealing more about His kingship.

The “buyers and sellers” were profiting from the religious worship of the Jewish people who would travel far and then be stuck with the “surcharges” levied by these corrupt leaders. This is why Jesus dealt with them so strongly.



This is called the “second cleansing” of the Temple, because this happened at the beginning of Christ’s ministry and again here at the end.

The “Son of David” would come and sit on the throne of David. Many in Jerusalem saw Jesus as the promised King of Israel.

Jesus and His disciples approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives. He sent two of His followers, saying to them, “Go into the village before you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them, and bring them to Me. And if anyone says something to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.”

Now this took place that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the offspring of a beast of burden.’”

And the disciples went and did just as Jesus had directed them, and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their garments on them and sat on them. Most of the multitude spread their garments in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees, and spreading them in the road. And the people were going before Him, and those who followed were crying out, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!” And when He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, “Who is this?” And the multitudes were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.”

And Jesus entered the temple and cast out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer;’ but you are making it a robbers’ den.”

And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became indignant, and said to Him, “Do You hear what these people are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise for Yourself?’” And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and lodged there.

Now in the morning, when He returned to the city, He became hungry. And seeing a single fig tree by the road, He came to it, and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, “Never again shall there be any fruit from you.” At once the fig tree withered. Seeing this, the disciples were amazed, saying, “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?” And Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if

you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it shall happen. All things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."

And when He had come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?" And Jesus answered and said to them, "I will ask you one thing too, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things."

"Where did the baptism of John originate, from heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the people; for they all hold John to be a prophet." And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." He also said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' And he answered and said, 'I will, sir'; and he did not go. And he came to the second and said the same thing. But he answered and said, 'I will not'; yet afterward he regretted it and went. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The second." Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you that the tax-gatherers and harlots will get into the kingdom of God before you. For John the Baptist came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax-gatherers and harlots did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse after John's death and believe him."

THE LANDOWNER

Matthew 21:33-22:22

"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey. And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize his inheritance.' And they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?"

They said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a bitter end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds according to their agreement." Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which

*A cornerstone
formed the leveling point
and foundation stone
for entire structures.
Christ is the Cornerstone
of the Living Building of God,
and those who believe in
Christ are Living Stones!
Read more about this
in Psalm 118.*

the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone; this came about from the Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes'? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing Kingdom fruit. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whoever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. And when they sought to seize Him, they feared the multitudes, because they held Him to be a prophet.

THE WEDDING PARTY

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding celebration for his son. And he sent out his servants to call those who had been invited to the wedding party, and they were unwilling to come. Again he sent out other servants saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my choice livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding celebration."' "

"But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his servants and mistreated them and killed them. But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Go to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding party.' And they went out into the streets, and gathered together whomever they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.

"But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man not dressed in wedding attire, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to his servants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen." Then the Pharisees went and plotted together how they might trap Him in what He said.

And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any. Tell us what You think. Is it lawful to give tax payments to Caesar, or not?"

But Jesus perceived their malice and said, "Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the coin used for the tax." And they brought Him a Roman coin called a denarius. And He said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." And hearing this, they were amazed, and leaving Him, they went away.

Jesus' politics were quite simple: be at peace in earthly things - they will be subjected to the Kingdom that is to come!

DAY THIRTY-ONE

31

The Sadducees were another prominent religious sect. One of their core beliefs was that there was no resurrection after death.



Jesus was just too much. He knew the Word too well, but even more, He knew the will of the Father completely. This caused consternation among His critics, and finally, silenced them.

Phylacteries were little pouches worn on the head or arm with passages from the Law and the Prophets written inside of them. These were external signs of supposed deep spiritual devotion and great learning.

THE TRAP IS SET

Matthew 22:23-23:22

On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Him and questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies, having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up an offspring to his brother.' Now there were seven brothers we knew; and the first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother; so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. And last of all, the woman died. Therefore, in the resurrection whose wife of the seven will she be? For they were all married to her."

But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are in error, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching. But when the Pharisees heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they gathered themselves together.

And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "The son of David." He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet"'? If David calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, "The Scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the judgement seat of Moses. All that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them. And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels of their garments. And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called "Teacher" by men.

