The Life of Christ

Teacher's Manual

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Lesson 1
The Background of the Gospels

I. What world powers controlled Palestine during the inter-testamental period?

In this section we are looking at the world powers that had primary control over Palestine in the period of time from Malachi through to the end of the New Testament age. It should be noted that the dates are not necessarily consistent with the issue of world control as an empire, but only the control pertaining to Palestine itself. In some ways we could refer to this period of time as "the preparation of the world for the coming of Christ and the Gospel."

A. The Persian Period – 536-333 B.C.

The united Medo-Persian Empire conquered the fierce Assyrians and became the primary world power. Under Cyrus king of Persia many of the Israelites were encouraged to go back to Palestine and **rebuild their temple** (Note: This is the temple that was in use in Jesus' day). Cyrus philosophy was to conquer a people and then give them back their religious freedom to encourage long term loyalty to him and his kingdom.

A significant thing that happened in this period is that **the synagogue system** was established under Ezra to promote the reading and study of the Old Testament among the Jews both in Palestine and in exile. When we get to the New Testament period the existence of these synagogues would be vital for the spread of the Gospel. In many cities they became a spring board for Paul's church planting ministry.

Another significant thing that happened in this period that has a huge bearing on understanding the New Testament was the serious antagonism and rivalry that developed between **the Jews and the Samaritans**. The Samaritans were some of the main opposition to the rebuilding of the walls under Nehemiah. This national grudge continued to increase up to the time of Jesus to the point that each despised the other.

B. The Greek Period – 333-323 B.C.

Under the leadership of Alexander the Great, perhaps the greatest military leader of all time, the world was brought under the control of the Greek Empire in just a few short years. Alexander subjected most of the world from Greece to India. Legend has it that when he entered Palestine he was shown the predictions of Daniel about the kingdoms of the world and was so impressed that he became very benevolent to the Jews.

Perhaps the most significant thing that happened under the Greek period is that of the unification of the world under **the Greek language** and in a lesser extent the Greek culture. This would eventually prove extremely beneficial for the spread of the Gospel, particularly as we know of it under the ministry of Paul.

Most of the New Testament would be written in the Greek language which was the **universal language** in the time of Christ.

C. The Egyptian Period – 323-204 B.C.

Under the leadership of Ptolemais, Egypt took control of Palestine. They would remain in control for well over 100 years. They were very kind to the Jews and it was not uncommon for a steady stream of Jews to move freely from Palestine to Egypt.

It was under his leadership that Alexandria became a major learning center and the location of the greatest library in the world. He promoted a strong emphasis on learning and education on a wide range of topics including religion. It was through his initiative that **the Septuagint** was produced, which was a Greek version of the Old Testament.

This is significant because the Septuagint, written in the most **common language** in the world, became the Bible of Jesus, Paul and the Early Church. It was also accessible to people of non-Jewish origin. This was the Bible of the land for 500 years until the Latin Vulgate superseded it.

D. The Syrian Period – 204-165 B.C.

As the Egyptian hold on things grew weaker and other powers grew stronger (including the Romans), the Selucids or Syrians were seeking to exercise their own freedom from dominance and desired control of Palestine to serve as a buffer zone to the rest of the world powers.

The Syrians had a tremendous hatred for the Jewish people and under the leadership of Antiochus Epiphanes killed many of the priests, changed the name of Jerusalem to Antioch, dedicated the temple to Jupiter and outlawed Jewish observances including Passover. When Antiochus declared himself to be a god and set up an altar to Jupiter in the temple offering pig's blood upon it, the Jews saw this as the abomination of desolation to which Daniel had referred (Dan. 12:11).

Unfortunately he went way too far in antagonizing the Jewish people and he aroused the wrath of a man by the name of Maddatheaus Maccabeas. He and his four sons would become freedom fighters for the Jews.

E. The Maccabean Period – 165-63 B.C.

Maddatheaus Maccabeas began his quest for freedom by killing the priest of Jupiter who had been functioning in the temple. He then fled to the hills and organized about 10,000 volunteers to serve as an army of farmers. Even though they were outnumbered five to one and were armed with much inferior weapons, somehow they overcame the Syrians and drove them out with heroic acts of bravery.

Judas Maccabeas went to Jerusalem, cleansed the temple and the city and brought a restoration of worship. It took several years before complete control of the land was accomplished under the leadership of the Maccabean family.

Unfortunately after the death of the original Maccabean leaders, their successors (nephews and grandchildren) were corrupt politically and the nation declined spiritually over time.

F. The Roman Period – 63 B.C. – 476 A.D.

Eventually the Romans grew in strength to the point that they were accomplishing their vision for world domination. One of the needs of the empire was clear and safe avenues of transport for goods and supply lines. They hired Pompeii to clear the Mediterranean of pirates. In the course of his efforts he landed in Palestine, saw the internal warring among the Maccabeas and seized the opportunity to take them captive to Rome.

From that point the Romans began their domination of Palestine. This is where we find the situation when Jesus was born. The Jews hated the Romans and the Romans had little respect for the Jews. They saw them as a difficult people who were nearly impossible to rule over because of their narrow, monotheistic views.

The greatest things that the Romans did for the Gospel was to create a universal **society of laws**, to establish a kingdom of **peace** (*Pax Romana*) and to establish a **system of roads** that made world-wide travel much **easier and safer** than it had ever been before. Many of the roads that were built by the Romans endure to this day. These roads would be the means by which the Gospel would be carried into the entire world.

II. What was the political setting at the time of Christ's birth?

As has been stated above, the world was under the dominance of the Roman Empire. Palestine was under Roman rule and Roman appointed leaders. The Romans placed kings or tetrarchs over the Jews. Antipater was given the initial position of tetrarch of Palestine about 47 B.C. and served in that position for about 10 years. He was succeeded by the following.

A. Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.)

This is the Herod that was the tetrarch or king of Judea when Jesus was born. He was a very paranoid leader who was afraid of being deposed by freedom fighters (descendents of the Maccabeas) or other rivals. Initially he married a Maccabean woman to ensure a safe relationship with the Maccabeans, but he never trusted his wife. Thinking that she might sell him out he eventually allowed her to be killed. His method of killing off potential rivals continued when he was informed of the birth of a potential rival by an unusual visit from three Persian kings (See: Mt. 2:1-19; Luke 1:5).

B. Herod's Three Sons (4 B.C. – 36 A.D.)

After the death of Herod there was much turmoil over the issue of succession and the realm was divided among his sons.

1. Archelaus (4-6 A.D.)

   He was given rule over the southern areas including Judea. This included the city of Bethlehem. He was a short-lived ruler who was known for his brutality toward both the Jews and the Samaritans. It was because he was over the region which included Bethlehem that Joseph, Jesus' earthly father, determined to move to Nazareth after returning from Egypt rather than back to Bethlehem (Mt. 2:22-23). Archelaus fell into ill favor with the Romans and his own brothers and was deposed after a very short reign.

2. Philip (4-34 A.D.)

   Philip was given rule over the northern areas (Luke 3:1). He was a relatively peaceful leader. He was well liked by his subjects. He eventually married Salome, the daughter of Herodias who was responsible for the death of John the Baptist.

3. Antipas (4-39 A.D.)

   Antipas (also called Herod) was given rule over the east side of the Jordan (Luke 3:1). Of all of Herod's sons, he played the most prominent role in biblical history because his region included Galilee and Perea, the area where both John the Baptist and Jesus did most of their ministry. He is the one who was most responsible for the death of John the Baptist (Mt. 14:1-12). When people reported of Jesus' ministry to him as possibly John risen from the dead (Mt. 4:1-2; Mark 6:14-16; Luke 9:7-9), he was interested in meeting Jesus. He was reported at a later point to be interested in killing Jesus (Luke 13:31). He was the Herod who tried Jesus and wanted to see a miracle from Him. When Jesus did not perform for him, he abused Him and sent Him back to Pilate for sentencing (Luke 23:6-12).

C. Agrippa I (37-44 A.D.)

   Agrippa I was the grandson of Herod the Great. He was a very indulgent and vain man who, in an effort to find favor with the Jews, became a persecutor of Christianity. He was responsible for the death of James, the first one of The Twelve to be martyred (Acts 12:1-3). Agrippa's unusual and agonizing death is recorded in the Book of Acts which seemed to be the judgment of God on his blasphemous attempt to be worshipped as God (Acts 12:20-25).

D. Agrippa II (48-70 A.D.)

   Agrippa II was the son of Agrippa I and eventually came to power some time after the death of Agrippa I since he was only seventeen when his father died. He was known to have lived in an incestuous relationship with his sister Bernice. He seemed to have had a good understanding of Jewish affairs and was consulted by

Rome on religious matters. He was one of the rulers who heard Paul's case after his arrest by the Jews (Acts 25:13-26:32). Had not Paul already appealed to Rome, he may have released him. He was the last of the Herodian dynasty.

III. Who are the other political leaders that are relevant to New Testament study?

In addition to kings or tetrarchs being placed over Palestine, there were governors or procurators who served regionally. For the purpose of our study we will only look at procurators in relation to Judea who are specifically mentioned in the New Testament.

A. Pontius Pilate (26-36 A.D.)

Pilate was the procurator during the most significant time of biblical history, being the one who tried Jesus and ultimately consented to His crucifixion (See: Luke 13:1-2; 23:1-5, 13-25)

B. Antonius Felix (52-59 A.D.)

Felix was the procurator of Judea when Paul was being prosecuted by the Jews (Acts 23:23-26). He was a corrupt leader who was more interested in bribes than in justice and left Paul in prison for two years throughout the rest of his tenure.

C. Porcius Festus (59-61 A.D.)

Festus succeeded Felix and was left with Paul's case hanging in the balance. Festus was more interested in making inroads to the Jews rather than justice. Paul's only hope for a fair trial was to appeal to Rome and have his trial moved to a place where the Jew had no political influence (Acts 25:1-12).

IV. What are some of the religious and cultural background that serve to help us understand the New Testament?

The best way to get a picture of the background information is to define certain groups and parties that existed in Christ's day.

A. Synagogues

During the 400 silent years the Jews developed synagogues which most likely can be traced back to Ezra. These were local assemblies in nearly every city where the Scriptures were read, taught and discussed by the people. There was still only one temple, but each city had a synagogue which had its elders. There were no priests who functioned in relation to the synagogue. These synagogues set a beautiful stage for the later development of the local church. There were some cities in the Roman Empire that were off-limits to an official synagogue. These were Roman colonies that were established to be a model of Roman government and law and they did not allow any foreign temples in these areas. Philippi was such a city (Acts 16:12).

B. The Sanhedrin

This was the official Jewish council or board that was established perhaps as early as Jehoshaphat to administrate the affairs of the nation (II Chr. 19:8). It consisted of 70 members plus the High Priest, 24 chief priests, 24 elders and 22 scribes or lawyers. These members of the Sanhedrin were given plenty of room by Rome to dictate local affairs as long as they paid due homage to Rome. They found it easier to govern a conquered people if they could work through a body composed of those same people. Jesus stood before this council and so did some of the Apostles (Mt. 26:57-58; John 18:31; 19:7; Acts 4:1-7; 6:12-7:1). The Sanhedrin had limited authority under Rome. They could sentence someone to death, but they could not carry it out without Roman approval and execution.

C. Priests

The Jewish priesthood was ordained by God in the time of Moses and their function was primarily religious. But after the captivity from the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the priests also served as civil leaders and princes. The High Priest was the head of all of the priests and, in the absence of a king, was the highest non-Roman, Jewish authority in the land and the official head of the Sanhedrin.

D. Scribes

In the New Testament the scribes were the students, interpreters and teachers of the Scripture or the Law. They were held in high esteem by the people and may have found their origin as a group in the time of Ezra. They were experts in expounding the Scripture and were serious opponents of Christ, perhaps because He arose to notoriety outside of their rabbinical schools. The scribes were always trying to test Jesus' Scripture knowledge or to catch Him in His words (Mt. 22:35-36; Luke 10:25-26; 14:3; Mark 12:28, 35).

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, [36] "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" [37] Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' [38] This is the first and great commandment. [39] And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' [40] On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:35-40

Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. [2] And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. [3] And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" [4] But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him, and let him go. [5] Then He answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" [6] And they could not answer Him regarding these things. Luke 14:1-6

E. Pharisees

The Pharisees were a religious sect that arose during the time of the Maccabeas and were called "separatists" by their enemies because they separated themselves from the ambitious political parties in their nation. They were the ultraconservatives of the day and were sticklers for the letter of the law. The Pharisees had a hatred for Jesus because He exposed them for what they were—white on the outside, but full of death on the inside (Mt. 12:1-2; 23:1-2; Luke 6:6-7; 12:1).

F. Sadducees

The Sadducees were an aristocratic and political party among the Jews and were seen as the rivals of the Pharisees. They were the liberals and modernists of the day who denied the supernatural (e.g. angels, miracles, the resurrection of the dead, Acts 23:7-8). It is interesting that the Sadducees and the Pharisees who normally disliked each other would team up with to get rid of Jesus (Mt. 16:1-12; 22:23-33).

But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!" [7] And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. [8] For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. [9] Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, "We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God." Acts 23:6-9

G. Herodians

The Herodians were an exclusively political party who took their name from Herod and derived their authority from the Roman government. They were pro-Roman in their emphasis and were not interested in any change in the political situation of the day. They tended to view Christ as a revolutionary which explains how they interacted with each other (Mark 3:6; 12:13-17).

Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words. [14] When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? [15] Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it." [16] So they brought it. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." [17] And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at Him. Mark 12:13-17

H. Zealots

The Zealots were the Jewish nationalistic party and would be on the opposite political spectrum to the Herodians. They wanted to be rid of Roman rule over the

Jews and were not oppose to using violent means to overthrow the Roman yoke (See: Luke 6:15; Acts 23:12-13).

I. Galileans

This is a party that arose in northern Palestine and consisted of the followers of Judas of Galilee. He was also violently opposed to Roman rule. The Galileans were quite radical in the expression of their views and were known for inciting riots and other violent clashes with Roman authorities. This party came into a violent collision with Pilate (Luke 13:1-3). In order to turn Pilate against Jesus, His enemies tried to link Jesus and His disciples with this party (Mt. 26:69; Mark 14:70; Luke 23:6).

Lesson 2
Why Four Gospels?

One of the questions that is often raised is why do we need four Gospels and why were four Gospels included in our Bible. Why not just one? Why only four? Why no more or no less?

I. Does the number four have any significance?

A. The number four is sometimes referred to as the number of earth or the number of creation.

1. There are four seasons (winter, spring, summer and fall).
2. There are four principle directions (north, south, east and west).
3. There are four ancient elements (earth, air, fire and water).

In addition we speak of:

4. The four corners of the earth.
5. The four winds.

B. In type we see that the number four is seen in the following:

1. The four streams coming out of one in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 2:10).

These four streams all came from the one river in the Garden and watered the four corners of the earth.

Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. Genesis 2:10

2. The four pillars holding up the veil in the Tabernacle of Moses (Ex. 26:31-32).

"You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks shall be gold, upon four sockets of silver. Exodus 26:31-32

The veil was a symbol of Christ's body or flesh (Heb. 10:20).

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh… Hebrews 10:19-20

It is interesting that in conjunction with His death the veil in the temple was rent at the same time that His body died (Mt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said,

"Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last. Luke 23:44-46

The four Gospels are the four pillars that uphold Christ as we know him according to the flesh or the earthly Christ. The Book of Acts presents us with Christ in His risen and exalted state where we see Christ according to the Spirit or the heavenly Christ since His body is no longer here on earth.

II. Why do the differing accounts give us such a different view?

The four accounts give us different pictures or facets of Christ's earthly ministry. In some ways the accounts give us as much insight into the authors of these books as it does to Christ Himself. No two people will look any anything the same way. Who we are as individuals will often affect our impression of things. In order to give us a well rounded view of Jesus, God has taken four distinctly different individuals and given us their view of Jesus. In these four views, we can all find ample for us to know Jesus in His earthly walk and appreciate Him in His fullness.

III. What are the four distinct pictures that the four Gospels give us of Christ?

As we look at the four Gospels each one of them has significant value in getting a full view of Jesus Christ. Just like a precious diamond must be studied from different angles and the assessor must look into each of the facets in order to determine the true value, so we must see Christ through the eyes of these four observers of Jesus. The following are a few ways in which the four Gospels show us the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Note: These are meant to be studied in relation to the accompanying chart on page 16).

A. Four Prophetic Streams

Throughout the Old Testament there are perhaps as many as 300 different prophecies regarding the coming of Messiah. All of these can be divided into four principle pictures of the Coming One.

1. Behold Your King! (See: Zech. 9:9; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15; John 19:14)

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9

Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" But 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!" Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away. John 19:14-16

Matthew is the Gospel that focuses on Jesus as the King and His Kingdom. It is in his Gospel that Jesus goes up on a mountain in a kingly manner, sits down and gives the laws of His kingdom. In his genealogy he traces Jesus' lineage to King David.

2. **Behold My Servant!** (See: Zech. 3:8; Is. 42:1; 52:13-15)

   'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign; for behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH. Zechariah 3:8

   "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. Isaiah 42:1

   Mark is the Gospel that views Jesus as the servant of the Lord. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus has no genealogy, no spectacular birth or heavenly choirs. Jesus is a doer or a man of action in the Gospel of Mark.

3. **Behold the Man!** (See: Zech. 6:12-13; John 19:5)

   "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the LORD; yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zechariah 6:12-13

   Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!" John 19:5

   Luke's Gospel focuses on the humanity of Jesus and presents Him as true man. The key title in his Gospel in reference to Jesus is Son of Man. Luke traces Christ's genealogy back to the first man—Adam.

4. **Behold Your God!** (See: Is. 40:9)

   O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Isaiah 40:9

   John's Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus' deity. He presents Jesus as the Son of God who is without beginning and end. His genealogy starts with God Himself and with Jesus preexistent union with the Eternal God. John places a great deal of emphasis on Jesus relationship to the Father.

B. Four Tabernacle Colors

The four colors that were used in the veil in the Tabernacle of Moses which pointed to Jesus as the true tabernacle reflect in type these four streams (Ex. 26:31-32).

"You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks shall be gold, upon four sockets of silver.

1. Purple

   Purple is a kingly color and speaks of royalty. Matthew is the Gospel of Jesus' kingly splendor.

2. Scarlet

   Scarlet is the color of blood and speaks of the pouring out of one's life in humble service and suffering. Mark is the Gospel of Jesus' servanthood.

3. Fine Linen

   The fine linen was bleached white by the sun. It speaks of the spotless man who lived a perfect life to become our sin bearer. Luke is the Gospel of Jesus' perfect humanity.

4. Blue

   Blue is the heavenly color and speaks of Jesus as the Lord of heaven. John presents to us Jesus as the heavenly manna that came down from above (John 6:30-40).

C. Four Faces of the Cherubim

The four faces of the cherubim described by Ezekiel reflect in type these same four streams (Ezek. 1:5-11).

As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces.
Ezekiel 1:10-11a

1. The Lion

The lion with its kingly crown is referred to as the "king of beasts." Matthew shows us Jesus as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5).

2. The Ox

The ox was used in the culture of the day as a "beast of burden" and a symbol of work. Jesus is our burden bearer who is presented to us in the Mark's Gospel.

3. The Man

Luke's Gospel presents Jesus as a man of compassion who is acquainted with our sorrows qualifying him as our sympathetic High Priest.

4. The Eagle

The eagle is a glorious creature who symbolizes majesty. The eagle soars high above the earth and has the vision to see well beyond man. The eagle has an extra eyelid and is the only bird that can look directly at the sun. John is the one who displays to us the glory of the Son.

It is worthy of note that all of these animals are kings in their own realm.

D. Four Genealogies

The four genealogies presented in the four Gospels reflect these same four streams.

1. Matthew traces Jesus' lineage back to Abraham, the first one to receive the promise of kings, and to King David to establish His right to the throne. Even though Joseph was not Jesus' actual father, the oldest child in a royal family inherited the right to the throne. According to law, Joseph was his legal father even though he was not his natural father.

2. Mark has no genealogy because there is no particular value in recording the lineage of a slave.

3. Luke traces Jesus' lineage back to Adam through His mother Mary. This genealogy does two things. Like Matthew it traces Jesus back to David and Judah thus giving Him the right to the throne of David. It also goes all the way back to Adam making Jesus fit to be our near kinsman and redeemer, the last Adam.

4. John's genealogy is God. Jesus is God, and therefore has no beginning or no end.

E. Four Old Testament Offices

The four offices that were highlighted in the Old Testament pointed to Jesus who would be the ultimate fulfillment of each one of them. The four Gospels also reflect these four streams.

1. King

The office of Christ's kingship is presented in Matthew.

2. Prophet

Christ as the prophet or suffering servant is announced by prophecy in the Gospel of Mark (Is. 40:3; Mal.3:1).

3. **Priest**

   Luke begins with a priest and pictures Christ as the sympathetic High Priest who identifies with fallen man.

4. **Judge**

   The ultimate judge is God. Through the Gospel of John the relationship of the Son to the Father is highlighted and a thread that runs through it is that the Father has placed judgment into the hands of the Son (John 5:22, 27; 9:39).

   For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. John 5:22-23

F. Four Aspects of His Sonship

The aspects of His sonship reflect these four streams.

1. The Son of David – Matthew
2. The Son of Man – Mark
3. The Son of Adam – Luke
4. The Son of God – John

G. Four Different Audiences

It is obvious that the writers took to write for a specific purpose and to reach a certain group of people. This is clearly seen as a reflection of these four streams.

1. Matthew was written to the Jews. It contains more Old Testament references than any of the other Gospels and clearly establishes Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy and the King Messiah for whom they were waiting. He talks more about the king and the kingdom than any other of the evangelists.

2. Mark was written to the Romans. The Romans were not as interested in what a person said as in what they did. They were not the philosophers that the Greeks were, they were pragmatists. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus is a man of few words and the focus is on His works of service.

3. Luke was written to the Greeks. The Greeks were impressed with learning and culture. Luke was the most educated and cultured of all of the evangelists. His writing reflects a much higher vocabulary and is written in a more educated style.

4. John was written to the world. It is interesting that when people give out testaments for evangelism, it is usually the Gospel of John that is selected. It reflects the coming of Christ as a reflection of God's love for the world.

H. Four Different Evangelists

Different people see things differently from the perspective of who they are and what is important to them. The four evangelists were four very different people who reflect a cross-section of humanity and give all of us a point of identification.

1. Matthew was a Jew who originally worked as a Roman official.

2. Mark was a servant to the apostle Paul and Barnabas and a minister who proved profitable.

3. Luke was a Gentile and a trained physician who became a very close friend and a regular traveling companion of the Apostle Paul.

4. John was originally a fisherman who became perhaps Jesus' most intimate friend.

THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM UNFOLDED

	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
1. Four Prophetic Streams	Behold Your King	Behold My Servant	Behold the Man	Behold Your God
2. Tabernacle Colors	Purple	Scarlet	Fine Linen	Blue
3. Cherubim Faces	Lion	Ox	Man	Eagle
4. Genealogies	To King David	None	To the First Adam	Without Beginning
5. Four Old Testament Offices	King	Prophet	Priest	Judge
6. Four Aspects of His Sonship	Son of David	Son of Man	Son of Adam	Son of God
7. Different Audiences	Jews	Romans	Greeks	Whosoever
8. Four Descriptions of Jesus	What He said	What He did	Who He was	Who He is
9. Four Different Evangelists	Jewish/ Roman Official	Minister/Servant	Gentile/Physician	Intimate Friend
10. Key Words	"That it might be fulfilled" "Kingdom" "Son of David"	"Straightway" "Forthwith" "Immediately"	"Son of Man"	"World" "Son"

Lesson 3-4
The Birth of Jesus

I. The birth of Jesus is the most significant event in history.

A. The Historical Birth of Jesus

1. The greatest single event in the history of the world. His birth changed the course of human events.

2. The most significant person in history. All of history is really His-Story.

3. The eternal future of every person on the earth will be based on how you relate to and define this man.

   Is He:

   - A teacher as Nicodemus thought (John 3:2)?
   - A prophet as the woman at the well perceived (John 4:19)?
   - The Christ, the son of the Living God as the Father revealed to Peter (Mt. 16:16)?

B. The New Birth of Jesus

1. The greatest single event in the life of every person is the new birth.

2. Just as the Christ child was formed in the womb of Mary, Christ wants to be formed in each one of our lives.

3. This also occurs by a miracle conception caused by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

4. The activity of the Holy Spirit is coupled with the incorruptible seed of the Word of God planted in our hearts.

5. God desires that this seed grow in us and that the word will be made flesh in us. Christ is to be formed in us.

II. Jesus existed as the Eternal Son of God prior to His incarnation.

A. Jesus was in the beginning with the Father God (John 1:1).

1. He was involved in creation (John 1:3).

   All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. John 1:3

   He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn't make. –NLT

2. He was an equal person in the Godhead (Phil. 2:5-7; John 10:30-33; II Th. 2:16-17; Heb. 1:3).

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men." Philippians 2:5-7

Other Translations:

"Who existing in the form of God counted not the being on equality with God a thing to be grasped." –ASV

"Though the divine nature was His from the beginning, yet He did not look upon equality with God as above all things to be clung to." --TCNT

"For He, Who has always been God by nature did not cling to His prerogatives as God's equal" –Phil

"His nature is, from the first, divine and yet He did not see, in the rank of Godhead, a prize to be coveted." –Knox

"Who, though he was God, did not demand and cling to his rights as God." --TLB

B. Jesus appeared in bodily form the Old Testament as the Angel of the Lord (Mic. 5:2).

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.

1. To Abraham (Gen. 14:18-24; 18:1; Heb. 7:1-10)
2. To Jacob (Gen. 32:22-32)
3. To Joshua (Josh. 5:13-15)
4. To Samson's Parents (Judg. 13:17-22)
5. To the Three Men in the Fiery Furnace (Dan. 3:24-25)

III. The birth of Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament.

A. By God to the Serpent (Gen. 3:15)

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.

B. By God to Moses (Deut. 18:15)

The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear…

C. By Isaiah (Is. 7:14; 9:6)

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

D. By Micah (Mic. 5:2)

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.

IV. Jesus had the right pedigree to qualify as the prophesied Messiah.

Among the Jews, it was an extremely important thing to be able to trace one's genealogy. Without an accurate genealogy you could not be in the official registry which would have a bearing on inheritance and one's ability to function in the priestly and kingly offices (Ezra 2:59-63; I Chr. 9:1). Without an accurate genealogy, Jesus could not have authenticated His claim as the Messiah (It is worthy of note that when Jerusalem was destroyed many of the genealogical records were destroyed, but Jesus' genealogy was preserved in two gospel accounts.).

It is interesting that in the Old Testament one's natural lineage meant everything, but in the New Testament it is one's spiritual lineage that means everything. All human beings find themselves either "in Adam" or "in Christ" the last Adam (See: John 1:12-13; 3:1-5; Rom. 5:14; I Cor. 15:22, 45).

It would be wrong to ignore the fact that there is much debate about whether or not the genealogies of Matthew and Luke are those of Joseph and Mary respectively. The obvious reading of both suggests they are both that of Joseph. However, it appears that either Joseph had two fathers or one of them represents the line through Mary. In the Talmud Mary is called the daughter of Heli which seems to support the view that Luke is indeed the record of Mary's lineage (For more on this see: *ISBE*, Genealogy of Jesus Christ, Vol. II, Page 1198).

A. The genealogy of Matthew established Jesus' kingly or regal line and right to the throne of David. In Matthew Jesus is seen as the Son of David and Seed of Abraham (Mt. 1:1-17; Rom. 9:6-9; Heb. 11:18).