"But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth your

*Proselytes or converts
were followers brought
from another flock into a
shepherding relationship
with another teacher.*

*Mint, dill; etc.
Expensive spices.*

*Tithing (giving
a percentage of our income
before it is used for anything
else) was an evidence of
beautiful, fragrant
gifts to God.*

*Judgements came
upon the Pharisees and
religious leaders because
while all appeared to smell
well on the outside, the
stench of death
was inside.*

father; For One is your Father, and He is in heaven. Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever lifts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be lifted up.”

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. [Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widow’s houses, while in your pretense you pray long prayers; therefore you shall receive greater condemnation.] Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one convert; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obligated.’

“You fools and blind men; which is more important, the gold, or the temple that sets apart the gold? And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering upon it, he is obligated.’ You blind men, which is more important, the offering or the altar that sets apart the offering? He who swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. And he who swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by Him who dwells within the temple. And he who swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.”

Matthew 23:23-24:22

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. But these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and uncleanness. You outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, ‘If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Consequently you speak against yourselves, for you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

“Fill up the measure of the guilt of your fathers. You serpents, you nest of poisonous snakes, how shall you escape the sentence of hell? Behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will whip in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation.”

JERUSALEM LAMENT

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

And Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. He answered and said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another which will not be torn down.”

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many. And you will be hearing about wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for these things must take place, but this is not yet the end.”

“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pains. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. Lawlessness will increase and most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be delivered.

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come. Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things that are in his house; and let the one who is in the field not turn back to get his coat.

“But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babies in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in

There are many interpretations of end time events, some simple and some complex. It is important that Jesus' words about the end form the foundation for all constructs about the end of time!

The “Abomination of Desolation” is part of what is called the Great Tribulation period. Daniel prophesied 600 years earlier that this would happen, and the book of Revelation is the vision account of this time of trouble that will come upon the entire earth. Read Daniel 9.

32

DAY THIRTY-TWO

BE READY

Matthew 24:23-25:12

Our spiritual readiness is impacted by several things. What is the condition of our faith? How much do we value what God has to say about our lives and our future? How willing am I to prioritize my life based upon God's value system?

the winter or on a Sabbath; for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would be saved; but for the sake of the chosen ones those days will be cut short."

"Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones of God. I have told you in advance. If they say to you, 'Look, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, or, 'Watch, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them.

"For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes across to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. He will send His angels with a great trumpet sound and they will gather His chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."

"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and shoots out its leaves, you know that summer is near. Even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away. But that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not understand until the flood came and took them all away. So shall the coming of the Son of Man be. There shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

"But be sure of this, if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you must be ready too; for the Son of Man

is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

“Who is the faithful and sensible servant his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master finds doing just that when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants and eat and drink with drunkards; the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect and at an hour which he does not know, and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

While the Kingdom of Heaven is the most-used analogy in Jesus' teaching, we have focused on "church" and gathering people for spiritual purposes. Jesus (and His apostles) were very focused on the condition of our Kingdom hearts.

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘The bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all the virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps.

“And the unprepared said to the prepared, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you as well; go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding celebration; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ But he answered and said, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ ”

Matthew 25:13-46

A talent of gold or silver would be equivalent to about 66 pounds today, and would have been a great fortune!

“Be on the alert, for you do not know the day or the hour. For it is like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own servants, and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.

“Immediately the one who had received five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who had received two talents gained two more. But the one who had been given one talent went away and dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master’s money.”

“Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.’ The one who had received

God's Son is the King of the earth. His Kingdom is our destination if we have placed our faith in Christ. Eternal life is the prize of the Kingdom. Those who follow Jesus are "priests of God Most High."

the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

"And the one who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.' But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'"

"For to everyone who has more will be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. Cast out the worthless servant into the outer darkness; where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me a drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, condemned ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angel-demons; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'

"Then they will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' Then He will answer them, 'I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

DAY THIRTY-THREE 33

*Jesus knew the outcome
of things all along. He knew
why He was here. He knew
what was going to happen.
He was willing to set aside
the "now" for what
"would be!"*

THE TIME IS HERE

Matthew 26:1-5

And it came about that when Jesus had finished these words, He said to His disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be delivered up to be crucified."

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, named Caiaphas; and they plotted together to take Jesus by stealth, and kill Him. "But not during the festival, or a riot may occur among the people."