1. It would be impossible to convince a Jew that Jesus was the Messiah unless it could be shown that He was descended from David (Jer. 23:5; Ps. 132:10-11; John 7:42; Acts 13:22-23).

2. It is equally clear that the Messiah was to come through the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 21:12; 22:15-18; Luke 1:73; Gal. 3:16).

3. As far as the Jewish leaders were concerned Joseph's lineage would be more important than Mary's although from God's point of view Mary was the only legitimate human parent.

   Notice the language of Matthew 1:16. Thirty-eight times in chapter one the man is said to have "begot" offspring in the line of Messiah. But in relation to Joseph it says,

   And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

   Notice the language of Luke 3:23 as well where it says,

   Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli…

B. The lack of genealogy in Mark established Jesus as a humble servant.

C. The genealogy of Luke established Jesus' legal line as the "Seed of the Woman." In Luke Jesus is seen as the Son of Adam and the Son of God (Luke 3:23-38).

   It should be noted that Abraham and David are also part of Mary's genealogy (Luke 3:31, 34).

D. The genealogy of John established Jesus as the eternal Son of God (John 1:1-5).

   In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 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.

   As such Jesus is:

   1. The Alpha and Omega (Rev. 22:12-13, 16; 1:8).

      "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."…[16] *"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."* Revelation 22:12-13, 16

   2. The Beginning and Ending (Rev. 22:12-13, 16).

   3. The First and the Last (Rev. 1:17 with Is. 44:6).

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Revelation 1:17-18

V. The birth of Jesus was announced by angels.

It is worthy of note that Gabriel was a principle player in the birth announcement of both John the Baptist and Jesus. His last appearance in the Bible was when he delivered the Seventy Weeks Prophecy to Daniel regarding the time when the Messiah would be born (Dan. 9:21-27; Luke 1:19, 26).

A. It was announced to Mary (Luke 1:26-38).

Note: This was the only time that the angel appeared to Mary. All subsequent appearances would be given to Joseph, the head of the household.

B. It was announced to Joseph (Mt. 1:20-21).

But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

C. It was announced to the shepherds (Luke 2:8-14).

And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:9-11

VI. The birth of Jesus was God becoming man.

Notice all of the factors that emphasized the humility of his birth experience.

He was:

A. Born of an unknown, unmarried teenager instead of a famous princess (Luke 1:48).

Jesus would make Himself of no reputation so that we could be introduced as sons to the God of the universe.

B. Born to parents who were quite poor (Luke 2:24). They could not offer a lamb only a turtledove.

Jesus would become poor so that we might become rich (II Cor. 8:9).

C. Born in the tiny town of Bethlehem instead of Jerusalem or Rome (Mic. 5:2).

Bethlehem means "House of Bread." Jesus would become the Bread of Life.

D. Born in a stable for an inn instead of a palace (Luke 2:7).

Jesus was born in a stable but would prepare a mansion for His people (John 14:2-3).

E. Placed in a manger instead of royal bed (Luke 2:7)

Jesus would lay His life down so that we could become royalty.

F. Greeted by shepherds instead of by royalty (Luke 2:15-20).

Jesus would eventually become the "Good Shepherd."

Note: The wise men did not most likely greet Jesus for nearly two years.

VII. Mary was a good selection as one to bear the Christ child.

Read: Luke 1:26-56

Now in the sixth month [when Elizabeth was in her sixth month of pregnancy] the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" 29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." 34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" 35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing will be impossible." 38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 Then she spoke out with a

loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

46 And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. 48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. 49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. 50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. 54 He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, 55 As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever." 56 And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

A. What we know about Mary?

1. She was a young woman (somewhere between 12-17, most likely under 15).

   It is important not to underestimate what God can do with young people.

2. She was a virgin (had not had any sexual contact with a man).

3. She had a belief in the coming Messiah.

4. She was betrothed to Joseph.

   Betrothal in the Jewish culture was much stronger than our engagement. She may have had little to say about the selection of Joseph to be her husband. In any case, they were considered married in every way except that they would not live together or enjoy sexual union until after the marriage ceremony itself. Betrothal for a virgin usually lasted for a year. Betrothal could only be broken by death or divorce. If Joseph had died before the marriage ceremony took place, she would have still been regarded as his "widow" (a widow who was a virgin).

5. She was a woman of no apparent significance from man's viewpoint.

   - Nothing is known of her parents (occupation or social status)
   - Not wealthy
   - She was simple, plain and ordinary.

   But God sees us as individuals. He sees us differently than anyone else does. He sees our hearts, our faith and our personal devotion to Him.

   As far as God was concerned she was "highly favored."

B. What was Mary's challenge?

The angel told Mary that she was highly favored. She was going to be allowed to participate in the greatest event, the greatest miracle of all time. This favor, however, would not feel so very special most of the time. Sometimes when God puts His hand on you it complicates your life. Having such favor for Mary would involve:

1. Being accused of adultery. Any sexual involvement in the betrothal was seen as adultery and punishable by death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24; John 8:3-5).

   The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death. Leviticus 20:10

   If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall die--the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall put away the evil from Israel. 23 If a young woman who is a virgin is betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her, 24 then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he humbled his neighbor's wife; so you shall put away the evil from among you. Deuteronomy 22:22-24

   Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" John 8:3-5

2. Experiencing the shame of having a child out of wedlock.

3. Going through difficult strains of relationship with family, spouse and friends (that may have continued for thirty years). Jesus would not be vindicated as the Son of God until His baptism in the Jordan.

4. Having your baby hunted by a paranoid king and having to live in hiding (moving often) for a few of years in Egypt.

5. Having your first born son teased by other children about being a bastard (Remember that they lived in Nazareth, the same city in which she was found with child).

6. Raising a child that you did not fully understand at times (Luke 2:51).

7. Seeing your son falsely accused and criticized by religious leaders.

8. Seeing your son arrested by the Romans, publicly beaten and humiliated.

9. Seeing your son die the worst possible and a most painful death.

Mary could have said, "Perhaps you should favor someone else."

God's favor can involve both a crown of joy and, at the same time, the sorrow of suffering. When God calls us, He does not necessarily call us to a life of luxury and comfort. For Mary there would be a cost for receiving Jesus into her life.

C. How did the angel encourage Mary?

The angel Gabriel said:

1. You are "Blessed among women."

   Mary would become a figure in history that would be considered the most blessed of all. But most of that recognition happened after her death. She had no fame or fortune throughout most of her lifetime.

2. "The Lord is with you"

   This is not a wish but a present state of being. Of course this is the key to our being able to do anything that the Lord tells us to do. Moses told God that he could do whatever needed to be done if he knew that God was going with him (Ex. 33:12-23).

3. "Do not be afraid"

   Fear is a natural reaction to the appearance of an angel. It is also a natural reaction to the revelation of God's purposes for one's life. Mary had every reason to be fearful (Note that she arose in haste and went to an "out of town relative", vs. 39). Fulfilling the will of God would put her life into danger. Self-preservation cannot be our goal in life if we are to fulfill our destiny in God.

4. "For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

   It was natural for Mary to have some questions. What the angel was saying was impossible from a medical and scientific perspective. This was an honest question. The angel let her know that the work would be all God—the Holy Spirit, the power of the highest.

   All that was needed was Mary's permission. She had to be a willing vessel?

D. What was Mary's response (Luke 1:38)?

Let it be unto me according to your word.

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing to accept whatever he wants. May everything you have said come true." --NLT

She had the faith of Abraham believing that God could do something that had never been done before. Even though her natural mind questioned the possibility, she was fully submissive to the will of God whatever the cost.

After the Angel left I am sure that Mary was confused. She undoubtedly struggled with her decision. She might have even experienced "buyer's remorse." She needed to be with someone safe while she processed this new revelation. She went to her relative, Elizabeth (many believe to be an older cousin).

E. What was Elizabeth's encouragement?

"There will be a fulfillment" (Luke 1:45)

Mary was encouraged by her relative Elizabeth, a woman who knew something of the miracle working power of God. Don't expect non-believers to understand what you are going through. Don't expect them to get excited about your vision.

Elizabeth told Mary,

Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.

F. What was the song of Mary (Luke 1:46-50)?

It was a song of faith. Mary sang a song of faith before she went back to Nazareth to face her family, Joseph and the religious leaders of the day. She focused on the end result of her faith and not the process that she would have to endure.

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

G. What are the lessons learned from Mary?

1. One's age is no limitation to being used of God.

   Actually, we are not limited by most of the external issues that some see as limitations. One's spiritual relationship and openness to God are the most important things. Sometimes youth is a better choice over older ones. Youth are open, less likely to be critical, more accepting of the impossible. They have had less time to experience disappointment and broken dreams and hence make excuses for not going forward. Sometimes we know too much to easily respond to a new challenge.

2. God delights in choosing nobodies to do great things (I Cor. 1:26-29).

   Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes, or powerful, or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God deliberately

chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose those who are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important, so that no one can ever boast in the presence of God. –NLT

He resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. He takes the things that are nothing and makes them into something. There is hope for all of us.

3. God does not need a lot to work with to perform the impossible.

   All he needs is a heart of faith and a spirit of willingness. He is looking for people like David whose hearts beat as God's heart.

4. When walking by faith seek out and associate with other people of faith.

   Seek counsel, encouragement and prayer from those who believe in God's ability to do the impossible. Do not expect family and friends to understand everything (Joseph had his angelic visitation, but Mary's mother, father and sister did not). People who live in the natural realm will not understand your vision.

5. Being blessed or favored of the Lord does not equate to a life without trouble.

   The road to fulfilling the vision of God will involve a certain amount of sacrifice, shame, suffering and sorrow. However, know that the Lord will be with you and His grace will be sufficient for you.

6. The ultimate significance of our sacrifice will not always be seen in our lifetime.

   Some of the people who have made some of the greatest contributions to the world were not appreciated until after they died. Since we do not do what we do for the recognition of men (we do it to please the Lord), we do not need to worry about earthly recognition.

7. When we cooperate with God's Spirit, when we are on God's side, when we make our will to be harmony with God's will, when our spirit is one with the Spirit of God, when we sing in tune with the heavenly choir…

THINGS HAPPEN!

Lesson 5
The Early Life of Jesus

I. What is the significance of the two names for the Christ child?

The scripture records seven people who were named before their birth including Ishmael (Gen. 16:11), Isaac (Gen. 17:19), Solomon (I Chr. 22:9), Josiah (I Kgs. 13:2; II Kgs. 22:1, a full 325 year before his birth), Cyrus (Is. 44:28; 45:1, a full 175 years before his birth), John the Baptist (Luke 1:13, 60-63) and Jesus (Mt. 1:21).

A. The name "Immanuel"

The name "Immanuel" is the name of Jesus as the Son of God or as the angel said, "The Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:32). This was the name that was given to Him through the prophet Isaiah (Is. 7:14; Mt. 1:23).

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

This name speaks of Jesus as God manifest in the flesh (John 1:14). Even though He was born of Mary, He was also born of the Holy Spirit. This is the name of Christ's deity (Heb. 1:3-8).

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"? 6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." 7 And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire." 8 But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom."

It does not appear that this name was used to apply to Christ on earth but only in God's mind through prophecy. Part of this is because Christ's deity was veiled by His flesh (Heb. 10:20).

B. The name "Jesus"

Jesus, which literally means "savior," is the name of Christ's humanity. It is the equivalent of "Joshua" in the Old Testament. Jesus partook of flesh and blood so that He could qualify as our kinsman redeemer and become our savior (Heb. 2:14-17).

Because God's children are human beings--made of flesh and blood--Jesus also became flesh and blood by being born in human form. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil, who had the power of death. 15 Only in this way could he deliver those who have lived all their lives as slaves to the fear of dying. 16 We all know that Jesus came to help the descendants of Abraham, not to help the angels. 17 Therefore, it was necessary for Jesus to be in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. He then could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. –NLT

The angel told Mary (Luke 1:31) and Joseph what they were to name the Christ child and Joseph was obedient to do so (Mt. 1:20-21, 25). The naming of a child was usually in the father's realm of responsibility. In this case the heavenly Father God named the child and through an angel passed the name on to the earthly father, Joseph.

But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins"…25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

Note: The name "Christ" meaning "anointed one" and the equivalent of the Hebrew concept of "Messiah" would not be applied to Jesus until after His baptism in the Jordan.

C. His official naming on the eighth day (Luke 2:21).

And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

This act was prescribed by God in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:12) and was confirmed as a practice under the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:3). Jesus would fulfill everything that was required of the law in order to become the sinless sacrifice for our sin. This act of circumcision was the first official action that foretold of His sacrificial death as a covenant son.

II. What is the significance of Jesus presentation at the temple and the encounter with Simeon and Anna?

The official visit to the temple by Mary and Joseph was for the purpose of presentation as prescribed by the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:1-8). This act could not take place until both Mary and Jesus were ceremonially clean. This means that this would have occurred more than forty days after the birth of Jesus.

A. The official presentation involved several things.

1. The parents were to come prepared to make two offerings (Lev. 12:6-8).

   a. They were to bring a burnt offering (preferably and lamb).
   b. They were to bring a sin offering.

2. By these offerings they would be making atonement for the mother and the child.

   Not only does this reinforce the concept that all men are born in sin, but it reminds us that Jesus fully identified with sinners from inception. Even though He did not have a sin nature, He fulfilled the law as though He did.

B. Simeon and Anna represent the faithful remnant in Judah who were ready to receive their Messiah.

   Most of the Jewish leaders missed their day of visitation (Luke 19:44). Jesus wept over Jerusalem because they would not be gathered. There were, however, some exceptions to this (i.e. Anna, Simeon, Mary, Joseph, the Apostles, etc.).

   The Bible speaks of those who were in the right place at the right time. They were properly positioned to receive even though they had waited most of their lives.

   1. Simeon (Luke 2:25-35)

      And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 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. 27 So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, 28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." 33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against: 35 (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

      Notice his qualities that helped him not to miss his day of visitation:

      - A prophetic sense of spiritual times and seasons
      - A devout lifestyle
      - An anxious anticipation in waiting for the Messiah (faith)
      - An ability to be Spirit-led

      Most people saw only another cute baby that day in the temple, the child of rather non-descript parents. Because of Simeon's twenty-twenty spiritual

vision, he saw "God's Salvation." He saw a "Light to lighten the Gentiles." He saw the "Glory of Israel."

2. Anna (Luke 2:36-38)

Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; 37 and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. 38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Notice her qualities that helped her not to miss his day of visitation:

- Continual posture of prayer
- Regular fasting
- An anxious anticipation in waiting for the Messiah (faith)

III. What is the significance of the visit from the magi?

These wise men were witnesses from the Gentile community and were a testament to the fact that Jesus was not merely born the king of the Jews, but He was born the savior of the world.

Note: We will come back and talk more about the wise men a little later.

IV. What is the significance of Jesus flight to Egypt?

Herod was troubled by the report of the wise men and set out to thwart the purposes of God by destroying a generation of children. God warned Joseph ahead of time and encouraged him to take the child and go to a realm outside of Herod's rule. God sent him to Egypt (Mt. 2:13-18).

It had been prophesied by Hosea that Jesus would be called out of Egypt (11:1).

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.

It is interesting because:

A. Israel was God's firstborn and called out of Egypt (Ex. 4:22-23).

Then you shall say to Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD: 'Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.'"

B. Jesus was God's firstborn and was called out of Egypt (Mt. 2:14-15).

Then he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

C. The Church is also God's firstborn and is call out of the Egypt of this world system (I Pet. 2:9-10; Heb. 12:23).

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.
I Peter 2:9-10

V. What happened to Jesus from the age of two through to thirty?

After coming back from Egypt the family settled again in Nazareth which had been the original home of Mary and Joseph.

A. Jesus' preteen years are summarized in the statement by Luke (Luke 2:40):

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

B. Jesus traveled to the temple in Jerusalem at the age of twelve (Luke 2:41-50).

1. This was most likely a rite of passage for all males when they first went up for the feasts as appointed by God (Ex. 23:14-17; Deut. 16:16).

2. This was a moment when He seemed to become aware of His call and purpose.

3. On this occasion we have His very first recorded words (Luke 2:49).

And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

Compare these words with his last words before His death (John 19:30, See also John 17:4).

He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

4. This occasion stuck in Mary's mind as the first of many divine moments that would lead to Jesus' ministry (Luke 2:51).

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

C. The rest of Jesus pre-thirty years are summarized by Luke (Luke 2:51-52):

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

This is all that is recorded about Jesus' early life. It attests to His perfect submission to His earthly parents, His absolute obedience to the will and timetable of His Heavenly Father, and His utter carefulness to fulfill the entire letter of the law.

We do know few other things about Jesus early life (Mt. 13:54-56).

When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"

1. He was most likely a carpenter or carpenter's assistant with His father.

2. He had other brothers and sisters.

3. He may have had to assume the role as head of the house upon Joseph's untimely death.

VI. What was so wise about the wise men?

Matthew 2:1-12

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." 9 When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

A. The Wise Men were wise because they were:

1. Seekers

Even though they had much of what this world has to offer, they had a deep hunger for more.

They were not satisfied with **position** (magi were advisors to kings).
They were not satisfied with **education**.
They were not satisfied with **wealth**.

There was a deeper hunger inside that only God's great gift to humanity could supply. God tells us that when we seek Him with our whole heart He will be found of us (Jer. 29:13). He tells us to ask, seek and knock (Luke 11:9).

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled" (Mt. 5:6).

Does that mean that if we do not seek, we will not find? Does that mean if we do not hunger and thirst we will not be filled? That is clearly the implication. You cannot fill a vessel that has no sense of need.

Jesus rebuked the Laodicean church because they confessed that they were rich and had need of nothing yet did not know that they were "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked." (Rev. 3:17).

The wise men (undoubtedly from Babylon) were searching the Scriptures for the promises of God. They knew from the book of Daniel (Seventy Weeks Prophecy) that it was the time and season for God to move. They didn't want to miss anything that God was doing or about to do.

2. Open to change

The Wise Men understood that if they were going to have something different than what they had, they would have to do something different than what they had done.

They would have to move to where Jesus was. They couldn't expect Jesus to move in their direction. He had already demonstrated His great love by coming to the earth. Now they had to move to where He was.

They were willing to leave their comfort zone and go to a new place with which they were unfamiliar to experience the blessing of God.

One of the greatest hindrances to God fulfilling His purpose in us is our love for the way things are (tradition). The last seven words of any church are "We never did it that way before!"

3. Followers

The Wise Men were not stubborn in their approach to God. In fact, they were actually looking for signs of God's leading in their lives.

They were not reluctant followers. They were easily led. They were true disciples or followers of Christ.

Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice and they follow Me" (John 10:3-4).

Even though every question was not fully answered (where their journey would end up specifically) they were willing to follow on the guidance that they had trusting that as they followed today, it would lead to the right destination tomorrow.

4. Balanced

The Wise Men followed the Lord based on both the subjective (the star) as well as the objective (the Word). It is interesting how they both lined up perfectly. One did not contradict the other. Micah 5:2 had prophesied Bethlehem as the birth place of the Messiah, the sign of the star indicated the same.

Miraculous experiences are great, but they are not a substitute for the Word of God. The Word and the Spirit agree. God wants us to move in both realms. He wants our faith not to stand in our experiences alone, but on the Word of God.

The Wise Men got to their destination by utilizing the two witnesses of the Word and the Spirit. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established."

5. Men of faith

The Wise Men had to trust the leading of the Holy Spirit and not their own understanding in order to experience God's great gift. In other words, it required faith on their part.

- They had to have faith in the prophecy of Daniel.
- They had to have faith to follow the star.
- They had to have faith in the prophetic record found in the Scriptures.
- They had to trust their spiritual senses over their natural senses because Jesus did not come in the manner you would expect the ruler of the universe to come.

They were able to look with eyes of faith at a very natural scene and see a mighty king. They were able to walk by faith and not by sight.

6. Humble

Even though the Wise Men were people of powerful position in their own right, they were willing to humble themselves before a baby and bow low before him.

They were willing to acknowledge His lordship or kingship over them even though He had done no miracles for them.

7. Givers

The Wise Men knew that you could not approach a king without a gift. It has to be a gift befitting a king or it would be an insult.

The Wise Men positioned themselves as givers. They were not coming to Jesus for what they could get out of Him. They came before the Lord with their hands full, offering the Lord the best that they had.

Ultimately, they were willing to present their time, talent and treasures and lay them at the feet of Jesus. In doing so they were acknowledging Jesus' lordship over them.

This is the same spirit that was on the Early Church. They understood God's great gift of salvation that had come to them in Christ. They understood that they had been purchased by the precious blood of Christ and that they were not their own. As a result they were willing to lay their treasures at the feet of Christ.

Everyone has something to give. Christmas should be about giving back to Christ in response to His unspeakable gift (See Rom. 12:1-2).

8. Worshipers

The Wise Men understood the principle of worship. They understood that you do not come before the Lord with a personal agenda. You do not come to get ("Lord, I will serve you if you…"). You worship the Lord not for what you can get out of Him but because of Who He is. He is first of all a "King".

In addition, they understood that you give to God your very best. They understood that you do not offer to God that which costs you nothing. They were willing to expend their time, talent and treasure to experience God's best.

Their worship is represented in the gifts that they gave. Their gifts were both prophetic of Christ's life and indicative of the giving of themselves to Christ.

a. The gifts first of all spoke of Christ's life. They gave:

- Gold, which speaks of Christ being deity—He was the sinless Son of God.

- Frankincense, which speaks of Christ's Priestly ministry and His life as a sweet smelling incense unto the Lord.

- Myrrh, which speaks of his suffering and death (myrrh was used to anoint bodies in burial).

b. Their gifts also spoke of the offering of themselves to the Lord. They gave:

- Gold, which speaks of the divine nature or their character
- Frankincense, which speaks of their devotion, prayer and worship
- Myrrh, which speaks of their life of sacrifice, personal suffering and taking up the cross to follow Him.

Our entire life is to be worship to God, not just our church attendance.

9. Obedient

The Wise Men lived a life of obedience. They left at the direction of the Spirit, they brought prophetic gifts and they followed the direction of the angel sent by God.

As a result of their obedience they did their part to bring the fulfillment of God's eternal plan. Their gifts were used to sustain the child in Egypt while He was being hunted by Herod.

We never know the power of our obedience. Our personal involvement in God's plan does make a difference.

10. Willing to die for their faith

Even though they were ordered by Herod to betray Jesus, they would risk their own lives not to do so.

This is the ultimate power of Christians—the willingness to suffer or even die for their faith.

B. We will be wise if we follow the Wise Men!

Wise men still seek Him!

Lesson 6
The Forerunner of Jesus

It was not uncommon for kings to send out forerunners who would go before them and prepare the way for the king. This could involve making the necessary arrangements, preparing the citizens of the town and trumpeting his arrival when he actually came. Jesus came as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. His arrival would mark a pivotal point in all of history. It was fitting that He would have one to come as a forerunner to prepare the way of the Lord (Is. 40:3-5).

I. The ministry of the forerunner was foretold by the prophets.

A. It was foretold by Isaiah (Is. 40:3-5; Compare Mt. 3:3; Luke 3:4-6).

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." Isaiah 40:3-5

B. It was foretold by Malachi (Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6; Compare Mark 1:3; Luke 1:17).

"Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. Malachi 3:1

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." Malachi 4:5-6

II. The birth of the forerunner was supernatural.

A. It was supernatural because Elizabeth his mother had been barren (Luke 1:5-7).

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

Think of how God has used barren women to bring forth His purposes (e.g. Sarah, Rebekah, Rachael, Samson's mother, Hannah, Etc.). Truly Elizabeth was able to sing the song of the woman healed of barrenness (Ps.113:9; Is. 54:1).

"Sing, O barren, you who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman," says the LORD. Isaiah 54:1

B. It was supernatural because an angel announced his birth (Luke 1:8-11).

So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

The Jewish nation had just walked through what is sometimes referred to as the "400 silent years." No strong prophetic voice was heard in the land during that time. The last angelic appearance was when Gabriel appeared to Daniel and gave the Seventy Weeks Prophecy concerning the coming of Messiah. All of a sudden the silence was broken and the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias as he performed his priestly duties.

C. It was supernatural because the lack of faith in his father had to be overcome (Luke 1:12-13, 18-20).

1. The religious experience of Zacharias had been mostly tradition with no experience of the presence of God.

2. Zacharias no longer had an expectation of angelic visitation or the presence of the supernatural when functioning in the priestly office (Luke 1:12).

   And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

3. While Elizabeth and Zacharias had prayed for a child, when the answer came he could not believe it (Luke 1:13-14).

   But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth."

D. It was supernatural because his father was struck with dumbness (Luke 1:18-20).

Most of us would like a supernatural sign that the promises we have received from the Lord will indeed come to pass. Most of us, however, would not like the kind of sign that was given to Zacharias—the loss of the his ability to speak.

And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

E. It was supernatural because he was named by God (Luke 1:13).

But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John."

It was customary for the first born son to be named by and after his father and to then succeed him into the priestly office. This is why when Zacharias eventually named the child "John" the other relatives were a bit surprised (Luke 1:59-66).

F. It was supernatural because John was filled with the Spirit in his mother's womb (Luke 1:15).

For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

G. It was supernatural because John recognized Jesus before either of their actual births took place (Luke 1:39-41).

Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

III. The preparation of the forerunner was unconventional.

A. It was unconventional because he was not trained in the normal rabbinical schools, but he was trained in the wilderness in the school of the Spirit.

B. It was unconventional because he was hidden from view until his time came (See: Is. 49:1-2). This type of preparation was also characteristic of Jesus and most of the true servants of the Lord.

Listen, O coastlands, to Me, and take heed, you peoples from afar! The LORD has called Me from the womb; from the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name. And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver He has hidden Me.

C. It was unconventional because God would bypass all of the big personalities of the day and speak through a "nobody" called "a voice" (Luke 3:1-2; John 1:23).

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. Luke 3:1-2

The last time that the phrase "the word of the Lord came" occurred in the sacred writings was through Zechariah (Zech. 8:18). Now some 400 years later a new prophetic voice is heard in the land.

1. This voice did not come through the political leaders of the day.
2. This voice did not come through the religious leaders of the day.
3. This voice came through John.
4. This voice did not come out of the rabbinical schools and institutions of the day; it came out of the wilderness.

IV. The outward appearance of the forerunner was unusual.

A. It was unusual because he did not have the look of royalty as the forerunner of a king should have.

B. It was unusual because he did not have outward priestly apparel that might have impressed the multitudes.

C. It was unusual because it consisted of camel hair (Mt. 3:4).

Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

1. This dress was not considered to be refined but coarse (Mt. 11:8).

But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

It was not a garment that was made from the actual camel skin, but it was made from a fabric woven from camel hair. This garment was certainly in sharp contrast to the robes and fine garments worn by the Sadducees and the Pharisees of the day (Mt. 23:5).

2. This dress was not uncommon for prophets (Zech. 13:4).

Zechariah speaks of "a robe of coarse hair."

3. This dress might have reminded people of Elijah (II Kgs. 1:7-8).

The king asked them, "What kind of man was it who came to meet you and told you this?" They replied, "He was a man with a garment of hair and with a leather belt around his waist." –NIV

D. It was as unusual as his diet was unusual (Luke 1:15).

1. His diet included an abstinence from wine and other strong drink (Luke 1:15, See the vow of the Nazarite in Numbers 6:1-12).

2. His diet consisted of locust (bugs) and wild honey (maybe he ate a few bees as well to fill out his diet, perhaps just the bee's knees).

a. God allowed His people to eat locust (Lev. 11:22-23).

b. Perhaps the honey would help them to go down more easily!