ANOINTING THE LIGHT

John 12:1-36

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom He had raised from the dead. So they made Him dinner, and Martha was serving; and Lazarus was one of those sitting at the table with Him. Mary took a pound of very costly perfume, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred days wages, and given to poor people?" He said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he carried the money box, used to pilfer from what was put into it. Jesus said, "Leave her alone, in order that she may keep it for the day of My burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me."

The great multitude of the Jews learned that He was there; and they came, not only because of Jesus, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. But the chief priests conspired to put Lazarus to death as well. Because of him many of the Jews were leaving them and were believing in Jesus.

On the next day the great multitude who had come to the celebration, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of the palm trees, and went out to meet Him, and began to cry out, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel."

*Jesus was
well-acquainted
with the prophecies about
Him. There were hundreds
of particulars, some spoken
thousands of years before
He came to earth in
human form.*

*The path of following Christ
is arduous and costly. This is
why Jesus always encouraged
His followers to "count the
cost" ahead of time. It was all
about bringing light
into dark places.*

And Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." His disciples did not understand at first; but when Jesus was risen from the dead, then they remembered that these things were written about Him, and that they had done these things to Him. So the multitude who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, were telling everyone who He was. For this reason the multitude went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign. The Pharisees then said to one another, "What we are doing is not doing any good; look, the whole world has gone after Him."

Now there were certain Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast and they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came, and they told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep his life eternally. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there will My servant be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

"Now My soul is troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 'Father, glorify Your name.'" Then there came a voice out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The multitude, who stood by and heard it, were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for you. Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out. If I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself." But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death He was about to die.

The multitude answered Him, "We have heard in the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up and killed'? Who is this Son of Man?" Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and He left and hid Himself from them.

John 12:37-50

Though He had performed so many signs in their sight, yet many were not believing in Him; that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Because of this they could not believe, for Isaiah also said, "He has blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart; or they might see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and be converted, and I would heal them." These things Isaiah said, because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. Nevertheless, even many of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, or they would be put out of the synagogue. For they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me. I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him. The word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has commanded me, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life. Therefore the things I say, I speak just as the Father has told Me to speak."

The End is the Beginning!

DAY THIRTY-FOUR 34

TIME ALONE WITH GOD

John 13:1-38

This is either the third or fourth Passover since Christ began His public ministry. His mission had always been to come and give Himself - this was the essence of His Kingdom. He knew it was time to deliver Himself for crucifixion.

Belief in Christ made His disciples clean before God. Though their feet still became dirty from walking through the world, it didn't change their heart-clean status.

If the Son of God would wash another man's feet, then we should be willing to serve others.

Before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. As they ate together the devil already had put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him. Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God, and was going back to God, rose from supper, and laid aside His garments. And taking a towel, He wrapped it around Himself.

Then He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was wrapped. He came to Simon Peter and he said to Him, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand later." Peter said to Him, "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Simon Peter said to Him, "Then Lord, wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed only needs to wash his feet, and is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew who was betraying Him. For this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."

And so when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and sat down at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent

For some reason, the Father places a high value on the suffering that comes from betrayal. Perhaps it is because the human condition has allowed billions of opportunities for Him to display His grace by giving His Son.

him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but the Scripture must be fulfilled, 'He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.' From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives who I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me." The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. Leaning close to Jesus was one of His closest followers, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is He is speaking about." And leaning on Jesus' breast, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "The one for whom I shall dip the piece of bread and give it to him." So when He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

None of those eating at the table knew why He had said this to him. Some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we need for the feast;" or that he should give something to the poor. So after receiving the bread he went out immediately; and it was night. When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.

"Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' A new commandment I give you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later." Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, before a rooster crows you will deny Me three times."

THE TRUE VINE

John 14:1-15:10

"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many beautiful dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And you know where I am going."

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you know Him and have seen Him."

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or believe on Me because of the works themselves.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in My name, I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever. The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you will know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will see Me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also. In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will reveal Myself to him."

Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what has happened that You are going to reveal Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our dwelling place with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you, while living with you.

*God is in the business
of causing people to grow.
Spiritual nourishment is
offered to anyone who is will-
ing to stay close to God. This
connection of Vine, branches,
and spiritual nourishment
is a big part of how
Christ-followers grow.*

Many in history have speculated about the nature of God's Spirit. Is He a person? How does He differ from the rest of the Trinity? It is important to get to know the Holy Spirit as our Helper. Jesus was leaving the earth, and the Holy Spirit is given the role of disclosing the Father to us, and Helping us to live lives that are in harmony with God's heart.

There were many things to say and little time to say them. Jesus would reveal what His followers could bear now and wait to say more face to face after He had risen from the dead.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things, and bring to your heart, mind, and memory all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have celebrated, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass, you may believe. I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father charged Me, I do now as He commanded. Get up and let us go from here.

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinekeeper. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.”

John 15:11-16:20

“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, when one lays down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me. But I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you. This I command you, that you love one another.

“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘a slave is not greater than his

master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for the sake of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. But they have done this in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Law, 'They hated Me without a cause.' When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

"These things I have spoken to you, that you may be kept from stumbling. They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God. These things they will do, because they have not known the Father, or Me. But these things I have spoken to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you about them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

"But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He comes He will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative. Whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take what is Mine, and will reveal it to you. All things that the Father has belong to Me; that is why I said that He takes of Mine, and will reveal it to you. Soon you will no longer see Me; and in a little while, you will see Me."

Some of His disciples therefore said to one another, "What is He is telling us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and then a little while later, you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" So they were saying, "What is this 'little while'? We do not know what He is talking about." Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me?' and again a little while, and you will see Me'? Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy."

John 16:21-17:19

“Whenever a woman is in labor she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she forgets the pain, because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. You, too, now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you. And in that day you will ask Me no questions. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

“These things I have told you figuratively; an hour is coming when I will speak no more to you in figurative language, but will tell you the Father’s word plainly. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say that I will make request of the Father on your behalf; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father. I came out from the Father, and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again, and returning to the Father.”

His followers said, “Now You are speaking clearly, and are not using a figure of speech. Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You. By this we believe that You came from God.” Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all mankind, so to all You have given Him, He may give eternal life. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, glorify Me together with Yourself, Father, with the glory which I had with You before the world was even formed. I demonstrated Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

“Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them, and truly understood

Jesus was very intimate with His Father, and totally immersed in His purpose. He knew that His sacrifice was going to save millions of souls, and bring honor and glory to His Father's house!

In some way Jesus' followers were to be marked by truth to the point where they were "set apart" for the special purposes of God.

Once again Jesus refers to His existence before the world was formed. This is barely understood within our culture's view of Jesus.

that I came out from You, and they believed that You sent Me. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.

“And I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of hell, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Set them apart in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I set Myself apart, that they themselves also may be set apart in truth.

“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but also for those who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one. I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You love Me.

“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and they have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known; that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

Jesus was the perfect servant and He invites us to live a life of serving God and serving others.

The emotional and physical pressure upon Christ must have been unbearable, inasmuch as He was taking upon Himself the sins of the world.

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

Luke 22:24-53

And there arose a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' But it is not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater, the one who sits at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves. And you are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." And he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death!" And He said, "Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me."

And He said to them, "When I sent you out without wallet and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" And they said, "No, nothing." And He said to them, "But now, let him who has a wallet take it along, likewise also a bag, and let him who has no sword sell his robe and buy one. For I tell you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me. 'And He was numbered with transgressors'; for that which refers to Me now has its fulfillment." And they said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

And He proceeded as He usually did to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed Him. When He arrived He told His followers "pray so that you do not fall into temptation." And He moved a distance from them and began to pray "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him, yet in His great agony He prayed fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling on the ground. When He got up from praying He found His followers sleeping, worn out from sorrow. He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

Roman officers ensured that Christ's death, trial, and burial would be free from tampering.

The sheer authority of Jesus' Name drove them to the ground, and demonstrated that He was not being taken, but was delivering Himself to be killed.

Observe the same account of this "ear slaying" in Luke. What do you see?

John is anonymous in his own book, and refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."



KILLING CHRIST

John 18:1-32

When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the ravine of the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, into which He and His disciples entered. Now Judas who was betraying Him also knew the place; for Jesus had often met there with His disciples. Judas received the Roman soldiers and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees and came into the garden. And Judas who was betraying Him was standing there with them with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went to them and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am He." When He said to them, "I am He" they drew back, and fell to the ground.

Again He asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene." Jesus answered, "I told you I am He. If you are here for Me, let these others go on their way," that the word might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You have given Me I have lost not even one."

Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given Me?"

So the Roman soldiers and their commander, and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him, and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was necessary for one man to die on behalf of the people. And Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter inside.