V. The character of the forerunner was impeccable.

A. It was impeccable because he was clothed in humility (Mark 1:7; Luke 3:15-16; John 1:27).

Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not, John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."
Luke 3:15-16

1. When he was asked who he was, he referred to himself as just a voice (John 1:19-23).

Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you, 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 the prophet Isaiah said."

2. John had his own following or disciples but he was not jealous over them. He willingly directed them to Jesus (Mt. 9:14; Luke 7:18; 11:1; John 1:35-37).

Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. John 1:35-37

B. It was impeccable because he understood why he was on earth—to exalt Jesus (John 3:26-30).

And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified--behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!" John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:26-30

C. It was impeccable because he stayed focused his entire life and eventually gave up his life for his message (Rev. 12:11).

He only had one time of doubting (Mt. 11:1-6).

Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

VI. The ministry of the forerunner was confrontational.

The ministry of John was foretold before his birth by Gabriel when he spoke to Zacharias (Luke 1:15-17).

For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

A. John preached repentance from dead works (Mt. 3:2, 7-10). This was a very common message for nearly all of the prophets of old.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." Matthew 3:7-10

1. This involved the confession of sins (Mt. 3:6).

2. This involved the restitution for sins committed (Luke 3:10-14).

3. This involved bringing forth the fruit of repentance (Mt. 3:8).

B. John preached the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4).

So John the Baptist showed up in the desert and told everyone, "Turn back to God and be baptized! Then your sins will be forgiven." –CEV

C. John preached faith or an anxious anticipation of the coming Messiah (John 1:6-8; 3:36; Acts 19:4).

Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." Acts 19:4

1. John preached Jesus as the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 35-36).

2. John preached Jesus as the Son of God (John 1:34).

3. John preached Jesus as the Bridegroom (John 3:29).

D. John preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Mt. 3:2).

E. John practiced water baptism as a demonstration of true repentance (Mt. 3:6; John 1:31).

F. John pointed people to Jesus who would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:11).

G. John warned the Jewish nation of impending judgment to come (Mt. 3:10-12).

VII. The death of the forerunner was unpredictable.

A. It was unpredictable because he was so popular (Mt. 14:5).

B. It was unpredictable because Jesus Himself was caught by surprise (Mt. 14:13).

VIII. The impact of the forerunner was incalculable.

A. His impact was felt locally as multitudes came out to hear him and be baptized by him (Mt. 3:5-6; Mark 1:5).

Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Mark 1:5

B. His impact spread widely. People were baptized with John's baptism as far away as Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6).

C. His ministry was compared to and tied into that of Elijah (Mt. 11:14; 17:13).

D. He was to be remembered as the greatest of the prophets (Mt. 11:11).

Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

E. He was to be the last of the Old Testament order of prophetic ministry (Mt. 11:12-13; See Ephesians 4:11-12).

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

F. He has a unique place in history being the transition man from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant (Mt. 11:12-13).

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.

G. He was depicted as the "friend of the bridegroom" (John 3:29).

He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.

IX. Taking the Nazirite Vow.

Read: Numbers 6:1-12

The Nazirite vow speaks of the commitment made by a child of God who wants to live a consecrated, separated life. The key word in Numbers chapter 6 is "separation" (vs. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12). It is used at least 10 times in these verses.

The word Nazirite or Nazareth means "separation".

The world asks, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" or
"Can any good thing come out of a life that is separated to the Lord?"
"Is there any profit in consecrating one's life to the service of the Lord?"

Nine Characteristics of the Nazirite Vow

A. It was voluntary (vs. 2)

Anyone taking the vow "separates himself." No one can force someone to take such a vow. The choice belongs to each one of us as to when we will yield our members. We must present ourselves as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).

B. It was a complete vow (vs. 3-7)

This consecration was going to touch every area of his life. Consecration that is not complete is not acceptable. The Nazirite's consecration meant complete separation from three things…

1. It meant separation from all fruit of the vine, "from the seed to the skin" (vs. 3-4)

This speaks of worldly pleasures and the things that intoxicate and drive people of the world.

2. It meant separation from the fashion of men (vs. 5).

   No razor was to come upon his head. It was not fashionable for men to have long hair; it was considered a shame (I Cor. 11:4). But the Nazirite had to bear the shame and reproach of being different, of walking and of looking different than others in the world.

3. It meant a separation from the presence of the dead (vs. 6-7).

   The dead belong to another world. The Nazirite can have no true fellowship with the spiritually dead or the unfruitful works of darkness. When we touch or handle "dead" things it can rob us of our separated life.

C. It was unto the Lord (vs. 8)

When a person took a Nazirite vow it was not done to be noticed or to be odd. It was something that a person did in order to be closer to the Lord and more useful in His hands (II Cor. 6:17-18). Paul was separated unto the gospel of God (Rom. 1:1).

D. It was a very public profession.

Everyone would know if you were a Nazirite. The vow was obvious to others. We can not be ashamed to be marked out for the Lord. We are not to hide our light under a bushel. Our life as a separated believer will be open to all, open to scrutiny and, at times, open to attack. People who have not taken such a vow will try to mar your vow. Delilah was one who succeeded in making a spoil of Samson's Nazirite vow.

E. It meant a life of self-denial.

1. Denial of the sweetness of wine.

2. Denial of some very natural inclinations and emotional feelings (e.g. burying mom and dad).

3. Denial of things that were lawful to others.

   The Nazirite had to be willing to set aside things that were not sinful in and of themselves but could none the less interfere with that intense consecration of heart that was to characterize that dedication.

F. It meant a life of holiness (vs. 8)

All the while that he remained separated he had the testimony that he pleased God.

G. It was easily marred (vs. 9-12, esp. 9)

Coming into contact with the dead even by accident meant he had to renew the vow by sacrifice. This was the only way back. If you failed you had to begin all over.

H. It was to be constant (vs. 8)

"All the days of his separation."

The Nazirite had no days off for good behavior. Every day was a holy day because it was separated unto the Lord.

There was also no fixed time for such a vow. It may have been short or long. Samson's was for life.

I. It was the key to success and strength (Judges 16:17)

…that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

Strength and victory in the spiritual realm are dependant upon separation and consecration.

Do we aim at being a Nazirite?

Lesson 7-8
The Baptism and Temptation of Christ

I. The baptism of Jesus was a significant event in His preparation to be the sacrificial Lamb of God (Mt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:8-11; Luke 3:21-23; John 1:28-34).

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:13-17

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' 31 I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." 32 And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. 33 I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." John 1:29-34

A. He would be revealed to John and to the nation in baptism.

1. John had chosen the Jordan as the primary place for his baptizing ministry (Mt. 3:5-6).

   Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

   Think of all of the memories connected with the Jordan River.

   a. The Jordan miraculously opened for the Ark of the Covenant and the Children of Israel to enter the Promised Land (Josh. 3-4).

   b. It was at the Jordan that Elisha received the double portion of the Spirit after Elijah's translation (II Kgs. 2:6-15). Note: Both Elijah and Elisha miraculously divided the Jordan.

   c. It was at the Jordan that Naaman dipped seven times and was healed of leprosy (II Kgs. 5:1-15).

2. One of the main reasons why John came baptizing was to recognize and identify the Messiah when He came (John 1:31).

I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.

3. John may have known Jesus "after the flesh" prior to this baptism, but now he would come to know Him "after the Spirit."

B. He would be proclaimed to be the Lamb of God by John at His baptism.

1. At His baptism Jesus would be announced as the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29).

   The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

   All of the sacrificial lambs of the Old Testament pointed to this Lamb. This included all of the following lambs:

   a. The lamb slain to cover the sins of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21).

   b. The lamb caught in the thicket to provide a substitute sacrifice for Isaac (Gen. 22:8, 13-14).

      So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. 9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." 13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."
      Genesis 22:6-14

   c. The Passover lamb whose applied blood protected God's people from the destroyer (Ex. 12:1-30; Is. 53:7; I Cor. 5:7).

      For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. I Corinthians 5:7b

   d. The lamb that was offered as a peace offering before the Lord (Lev. 3:1-11). Jesus is our peace and the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6; Luke 1:79; 2:14; John 14:27; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 1:20).

For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight…
Colossians 1:19-22

e. The lambs that were offered as a sin and a trespass offering whose death would cover the known and unknown sins of man (Lev. 4:32-35; 5:5-6).

2. From this announcement at His baptism the world would have an opportunity to inspect the Lamb to see if He really qualified as the blameless Lamb of God (Ex. 12:5).

The spotless lamb had to be inspected and declared qualified or fit to be the perfect sacrifice for sin. Jesus, our sacrificial lamb, like the Old Testament sacrifices of old, had to be a young male without spot or blemish.

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year.

a. Jesus was perfectly sinless in His life (I Pet. 1:19; 2:21-22; II Cor. 5:21; John 8:46; 14:30; 18:38; Heb. 4:15).

"Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness— by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. I Peter 2:22-25

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. II Corinthians 5:21

b. There were many witnesses who gave testimony of Christ, the Lamb without blemish.

- The testimony of demons (Mt. 8:28-29; Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34)

Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are— the Holy One of God!"
Luke 4:33-34

- The testimony of Christ Himself (John 8:46; 14:30)

Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? John 8:46

- The testimony of Pilate (John 18:38; 19:4, 6)

  Pilate made three confessions that concluded Jesus, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

  I find no fault in Him at all. John 18:38

  I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him. John 19:4

  You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him. John 19:6

- The testimony of Pilate's wife (Mt. 27:19)

  Have nothing to do with that just Man.

- The testimony of the thief on the cross (Luke 23:41)

  This Man has done nothing wrong.

- The testimony of the centurion at the crucifixion (Luke 23:47)

  Certainly this was a righteous Man!

- The testimony of Herod (Luke 23:13-15)

  Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him.

- The testimony of Judas (Mt. 27:4)

  I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.

C. He would be identified with sinners at His baptism.

1. Jesus did not need to confess His sins and be baptized for repentance (Mt. 3:6; Acts 19:4).

   Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.
   Matthew 3:6

Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance…"
Acts 19:4a

2. John recognized that Jesus did not need to be baptized by him (Mt. 3:13-14).

   Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

3. Jesus insisted on being baptized to identify with sinners at every point of His life (Mt. 3:15). He identified with us so that we would one day be able to be identified with Him.

   But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

4. Jesus was baptized to give us an example to follow (John 13:15).

   For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

D. He would make His first step toward the cross at His baptism (Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50).

   The baptism of Jesus at the Jordan would point to another baptism that He would experience at Calvary—the baptism of suffering.

   But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! Luke 12:50

E. He would be attested by His Father in heaven as the Son of God.

   As Jesus came up out of the waters of baptism and was communing with the Father in prayer (Luke 3:21) three things happened.

   1. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in a dove-like form. We will come back to this in a minute.

   2. The heavens were opened (Mt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21).

      They were literally "torn apart." This image speaks of the complete openness of the relationship that Jesus had with the Father. Their relationship was not clouded by sin. In a sense the heavens were closed as a result of the judgment on sin (Deut. 28:23). The coming of Jesus marked the dawning of a new era of open communication between heaven and earth.

   3. The Father spoke words of affirmation over Jesus (Mt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22).

      And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17

The Father spoke from heaven over Jesus on two other occasions. On all of these occasions the voice of God spoke words of pleasure when Jesus did things that indicated He had accepted the will of the Father as the sin bearer (Mt. 16:21).

a. At Jesus baptism

b. On the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 16:21; 17:5)

Just prior to the Transfiguration, Jesus had made it clear that His personal journey was leading to the cross.

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Matthew 16:21

In this case the Father adds the admonition, "Hear Him!"

While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" Matthew 17:5

c. Upon His imminent crucifixion (John 12:27-32)

"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 a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

F. He would be anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism.

1. The Holy Spirit descended on Him as a dove (Mt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32).

2. This anointing of the Holy Spirit marked the inauguration of His ministry (Acts 10:38).

…how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Jesus was thirty years of age (Luke 3:23). This is the age when the priests of the Old Testament were anointed and inaugurated into their official office (Num. 4:22).

3. Throughout His ministry Jesus would function in the power of the Holy Spirit just as we must function.

Notice Jesus' relationship to the Holy Spirit.

Christ was:

- Born of the Spirit (Luke 1:35; John 3:5).
- Baptized with the Spirit (Mt. 3:16-17; Acts 1:4-5).
- Filled with the Spirit (Luke 4:1; Eph. 3:19).
- Led of the Spirit (Mt. 4:1; Rom. 8:14).
- Empowered by the Spirit (Luke 4:14; Acts 1:8).
- Anointed by the Spirit (Acts 10:38; I John 2:27).
- Ministering by the Spirit (Luke 4:18; I Pet. 1:11-12).
- Sealed by the Spirit (John 6:27; II Cor. 1:21-22).
- Raised from the dead by the Spirit (Rom. 8:2, 11-13).
- Giving commandments by the Spirit (Acts 1:2; 15:28-29).
- The Baptizer in the Holy Spirit (Mark. 1:8; Acts 2:33).

4. It was this special anointing of the Holy Spirit that signaled to John that Jesus was the One who would bring the baptism of the Holy Spirit (John 1:32-34).

   And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

   a. John was to look for the one upon whom the Spirit descended and remained.

   b. While the Holy Spirit had been active in the Old Testament era, His activity was characterized by coming upon people for a specific task or function and then withdrawing.

   c. This may have been what John referred to when he said that he needed to be baptized by Jesus (Mt. 3:14).

      And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

5. From this point on Jesus would be Jesus the Christ or Jesus the Messiah (Mt. 16:16, 20; 23:8-10; 26:63-64; 27:17, 22; Luke 4:41; John 4:25-26).

   The New Testament word "Christ" and the Old Testament word "Messiah" both mean "anointed one."

   The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." John 4:25-26

II. The temptation of Jesus was a significant event in His preparation to be the Last Adam (Mt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13).

Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. 3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." 4 But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'" 5 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.7 Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." 8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" 9 Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. 10 For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you,' 11 and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" 12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" 13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. Luke 4:1-13

A. Jesus' temptation would take place in the wilderness.

1. It should be noted that it was the Spirit of God that led Jesus into the wilderness.

   a. Most of the accounts say that Jesus was "led of the Spirit" into the wilderness (Mt. 4:1; Luke 4:1).

      Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness… Luke 4:1

   b. Mark's Gospel indicates that the Holy Spirit "drove

      Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

      Immediately the Holy Spirit compelled Jesus to go into the wilderness.
      –NLT

      So which is it? Led or driven? When you are as sensitive to the Spirit as Jesus was, the "still small voice" becomes a compelling force in your life.

2. In the life of Jesus, the wilderness would be a primary place of communion with His Father (Mark 1:35; Luke 4:42; 5:16; John 11:54).

   So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. Luke 5:16

   Sometimes you just have to get away where it is quiet and seek the face of God.

B. Jesus' temptation followed a significant spiritual experience.

Jesus had just had the most significant spiritual experience of His life. What could be greater than the heavens opening and God Himself speaking His pleasure over your life? These are often times when Satan attacks. He comes to challenge what God has just done.

C. Jesus' temptation took place during a time of fasting.

This was an extended period of fasting. There are only three individuals recorded in the Bible who fasted 40 days as a part of their separation unto the Lord. The other two include Moses (Ex. 24:18; 34:28), Elijah (I Kgs. 19:8).

Note: It is possible that Joshua fasted when he was waiting at the base of the mountain for Moses.

1. Jesus fasted because He had taken the prophetic word over His life seriously.

   He needed to meditate on this word and prepare Himself for the implications of the word that was spoken.

2. Jesus fasted because He knew that the word over Him would require a major life adjustment. He was at a major cross road in His life.

   This word over His life would mark a major transition in His life. No more work in the carpenter's shop. He would take up His new task of laying the foundation for His highest call—building the church.

3. Jesus fasted because He knew that the Father had more to say to Him.

   Jesus knew that it was those who hungered and thirsted for God who would get more details regarding their vision (Mt. 5:6). He wasn't going to take anything for granted.

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

4. Jesus fasted because He wanted to heighten His sensitivity to the work of the Spirit in His life. Fasting is an act of humility acknowledging God's authority over our lives.

   Andrew Murray said, "Fasting helps to express, to deepen, and to confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything—to sacrifice ourselves—to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God."

5. Jesus fasted as a way to prepare Himself for the first major confrontation with His enemy, the devil (I John 3:8).

   Do not think for one moment that the devil will respect your fasting time. He has some things that he wants to say to you as well. He wants to sow doubts

into your heart and try to thwart the work of God in your life. He comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

D. Jesus' temptation as the last Adam paralleled the temptation of the first Adam and his wife Eve (Gen. 3:1-13).

It is clear from Matthew's Gospel that part of the purpose of Jesus' visit to the wilderness was "to be tempted of the devil" (Mt. 4:1). In all likelihood Jesus was bothered or tempted by the devil during the entire 40 day period with the most significant temptations coming toward the end.

It should be noted that Jesus must have eventually told His disciples of these temptations. His transparency would help them to overcome their own areas of temptation.

Remember being tempted is not sin. Yielding to temptation is sin.

1. Christ was tempted in the realm of the body—the lust of the flesh (Luke 4:3-4).

   This appeal was to the senses and physical appetites. These are the first words of Satan recorded in the New Testament. His first words in the Old Testament were "Has God indeed said?" (Gen. 3:1).

   *And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." But Jesus answered him, saying, "**It is written**, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"*

   What was the devil saying? Men will follow you if your bribe them with bread and give them what they want in the way of material blessings. You don't have to walk the hard road of service, sacrifice and suffering.

2. Christ was tempted in the realm of the soul—the lust of the eyes (Luke 4:5-8).

   This appeal was to the emotions.

   *Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For **it is written**, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

   What was the devil saying? Don't set your standards too high, just compromise a little bit and men will follow you. You don't have to walk the hard road of service, sacrifice and suffering to gain authority and power in this world.

3. Christ was tempted in the realm of the spirit—the pride of life (Luke 4:9-13).

This appeal was to amaze the people and to be proclaimed as great.

*Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you, and, in their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" And Jesus answered and said to him, "**It has been said**, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.*

Note: Satan quoted Psalm 91:11-12 and Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:6.

Tempting the Lord is putting ourselves in foolish situations and expecting the Lord to rescue us.

What was the devil saying? Give the people sensation through senseless experimentation with the power of God and they will follow you. You don't have to walk the hard road of service, sacrifice and suffering.

Jesus now understood that He was the Son of God. As the Son of God He would have power and authority. But how would He use it? Jesus had to decide how to use His power. We are told how He used it in Philippians 2:5-8).

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Jesus overcame the devil the same way that Adam and Eve should have overcome him by quoting what God has said. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). It is the weapon with which we drive Satan away. We must know the scripture better than Satan does.

E. Jesus' temptation was part of His preparation process as our sin-bearer (Heb. 4:15).

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

His temptation was complete. He was tempted in all points—body, soul and spirit (I John 2:16).

For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.

F. Jesus' victory over the devil and his temptation was critical to His success.

The first Adam succumbed to temptation in an environment that was beautiful and friendly. The Last Adam maintained His purity in an environment that was desolate and hostile (Mark 1:13).

And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts…

1. His mission was to destroy the works of the devil.

2. His miracle working authority over demons would be based on His victory won in this encounter.

G. Jesus experienced the reward of successfully overcoming the devil.

1. After His success, angels ministered to Him (Mark 1:13c; Heb. 1:14).

   …and the angels ministered to Him. Mark 1:13c

2. After His success He came forth in the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14).

   Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.

3. After His success He found a new release and a higher level of ministry (Luke 4:15)

   And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

4. After His success He was ready to go public with His ministry (Luke 4:16-22 with Is. 61:1-3).

   So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. 17 And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 18 "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." 20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." 22 So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" Luke 4:16-22

Lesson 9
The Disciples of Christ

I. Jesus began His ministry in a similar way to that of John the Baptist.

A. His message was similar to that of John.

1. He preached repentance (Mt. 3:2; 4:17).

2. He preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Mt. 3:2; 4:17).

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 4:17

This phrase literally means that the kingdom of heaven or the reign of God "has drawn near" (Compare Daniel 7:13-14; Mt. 26:18, 45-46). Jesus was the agent or instrument of the kingdom. He was preparing to build the church which would also be God's instrument of the kingdom.

Jesus instructed his disciples to preach the same thing when He sent them out (Mt. 10:7).

And as you go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

3. He preached faith in the gospel (Mark 1:14-15).

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

In this passage Jesus mentions that the "time is fulfilled." Most likely this is an allusion to the prophecy of Daniel which dealt with the coming of Messiah (Dan. 9:24-27).

B. His disciples baptized people in water in a way similar to that of John (John 3:22-23, 26; 4:1-2).

After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. John 3:22-23

C. He gathered disciples or followers similar to that of John (John 4:1-2).

Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples)…

D. His ministry went beyond that of John.

1. He taught in the synagogues (Luke 4:14-15).

   Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

2. He demonstrated the power of the kingdom in signs and wonders (Mt. 4:23-25; Mark 1:32-34; Acts 10:38).

   And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. Great multitudes followed Him--from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. Matthew 4:23-25

   …how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. Acts 10:38

II. Jesus called some of His followers to be His disciples.

Jesus began His ministry by teaching in the synagogues and preaching to the masses. He started from the masses but His goal was to make disciples and train leaders for His mission of planting the Church.

A. Jesus made the cost of discipleship clear (Mt. 10:34-39; Luke 9:23-27; 14:25-33).

   Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels. Luke 9:23-26

   Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:25-26

   This was not a "seeker-sensitive" message. Jesus demanded a complete response.

   1. Not everyone could handle His message (Mt. 15:12; John 6:41-71).

      From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words

of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." John 6:66-69

2. We are blessed when we are not offended at His words (Mt. 11:6; Luke 7:23).

   Then His words can be a stepping stone rather than a stumbling stone (Rom. 9:33).

B. Some of those He called to discipleship responded properly.

1. The call of Peter, Andrew, James and John (Mt. 4:18:22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11; John 1:35-42).

   And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.
   Matthew 4:18-22

   Notice that they left three things to follow Jesus:

   a. They left their nets (the tools of their trade).

   b. They left their ship (their livelihood).

   c. They left their relatives (Mark 1:20).

      And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

   In a later discussion with Jesus they made reference to what they had left (Mt. 19:27, 29).

   Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" …And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

2. The call of Philip and Nathanael (John 1:43-51).

   The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is

no deceit!" 48 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." 49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51 And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

These men could respond in this way because they seemed to have a revelation of Who Jesus was. When you really see Him as the Son of God and the King of kings you must respond to His bidding.

3. The call of Matthew (Mt. 9:9; Mark 2:13-14; Luke 5:27-28).

After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. Luke 5:27-28

Matthew appears to have simply walked away from everything including his job, his livelihood and the money on the tables.

C. Some others did not respond too well.

1. The rich young ruler (Mt. 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-30)

Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" 18 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" 20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth." 21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." 22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Mark 10:17-22

It is interesting that when Jesus listed commandments for this young man to observe, He omitted two very important ones—you shall have no other gods before Me and you shall not covet. Jesus put His finger on the thing in this man's life that served as his god—his money. If we are to be Jesus' disciple there can only be one God. All other gods must bow to His lordship.

2. The scribe (Mt. 8:18-20; Luke 9:57-58)

And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes

have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Matthew 8:18-20

This scribe also had another god in his life. His god had to do with the security and comfort of his home. To be Jesus disciple would not always be comfortable. Sometimes it meant going without. Sometimes it meant sleeping under the stars. It meant not making this world one's home and settling down here on the earth.

3. Another man (Mt. 8:21-22; Luke 9:59-60)

Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." Luke 9:59-60

This man also had another god in his life. His god was the inheritance that was due him upon the death of his father. There can be no first but Jesus if we are to be His disciple. Jesus knew that the other members of the family (the spiritually dead) would take care of dad up to his death so that they could get their full inheritance, but who would go and preach the kingdom?

4. Yet another man (Luke 9:61-62)

And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

For this man his relationships were his god. Jesus knew that if this man went back home his relatives would talk him out of his decision to follow the Lord and he would never be back.

III. Jesus selected from His disciples twelve whom He would name "apostles" (Mt. 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16).

Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor. Luke 6:12-16

A. These apostles would be chosen after serious prayer (Luke 6:12).

B. These apostles would be a cross section of the culture of the day.

1. Simon Peter, a fisherman
2. Andrew, Peter's brother and a fisherman

3. James, the son of Zebedee, brother of John and a fisherman
4. John, a fisherman, the youngest of the twelve
5. Philip, possibly a fisherman
6. Bartholomew
7. Matthew, also called Levi, a tax collector
8. Thomas, a fisherman
9. James, the son of Alphaeus
10. Simon, the Zealot
11. Judas, the son of James, also known as Thaddaeus
12. Judas Iscariot, treasurer for the group, betrayed Jesus for money

C. These apostles would be the foundation for the New Testament Church (Eph. 2:19-22).

They would be His duly appointed emissaries to complete His task of building the Church after His ascension into heaven.

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

D. These apostles would have a special place in God's kingdom for all eternity.

1. They would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28).

   So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

2. Their names would be in the twelve foundation stones in the Eternal City (Rev. 21:14).

   Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

IV. Jesus commissioned the twelve apostles to share with Him in His ministry (Mt. 10:1; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6).

And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. Matthew 10:1

And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. 8 He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff--no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts--9 but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. 10 Also He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. 11 And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!" 12 So they went out and preached that people should repent. 13 And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them. Mark 6:7-13

Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. 2 He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick…6 So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. Luke 9:1-2, 6

Lesson 10
The Ministry of Jesus

I. Jesus came as the fullness of the Godhead (John 1:14, 16; 3:34-35; Eph. 4:7-12; Col. 1:18-20).

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth…And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. John 1:14, 16

For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God's Spirit is upon him without measure or limit. The Father loves his Son, and he has given him authority over everything. John 3:34-35—NLT

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men"….. And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:7-8, 11-12

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:18-20

When Jesus Christ ministered on the earth, He came as the complete and perfect representative of God. He came to minister the way God would. He came to serve. He taught that ministry is service.

A. Jesus came as the servant of all (Mark 10:35-45; Phil. 2:5-11).

But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Mark 10:42-45

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:5-8

B. Jesus came to wash the feet of those in need (John 13:12-17).

So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed

your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

C. Jesus came to lay His life down for others (John 10:11, 17-18; 12:24-25).

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep… Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father. John 10:11, 17-18

D. Jesus gave us a pattern for all ministry (John 13:15; I Pet. 2:21).

For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. John 13:15

Christ was:

1. THE Apostle (Hebrews 3:1)

   Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus…

2. THE Prophet (John 4:19)

   The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet."

3. THE Evangelist (Luke 4:18)

   The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor…

4. THE Pastor (John 10:11)

   I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

5. THE Teacher (John 3:2)

   Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.

6. THE Elder (Romans 8:29)

   For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

7. THE Deacon (Luke 22:27)

For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

8. THE Exhorter (Luke 2:25)

   *And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the **Consolation** of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.*

9. THE Giver (Galatians 2:20)

   I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

10. THE Ruler (Luke 1:33)

    And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

11. THE Shower of Mercy (Hebrews 2:17)

    Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

12. THE Worker of Miracles (John 11:47)

    Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs."

13. THE Healer (Luke 6:17-19)

    And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all.

14. THE Deliverer (Matthew 1:21)

    And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.

15. THE Governor (Isaiah 9:6-7)

    For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

16. THE Intercessor (Hebrews 7:25)

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

II. Jesus ministered as an evangelist (Luke 4:18-19).

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.