The servant-girl therefore who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's followers, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the servant and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The high priest was questioning Jesus about His followers and about His teaching. Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; from the beginning I taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I

The Praetorium was the Roman hall in the capital of Jerusalem from which the Jews were governed.

38

Pilate reluctantly submitted to the inevitable when these troublesome Jews invoked Caesar's name. There could only be one king in the Empire, and that was Caesar.

spoke nothing in secret. Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; behold, they know what I said." And when He had said this, one of the officers standing by hit Jesus with a severe blow, saying, "Is that the way You answer the high priest?" Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, reveal the wrong; but if correctly, why do you strike Me?" Annas therefore sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself by the fire. They said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with Him?" Peter therefore denied it again; and immediately a rooster crowed.

They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium in order that they might not be defiled, but might share in the Passover. Pilate therefore went out to them, and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?" They answered and said to him, "If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you." Pilate therefore said to them, "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death," that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spoke, indicating what kind of death He was about to die.

DAY THIRTY-EIGHT

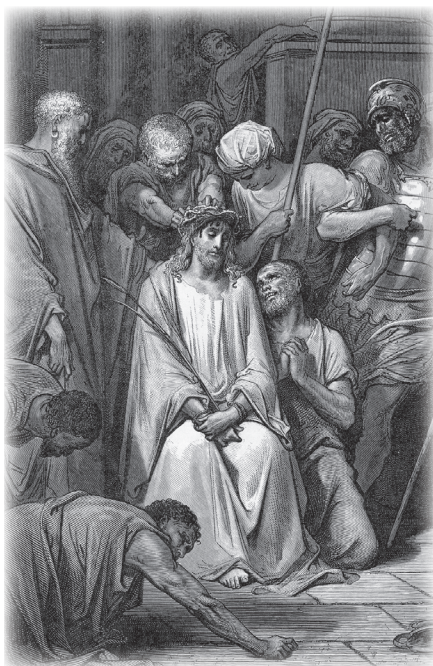
John 18:33-19:22

Pilate again entered into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You up to me; what have You done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

Pilate therefore said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him. But you have a custom, that I should release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish that I release for you the King of the Jews?" Therefore they cried out again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a criminal.

Then Pilate took Jesus, and had Him violently whipped. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and arrayed Him in a purple robe; and they began to come up

Many prophecies were fulfilled in the birth, life, ministry, and death of Christ. These were made hundreds and even thousands of years before His birth.



to Him, and say, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and to give Him blows in the face. And Pilate came out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no guilt in Him."

Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!" When the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves, and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

Pilate therefore said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin." As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour of the day. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!" Then they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." So he delivered Him to them to be crucified.

They then took Jesus and He went out, carrying His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified Him, along with two other men, one on either side with Jesus in the middle. And Pilate wrote an inscription also, and put it on the cross. And it was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and in Greek. And so the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered "What I have written I have written."

John 19:23-42

The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and tore it into four parts, a part to every soldier. They did the same with His tunic; and the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. They said therefore to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be;" that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "They divided My outer garments among



Hyssop was an herb that provided a natural anesthetic, in this case, as crucified people died.

Luke 23:39 - 45 really needs to be read here!

"One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!"

But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"

"And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."

And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!"

And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour; because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two."

them, and for My clothing they cast lots." This is why the soldiers did these things. Also standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" He then said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own household.

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to His mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

Because it was the day of preparation (for that Sabbath was a holy day), the Jews asked Pilate that the legs of the three might be broken so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, and that they might be taken away. Therefore the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. I am telling you what I saw with my own eyes, and my witness is true; and I know that I am telling the truth, so that you also may believe. These things came to pass that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of His shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They will look on Him whom they pierced."

After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. He came and took away His body. And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to Him by night; bringing a mixture of 100 pounds of spices. And so they took the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in linen wrappings with the spices, according to the burial custom of the Jews.

Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. Therefore on account of the Jewish day of preparation, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

DAY THIRTY-NINE

FACT OR FICTION?

Luke 24:1-53

*Though they had been
told in advance, the recognition
that Jesus was no longer dead
would now revolutionize
His followers' lives.*

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. But when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened that while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel; and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

And they remembered His words, and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven as well as the others. This included Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James as well as other women with them who were telling these things to the apostles. These words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them. [But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. And stooping and looking in, he saw just the linen wrappings; and he went away to his home, amazed at what had happened.]