A. As an evangelist He preached the gospel (Mt. 11:5; Luke 7:22).

Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Matthew 11:1-5

B. As an evangelist He brought physical healing (Mt. 4:23-24; 14:14; 15:30; Luke 4:40; 5:15; 9:11).

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. Matthew 4:23-24

When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. Luke 4:40

C. As an evangelist He brought inner healing to the broken-hearted announcing the forgiveness of sins (Mt. 9:2; Luke 7:47-50).

"Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." Luke 7:47-50

D. As an evangelist He brought deliverance to those held captive by Satan (Mt. 8:16; 9:32-33; 12:22; Mark 1:39; Luke 4:41; 6:18; 9:42; Acts 10:38).

And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons. Mark 1:39

When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ. Luke 4:40:41

III. Jesus ministered as a teacher (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 23:8, 10; Mark 6:6; Luke 13:22; John 3:2).

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues… Matthew 4:23a

A. As a teacher He ministered with unusual authority (Mt. 7:28-29; Mark 1:22; Luke 4:32).

And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Matthew 7:28-29

B. As a teacher He was able to silence His critics (Mt. 22:15-46).

1. In the matter of paying taxes to Caesar (Mt. 22:15:22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26).

2. In the matter of the man who had seven wives (Mt. 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-40).

3. In the matter of the greatest commandment (Mt. 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34).

4. In the matter of the sonship of Messiah (Mt. 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44).

Notice the comments relative to these encounters:

But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent. Luke 20:26

Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." But after that they dared not question Him anymore. Luke 20:39-40

But after that no one dared question Him. Mark 12:34b

C. As a teacher He had the full attention of the people (Luke 19:47-48). Much to the demise of the other teachers or scribes of the day.

And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him. Luke 19:47-48

IV. Jesus ministered as a pastor/shepherd (Mt. 2:6; I Pet. 5:4).

A. As a shepherd He had a heart of compassion for the people (Mt. 9:35-36; Mark 6:34; Luke 7:13).

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Matthew 9:35-36

B. As a shepherd He was willing to search for those who were lost (Mt. 18:12-13; Luke 15:4-6; 19:10).

…for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.
Luke 19:10

C. As a shepherd He was willing to minister to both the natural and spiritual needs of the people (Mt. 15:32; Mark 8:2).

Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."
Matthew 15:32

D. As a shepherd He was willing to go the way before the sheep (John 10:4).

And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

E. As a shepherd He was willing to lay His life down for the people (John 10:11, 17-18).

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.
John 10:11

V. Jesus ministered as a prophet (Mt. 13:57; 14:5; 21:11, 46; Luke 7:16; John 4:19; 7:40; 9:17).

A. As a prophet He spoke forth the word of the Lord (Luke 24:19).

The two men on the road to Emmaus reflected on Jesus as follows:

The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people…

B. As a prophet He understood details from people's lives (John 4:28-30).

The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

C. As a prophet He perceived what was in the hearts of men (Mt. 9:4; Mark 2:8; John 6:64).

But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? Matthew 9:4

D. As a prophet He predicted future events.

1. The destruction of the temple (Luke 21:20-24).

   But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Luke 21:20

2. The signs of the end times (Mt. 24:3-44; Mark 13:1-27; Luke 21:5-36).

3. His own death, burial and resurrection (Mt. 12:40; 20:17-19; 27:63; Mark 8:31; John 2:19-21).

   And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. Mark 8:31

   Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again." Matthew 20:17-19

4. His desertion and betrayal by His disciples (Mt. 26:21, 31-35; John 16:32).

   Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples. Matthew 26:31-35

5. The coming of the Holy Spirit (John 14:25-26; 15:26-26).

   These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach

you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:25-26

VI. Jesus ministered as an apostle.

A. As an apostle He was a "sent one" (John 3:16; 20:21; 4:34; 5:19; 5:30; 6:38; 8:28-29, 42; 12:44-45). Jesus was sent by the Father to represent His interests.

But I have a greater witness than John's: for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. John 5:36

I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me. John 8:18

I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. John 8:42

B. As an apostle He came to represent the Father who sent Him (Luke 2:49; John 4:34; 5:19, 23, 30, 43; 7:16, 18, 28-29; 8:29, 38; 9:4; 10:38; 12:44-45, 49; 14:9-11; 16:28).

As you can see, the Gospel of John is the gospel of Jesus' apostleship.

Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business. Luke 2:49

My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work. John 4:34

Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. John 5:19

He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. John 5:23

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own but the will of the Father who sent Me. John 5:30

I have come in My Father's name. John 5:43a

My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. John 7:16

He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. John 7:18

I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him and He sent Me. John 7:28b-29

And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him. John 8:29

I speak what I have seen with My Father… John 8:38a

I must work the works of Him who sent Me… John 9:4a

…believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him. John 10:38b

He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him Who sent Me. And he who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me…For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. John 12:44, 45, 49

He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show me the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. John 14:9b-11

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. John 14:24

I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father. John 16:28

C. As an apostle He came to lay the foundation for building the Church (Mt. 16:18).

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Jesus had a very simple plan that involved five main steps:

1. **Evangelism**

   The initial focus of Jesus' ministry was to gather a following. He preached openly, in the streets and on the hillsides. He came to men where they were and preached to them the message of the Kingdom. He invited them through repentance, water baptism and a changed lifestyle to enter into the Kingdom.

2. **Discipleship**

   Jesus soon moved to focus His energies on a select group of followers who were more ready than others to forsake all for the call. He spent special times of training with these potential leaders communicating His values and ministry philosophy to them.

3. **Leadership Development**

   Jesus chose twelve from His many followers and disciples whom He named apostles. These would be the ones to whom He would give the most of His attention. These would be the ones that He would groom to carry on His work

after He retired from the field. He would develop them through systematic teaching and training experiences.

4. **Delegation of Authority**

   Jesus divested Himself in these apostles who would be used to do the real work of church planting. They would actually reap the harvest that Jesus had sown while He was among them. Jesus would accomplish His declared mission through them.

5. **Follow-up**

   Jesus stayed in continual contact with these delegated leaders through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Even though the work was now in their hands, He was ever ready to work with them on an ongoing way to assist them in problem solving, counsel and support.

D. As an apostle He raised up leaders and sent them out (Luke 6:13; 9:1-2; John 17:18; 20:21; Mt. 28:18-20).

*As you have **sent** Me into the world, I also have **sent** them into the world.*
John 17:18

*Peace be to you! As the Father has **sent** Me, I also **send** you.* John 20:21

Lesson 11
Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man

I. Jesus was truly God and truly man.

A. He was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4; Mt. 1:18; 2:11; 12:47; 13:55; Luke 2:7; Rom. 1:3).

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Galatians 4:4

When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?" So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. Matthew 13:54-58

So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:6-7

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Romans 1:1-4

1. As such He became a partaker of flesh and blood (John 1:14; Heb. 2:14-15).

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

a. He had a human body before His resurrection (Mt. 26:12; 27:58-59).

Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. Matthew 27:57-60

b. He had a human body after His resurrection (Luke 24:39; John 20:27).

Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. Luke 24:38-43

2. As such He took on human nature (Acts 2:30; Heb. 2:14; I John 4:2-3).

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Hebrews 2:14-15

B. He was begotten of the Heavenly Father according to the flesh.

1. As such He always existed in spirit form (Rev. 22:12-13, 16).

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."…[16] "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." Revelation 22:12-13, 16

2. As such He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in relation to the incarnation (Mt. 1:20; Luke 1:35).

And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35

II. Jesus was the Son of God.

A. He was declared to be the Son of God.

1. He referred to Himself as the Son of God (John 5:18; 10:30-33; Luke 22:70; Rev. 1:8).

Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. John 5:18

Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God? So He said to them, "You rightly say that I am." Luke 22:70

2. He was declared by the Father to be His Son at His baptism (Mt. 3:13-17; Mk. 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22).

   When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."
   Luke 3:21-22

3. He was acknowledged as the Son of God by Satan and his demons (Mt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13, 41).

   And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Luke 4:41

B. He demonstrated the attributes of God. John is the Gospel of Christ's deity (John 1:1-5, 6-18).

   In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 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…And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
   John 1:1-5, 14

1. He is all powerful (Mt. 28:18; John 1:3; Eph. 1:20-23; Heb.1:3; 2:8).

   God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Hebrews 1:1-4

2. He is all-knowing (John 2:24-25; 5:25; 16:30; Col. 2:3; Rev. 2:23).

   Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. John 2:23-25

3. He is everywhere present since the resurrection by the Spirit (Mt. 18:20; 28:20).

   Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe

all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matthew 28:19-20

4. He is eternal (John 1:1; 17:5; 8:58; Mic. 5:2).

   Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." John 8:58

   And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. John 17:3-5

5. He is unchanging (Heb. 1:10-12; 13:8).

   But to the Son He says…"You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail." Hebrews 1:8a, 10-12

   Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Hebrews 13:8

6. He is self-existent (John 1:4; 5:21, 26; Heb. 7:16).

   For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself. John 5:26

7. He is holy (Acts 3:14; Mark 1:24).

   But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. Acts 3:14-15

8. He is the fullness of the Godhead (Col 1:19; 2:9).

   For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.
   Colossians 2:9-10

   For in Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body, and you are complete through your union with Christ. He is the Lord over every ruler and authority in the universe. –NLT

C. He possesses or demonstrates godlike functions.

1. Creation (John 1:3).

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. John 1:3

He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn't make. –NLT

2. Sustaining Creation (Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:3).

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. Colossians 1:15-17

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.
Hebrews 1:1-3

3. Forgiving Sins (Mk. 2:5-12; Luke 7:48).

When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." 6 And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--He said to the paralytic, 11 "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." 12 Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!" Mark 2:5-12

Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"
Luke 7:48-49

4. Eternal Judgment (John 5:22; Mt. 25:31-46; Acts 17:30-31; II Tim. 4:1).

For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. John 5:22-23

Read Matthew 25:31-46

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will

judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." Acts 17:30-31

4. Giver of Life (John 10:28; 17:2).

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. John 17:1-2

D. He is an equal person in the Godhead (II Cor. 13:14; John 10:30-33; II Th. 2:16-17; Heb. 1:3).

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. Philippians 2:5-7

Other Translations:

Who existing in the form of God counted not the being on equality with God a thing to be grasped. –ASV

Though the divine nature was His from the beginning, yet He did not look upon equality with God as above all things to be clung to. –TCNT

For He, Who has always been God by nature did not cling to His prerogatives as God's equal. –Phil

His nature is, from the first, divine and yet He did not see, in the rank of Godhead, a prize to be coveted. –Knox

Who, though he was God, did not demand and cling to his rights as God. –TLB

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. II Corinthians 13:14

I and My Father are one." Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." John 10:30-33

III. Jesus was the Son of Man (I Tim. 2:5; John 8:40).

"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." I Timothy 2:5

A. He is called the Son of Man over 75 times in the New Testament (Luke 9:22, 26, 44, 58; 19:10).

Note: Luke is the Gospel of Jesus as the Son of Man. In his genealogy he goes back to Adam (Luke 3:38).

*And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying "The **Son of Man** must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."* Luke 9:22

*For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the **Son of Man** will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.* Luke 9:26

*Let these words sink down into your ears, for the **Son of Man** is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.* Luke 9:44

*And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the **Son of Man** has nowhere to lay His head."* Luke 9:58

*And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the **Son of Man** has come to seek and to save that which was lost."* Luke 19:9-10

B. As the Son of Man, He was subject to the normal laws of human development (Luke 2:40, 52).

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. Luke 2:40

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Luke 2:51-52

C. As the Son of Man, He was subject to the physical limitations associated with humanity (Heb. 4:15).

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15

1. He grew weary (John 4:6, Compare Is. 40:28).

So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. John 4:6

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. Isaiah 40:28

2. He needed sleep (Mt. 8:24, Compare Ps. 121:3-4).

   Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" Matthew 8:23-25

   He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. Psalm 121:3b-4

3. He grew in knowledge and wisdom (Luke 2:52; Mk. 13:32, Compare Is. 40:12-14; Job 21:22).

   And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Luke 2:52

   But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Matthew 13:32

   Can anyone teach God knowledge, since He judges those on high? Job 21:22

4. He grew hungry (Mt. 4:2; 21:18).

   Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Matthew 4:1-2

   Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away. Matthew 21:18

5. He grew thirsty (John 19:28; Ps. 22:15).

   After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" John 19:28

   My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. Psalm 22:15

6. He wept on occasion (John 11:35; Heb. 5:7).

   Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, "Where have you laid him? They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." [35] Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" John 11:35

…who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Hebrews 5:7-8

7. He experienced agony of soul (Luke 22:44).

   And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luke 22:44

8. He experienced physical death (John 19:30; I Cor. 15:3).

   So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. John 19:30

D. As the Son of Man, He did not look any different than anyone else (Is. 53:2b).

   He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. Isaiah 53:2b

   He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. –NIV

   When we beheld him there was nothing to behold, that we should desire him. –The Emphasized Bible

   He had no distinguished appearance. –Spurrel

   But in our eyes there was no attractiveness at all, nothing to make us want Him. – The Living Bible

   There was nothing attractive about him, nothing that would draw us to him.
   –Good News Translation

   1. He had to be pointed out to his captors (Mt. 26:47-48; Luke 22:47-48).

      And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him." Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. Matthew 26:47-49

   2. He was mistaken for a gardener (John 20:15).

      Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away."
      John 20:15

E. As the Son of Man, He was tempted as a man (Heb. 2:18; 4:15).

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15-16

F. As the Son of Man He functioned like we must function.

1. He spent time in prayer seeking the mind of the Father (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 6:12-13; Mt. 14:23).

   Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. Mark 1:35

   Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles. Luke 6:12-13

   And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Matthew 14:23

   So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. Luke 5:16

2. He depended on the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18-19; Acts 10:38).

   How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. Acts 10:38

3. He needed the strengthening ministry of angels (Mt. 4:11; Luke 22:41-45).

   Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him. Matthew 4:11

   And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luke 22:41-44

4. He had no knowledge of the future (Mark 13:32).

   But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Mark 13:32

Lesson 12
Jesus, the Very Heart of the Father

I. Jesus was sent by the Father as His representative.

We have already mentioned the fact that as the Apostle sent from heaven Jesus came as the official representative of the Father.