ON THE ROAD

And two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had taken place. And it came about that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself approached, and began traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad.

*All of Jerusalem was in
turmoil, and should have been! It
was one thing that the Son of God
had been crucified and killed,
but now He was missing.
And worse yet, He was
beginning to show up
in specific places...alive!*

And one of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that He was the one who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. And some of the women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. And some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but they did not find Jesus."

*Moses and the prophets
clearly represented the Messiah
(Savior). To miss Him
was to miss it all!*

*Every appearance of Jesus
after the resurrection had a
purpose. Here they were
being taught to see with
spiritual eyes.*

*He ate the fish to prove He was
more than a ghost. He was a real
risen-from-the-dead person with
a real risen-from-the-dead body,
just as His friend Lazarus
had been, only better!*

*The Temple became a
rallying place for these new
believers and these witnesses to
the Living Christ who once was
dead. The world was never
going to be the same!*

And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He would travel farther. And they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." And He went in to stay with them.

And it came about that when He had sat at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" And they arose that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, saying, "The Lord has really risen, and has appeared to Simon Peter." And they began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

And while they were telling these things, He Himself stood among them. But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is Me; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." [And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.] And while they still could not believe it for joy and were gazing in astonishment, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them.

Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "It is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

"You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came about that while He was blessing them, He parted from them. And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising God.

The nail prints in Christ's hands and feet will never leave the body of the eternal Jesus Christ. They will be an eternal reminder of the great love of the Father and the incredible sacrifice of the "Lamb of God."

The Holy Spirit was given to comfort and empower them. Christ would now be gone and would speak to them through the Holy Spirit (the Comforter). He would empower them to be His witnesses through the Spirit's power.

It was neat that Thomas responded in faith, but even cooler in God's mind when someone who does not see the nail prints still believes.

"This is the third time"... Jesus' ministry after His resurrection was key in that it proved all He said was true. He took the time to carefully allow them to see and handle the One who had been dead. There is more historical proof for the resurrection than much of what we readily accept as historical truth!

FEED MY SHEEP

John 20:19-21:25

When evening had come on the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them, and said to them, "Peace be with you." And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained." But Thomas, one of the twelve, called "the twin," was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the nail holes, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

FISHERMEN

After these things Jesus revealed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and this is how it happened. Simon Peter, and Thomas, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will come with you." They went out, and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing. But when the day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus therefore said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No." And He said to them, "Throw the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will catch some fish." They threw out their net and they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. The disciple

whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." And so when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his heavier garment (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the smaller boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish.

And so when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already prepared, and fish placed on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you just caught." Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three. Although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" Knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread, and gave them the fish as well. This is the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after He was raised from the dead.

So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep."

JOHN'S FAREWELL

"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to plan your way and hold yourself together, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will carry you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." Now this He said, revealing what kind of death he would experience to glorify God. He said to him, "Follow me!"

Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His breast at supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" Peter therefore seeing this exchange said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!" This saying therefore went out among the brothers that this disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?"

This is the disciple who witnessed these things, and wrote them down; and we know that my testimony is true.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books they would fill.

*Peter had denied Christ
three times, now he asserts
three times that He will be
faithful to his calling
to feed sheep.*

*This exchange must
have been both painful
and comforting
to Peter.*

*We have about forty days
of Christ's three or four year public
ministry recorded in the four Gospels.
Can you imagine the things
that are unwritten!?*

DAY FORTY 40

TO THE END OF THE AGE

Matthew 28:16-20

But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Theophilus was a Greek who received an earlier letter from Luke. The Gospel of Luke is the most consecutive of the four Gospels, and The Acts of the Holy Spirit is a continuation of the incredible ministry of Christ.

THE STORY GOES ON

Acts 1:1-2:4

The first letter I sent, Theophilus, to tell you about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Christ appeared over forty days to hundreds of people after His resurrection. This established and energized the ministry of His early followers, and caused them to leave everything and to follow Him.

And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is this the time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Christ was God - it was no longer a disputable issue for the disciples. They had seen Him killed, disappear from His tomb, reveal Himself numerous times, and ascend to heaven to return to the Father!

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were all watching, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. As they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. And they said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a week's journey away.

And when they returned, they went up to the upper room where they were staying: Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.

*People debate whether
or not the choice of Matthias to
replace Judas was presumptuous,
and that Christ's choice
of Saul who became
Paul was the real replacement
for Judas. We don't
know for certain.*

*The choice of Matthias
was from a select group who
had been around since the
beginning and seen it all!
Pentecost took place 50 days
after Passover, and during
this time the risen Jesus had
appeared to many, to even 500
people at one time,
demonstrating to
His followers that the grave
had not held Him.*

*The Jews were gathered in
Jerusalem from all over the world
for this great feast. Though their
languages differed they all heard
what the disciples were saying in
their own languages.*

With one mind they were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.

At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was counted as one of us, and received his part in this ministry." (Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, the Field of Blood.) "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his household be made desolate, and let no man dwell in it'; and, 'His place let another man take.'

"It is therefore necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us -- beginning with Jesus baptism by John, until the day that He was taken up from us -- that one of these should become a witness with us of His resurrection." And they selected two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, "You, Lord, know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was counted with the eleven apostles.

THE OUTPOURING AT PENTECOST

And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues that looked like fire, distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them the ability.

Acts 2:56-41

Now there were Jews staying in Jerusalem, devoted men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs - we hear them in our own

languages, speaking about the mighty works of God.”

*Joel the prophet had
spoken hundreds of
years earlier that such
phenomenon would occur!*

*The purpose of the pouring
out of the Spirit in the last days
was to invite many souls
into the Kingdom!*

*The numbers of people
who have lived since
the Incarnation of Christ are
huge compared to those
who came before us!*

*King David is quoted because
a promise was made to him that
one of his sons would sit on
his throne eternally.*

*David was from the tribe of Judah
(one of the twelve tribes of Israel),
and so was Jesus! Read Psalm 16.*

And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others were mocking and saying, “They are intoxicated.” But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: “Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen carefully to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you are thinking, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning; but what you see is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour out My Spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. Upon My people, both men and women, I will in those days pour out My Spirit and they will prophesy. And I will perform wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And it will be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him among you, just as you know -- this Man delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.”

“For David says of Him, ‘I was always beholding the Lord in my presence; for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue is filled with praise; and my flesh also will hope and live securely; because You will not abandon my soul to the grave, or allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. You have made known to me the path of life; You will make me full of gladness with Your presence.’

“Brothers, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to place one of his descendants upon his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hell, nor did His flesh decay. God raised Jesus up again, to which we are all witnesses. Having been lifted to the right hand of God and

*When King David spoke
this prophecy in the Psalms
hundreds of years earlier, he had
to be speaking of someone else
because he died and was buried.*

*Peter appeals to the Jews'
knowledge of the Scriptures and
demonstrates that Jesus is being
spoken of in this Psalm, and
it pierces many deeply, and
has a staggering affect.*

*This phenomenon continued
to spread throughout the Roman
Empire, and the message of
Christ swept the earth, as it
continues to do today.
As long as there is a Holy Spirit
there will be new life, and as long
as there are believers
in Christ the truth of the
Gospel will be told!*



*Peter and John in the
Temple with a paralyzed beggar.
What they lacked in financial
resources they offered in truth.
Eternal life is provided
in the Name of Jesus!*

having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out what you both see and hear. For it was not David who went into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."' Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus you crucified."

Now when they heard this they were pierced in their hearts, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For this promise is for you and your children, and for all who are yet to be born, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself."

Acts 2:42-47

And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Now I make known to you, brothers, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which you stand. By this Good News you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, so you have not believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the twelve.

After that He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep in death. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, to one untimely born, He appeared to me as well.

My Story

Together we have read about this truly miraculous life. You have examined firsthand who Jesus claimed to be and what many eye witnesses said He did. His prophesied birth, His choice to be born into this world, His teaching, His miracles, His sinless life, and finally His Living work in every decade since His resurrection all lead us to several key questions.

Do I personally believe that Jesus is indeed God's Son?

Do I believe that God sacrificed His own Son to buy me back from death?

Do I believe that I am eternally lost without Him?

Have I submitted my will and called upon the Father to deliver me from eternal separation and death?

There are no eloquent words that can make the Father listen, no deeds of kindness I can do that will get His attention...I must come through the Door of the sheep, recognizing that God in Christ is the only way I can find eternal life.

I must repent of being separated from God. I must embrace the Son, and commit and submit my will to the One who can deliver my life and my soul, and give me the gift of eternal life.

Welcome to the crossroads of mortality and eternity.

The choice is yours!

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