A. He came to put a face on God (John 1:14; 8:19; 12:45; 14:7-9).

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. John 12:45

"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves." John 14:7-11

B. He came to speak the Father's words (John 7:16; 12:49-50; 14:10, 24).

"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak." John 12:48-50

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 home 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." John 14:23-24

C. He came to work the Father's works (John 5:19, 36; 9:4; 10:32, 37-38; 14:10-11).

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." John 5:19

"If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." John 10:37-38

D. He came to be about His Father's business (Luke 2:49; John 4:34; 17:4; 19:30).

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:34

E. He came to fulfill the will and purpose of the Father (John 5:30; 6:38).

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. John 6:38

II. Jesus was sent by the Father with a specific purpose in mind (Eph. 3:11).

Jesus declared the various aspects of the purpose of God for His life.

A. He came to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

"…for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

B. He came to call sinners to repentance (Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32).

When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Mark 2:17

C. He came to preach the kingdom of God (Mark 1:38; Luke 4:43).

…but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." Luke 4:43

D. He came to bear witness to the truth of God (John 18:37).

Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then? Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." John 18:37

E. He came to fulfill all of the law and the prophets (Mt. 5:17-18).

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." Matthew 5:17-18

F. He came to destroy the works of the devil (Heb. 2:14; I John 3:8b).

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. I John 3:8b

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Hebrews 2:14-15

G. He came to bring separation between honest and hard hearts (John 9:39; Mt. 10:34-39).

And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind." John 9:39

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword." Matthew 10:34

H. He came to suffer and die for our sins (John 12:27; Acts 2:22-24).

"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." John 12:27

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know--Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it." Acts 2:22-24

I. He came to bring light and life to all men (John 1:4-9; 6:51; 8:12; 10:10b; 12:46).

"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." John 10:10b

"I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness." John 12:46

J. He came to bring true joy to those who follow Him (Luke 2:10; John 15:11; 16:22-24; 17:13).

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." John 15:11

K. He came to bring salvation and everlasting life (Mt. 1:21; John 3:17; 6:39-40).

"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:17

"This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who

sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:39-40

III. Jesus was sent by the Father to reveal the heart of the Father toward man.

A. A heart of love (John 15:9; 17:26).

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love." John 15:9

1. This heart was seen in the Father (John 3:16; Eph. 2:4; I John 4:8, 10, 19).

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus… Ephesians 2:4-6

2. This heart was seen in the Son (Mark 10:21; John 13:1; 15:13; Gal 2:20; Eph. 5:2; Rev. 1:5).

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. John 13:1

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. Ephesians 5:1-2

B. A heart of mercy and compassion

1. This heart was seen in the Father (Ps. 78:38; 86:1-5, 15; 111:4; 145:8).

Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me; for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am holy; You are my God; Save Your servant who trusts in You! Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I cry to You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.…But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth. Psalm 86:1-5, 15

The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. Psalm 145:8-9

2. This heart was seen in the Son (Mt. 9:36; Mark 6:34).

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.
Matthew 9:36

a. He had compassion for the hungry (Mt. 15:32; Mark 8:2).

Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way." Matthew 15:32

b. He had compassion for the sick and infirm (Mt. 14:14).

And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

c. He had compassion for the blind (Mt. 20:29-34).

When others were not having compassion, Jesus was having compassion.

Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

d. He had compassion for the untouchables in society (Mark 1:40-42).

Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

e. He had compassion for the demon-possessed (Mark 5:18-20).

And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

f. He had compassion for the grieving (Luke 7:12-17).

And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

g. He had compassion for the poor (Mt. 11:5; Luke 4:18; 14:13).

Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Matthew 11:5

h. He had compassion for the prodigal (Luke 15:20).

And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

i. He had compassion for those carrying the debt of sin (Mt. 18:26-27).

The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, "Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all." Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

C. A heart of forgiveness

1. This heart was seen in the Father (Ex. 34:6-7; Neh. 9:17; Mic. 7:18-19).

And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation." Exodus 34:6-7

They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of Your wonders that You did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage. But you God are ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, and did not forsake them. Nehemiah 9:17

Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will

give truth to Jacob And mercy to Abraham, Which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old. Micah 7:18-20

God is a forgiving God. He is a God of love, mercy and compassion Who is eager and even anxious to forgive His people.

So much did God want to convince us of this that He sent Jesus to preach remission of sins. Jesus likewise sent the apostles to tell men that their sins could be forgiven.

The good news of the Gospel is not that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Man's conscience bears witness to that. The good news is that there is forgiveness of sins.

2. This heart was seen in the Son (Mt. 9:1-8: Mark 2:5-10; Luke 5:20-26; 7:36-50; John 8:11).

So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men. Matthew 9:1-8

Read: Luke 7:36-50

As time permits, talk about this woman and her relationship to Jesus. Contrast the attitude of the other disciples.

Conclusion

In the same way that Jesus revealed the heart of the Father to the world, we are also to reveal that same heart to the world.

Lesson 13
Jesus, The Greater than Moses

I. Prophets had indicated that one greater than Moses would be coming.

A. In the New Covenant, Jesus brought in a better covenant than Moses.

In the book of Hebrews, Christ is presented as the Pre-eminent One and the one Who established a new and better covenant.

1. Christ is seen as greater than:

   a. The Prophets (Heb. 1:1-3)
   b. The Angels (Heb. 1:4-2:18)
   c. Moses (Heb. 3:1-19)
   d. Joshua (Heb. 4:1-13)
   e. Aaron (Heb. 5:14-7:18)
   f. Abraham (Heb.7:7)
   g. The Law (Heb.7:19ff.)

2. The New Covenant is seen as better than the Old Covenant (Heb. 8:7-13; 11:40).

   The New Covenant is better because it is has:

   a. Better Revelation (Heb. 1:1-4)
   b. Better Hope (Heb. 7:19)
   c. Better Priesthood (Heb. 7:20-28)
   d. Better Covenant (Heb. 8:6)
   e. Better Promises (Heb. 8:6)
   f. Better Blood (Heb. 9:11-14).
   g. Better Sacrifices (Heb. 9:23)
   h. Better Possessions (Heb.10:34)
   i. Better Country (Heb. 11:16)

B. In the New Covenant, Jesus is seen as the greater than Moses.

1. This was foretold by Moses (Deut. 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37).

   "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'" And the LORD said to me: "What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him."
   Deuteronomy 18:15-18

2. This was confirmed by the prophets (Acts 3:24).

For Moses truly said to the fathers, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. Acts 3:22-24

3. This was anticipated by the people (Mark 6:15; John 1:21, 25).

   When questioning John the Baptist the people wanted to know if he was "The Prophet" not just "a prophet."

   And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." John 1:21

   They wondered the same things about Jesus.

   Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets." But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" Mark 6:14-16

4. This was fulfilled in Jesus (Mt. 21:10-11; Luke 7:16; 24:19-21; John 1:45; 7:40).

   Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." John 1:45

   Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." John 7:40

   a. Jesus was the greater than the temple (Mt. 12:6).

      "Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." Matthew 12:6-8

      He was greater than the temple, because the temple only provided a place for God's presence; Jesus was the very presence of God (See Psalm 68:35).

      O God, You are more awesome than Your holy places. The God of Israel is He who gives strength and power to His people.

   b. Jesus was the greater than Jonah (Mt. 12:41).

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here." Matthew 12:38-41

He was greater than Jonah because Jonah's three days and three nights' experience led to the salvation of a nation while Jesus three days and three nights' experience led to the salvation of the world (Mark 8:31).

c. Jesus was the greater than Solomon (Mt. 12:42).

The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.
Matthew 12:42

He was greater than Solomon because Solomon had wisdom but Jesus was the personification of wisdom (I Cor. 1:24, 30; Col. 2:3).

For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. I Corinthians 1:22-24

Paul spoke of Christ as He *"…in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* Colossians 2:3

d. Jesus was the greater than Abraham (John 8:52-59).

Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' 53 Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?" 54 Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. 55 Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." 57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" 58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." 59 Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. John 8:52-59

He was greater than Abraham because Abraham tithed to Him in the person of Melchizedek and the lesser always tithes to the greater (Heb. 7:4, 7).

Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. 5 And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; 6 but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. 8 Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Hebrews 7:4-8

e. Jesus was the greater than Jacob (John 4:12-14).

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." 11 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? 12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" 13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:10-14

He was greater than Jacob because while Jacob provided water to his people, only for them to thirst again, Jesus would provide water that would quench one's thirst forever.

f. Jesus was the greater than Moses (Heb. 3:1-6).

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. 3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

II. Jesus was similar to Moses in many ways.

As can clearly be seen Moses was a type of Christ.

A. Both Moses and Jesus were miraculously preserved from the king's wrath in their infancy (Ex. 2:1-10; Mt. 2:13-18).

B. Both Moses and Jesus were anointed to be deliverers of God's people (Acts 7:35; Rom. 11:26).

C. Both Moses and Jesus separated themselves to this high calling (Heb. 11:23-29; Luke 2:49).

D. Both Moses and Jesus were empowered by God to challenge the forces of wickedness in their day (Ex. 3:1-4:9; Luke 4:14-15, 18-19).

E. Both Moses and Jesus were signs and wonders ministries (Dt. 26:8; Acts 2:22).

F. Both Moses and Jesus were shepherds to God's people (Num. 27:17; John 10:11).

G. Both Moses and Jesus fasted for forty days (Ex. 34:28; Mt. 4:2).

H. Both Moses and Jesus were meek and lowly of heart (Num. 12:3; Mt. 11:28-29).

I. Both Moses and Jesus experienced a transfiguration on a mountain where the glory of God shone upon their faces (Ex. 34:35; Mt. 17:2).

J. Both Moses and Jesus were used by God to build a spiritual house (Ex. 25:9; Mt. 16:18; Heb. 3:1-6).

K. Both Moses and Jesus functioned as prophet, priest and king.

L. Both Moses and Jesus had a face to face relationship with God (Ex. 33:11; Num. 12:8; Deut. 34:10).

M. Both Moses and Jesus were mediators of divine covenants (Heb. 8:5-6; 9:15; 12:24). Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant, but Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant.

N. Both Moses and Jesus were lawgivers in relation to that covenant (Ex. 24:12; John 7:19).

III. Jesus was greater than Moses for a variety of reasons.

A. He was greater than Moses because Moses represented the shadow or the type and Jesus brought in the reality (Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 10:1).

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or

regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Colossians 2:13-17

B. He was greater than Moses because He made the law honorable (Is. 42:21).

The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will exalt the law and make it honorable.

C. He was greater than Moses because He internalized the law (Mt. 5:20). The Law of Moses dealt with the fruit of sin or the external acts. Jesus dealt with the root or the inner attitude that motivated the external act.

For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. –NIV

We will be talking about pharisaical righteousness later on. How do we exceed the level of righteousness or "law-keeping" that they set? It has to do with the heart (Mt. 23:23).

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

D. He was greater than Moses because in Christ the Mosaic Law is fulfilled and superseded (Mt. 5:17-18; Gal. 3:22-25; Rom. 8:1-4).

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.
Matthew 5:17-18

Do not think that I have come to do away with or undo the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to do away with or undo but to complete and fulfill them. –Amp

But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. Galatians 2:22-25

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
Romans 8:1-4

IV. Jesus laid out the laws of the kingdom that would form the basis of the New Covenant.

A. He began by sitting on a mountain (Mt. 5:1).

And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.

B. He gathered His disciples to Him (Mt. 5:1).

C. He laid out the new laws that pertain to His kingdom (Matthew 5-7).

It should be noted that while keeping the law was difficult in the Old Covenant, keeping these laws that Jesus would give is impossible without the Holy Spirit working within us.

1. This included what is referred to as "The Beatitudes" (or as some have suggested, Be Attitudes) (Mt. 5:3-12).

- *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 meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*
- *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.*
- *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain 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 are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- *Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Moses law began with the giving of the Ten Commandment. Jesus' giving of the law began with nine beatitudes.

a. A beatitude is a blessing. The word literally means "happy" or "much to be envied." Each of these nine statements begins with the word "blessed."

b. Each beatitude consists of three parts—a blessing, a condition and a promise.

c. The beatitudes define the attitudes that must be worked into believers if they are going to be able to be the salt of the earth and light of the world (Mt. 5:13-16).

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

2. This included a redefinition of the Mosaic Laws.

   Notice the repeated phrase, "You have heard that it was said to those of old…But I say…"(Mt. 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; Luke 6:27).

Law Topic	Moses Said	Jesus Said
Murder	Do not kill (Deut. 4:2)	Do not hate (Mt. 5:21-26)
Adultery	Do not commit adultery (Dt. 5:18)	Do not lust (Mt. 5:27-)
Divorce	Permitted for any cause (Dt. 24:1-5)	Greatly restricted (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:4-9)
Oaths	Swear to the truth (Num. 30:2)	Your word is truth (Mt. 5:33-37)
Retaliation	An eye for an eye (Lev. 24:19-20)	Turn the other cheek (Mt. 5:38-42).
Enemies	Hate (Ex. 17:14-16; Dt. 7:1-2)	Love, bless, pray for (Mt. 5:44-47)

D. This included principles by which His kingdom would operate. His laws could be summarized in several principles.

1. Do not let hardness of heart rob you of God's highest and best (Mt. 19:7-8).

   They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."

2. Keep your heart pure and you will have no trouble keeping the spirit of the law (Mt. 15:18-19; Mark 7:18-23).

   So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?" And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." Mark 7:18-23

3. Take extreme measures when dealing with sin in your life (Mt. 5:29-30).

   If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off

and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

4. Keep your relationship with other people unclouded by offenses (Mt. 5:23-24; 6:14-15).

   Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24

5. Always do more than is expected or required of you (Mt. 5:38-42).

   You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

6. Be generous with what God has given to you (Mt. 5:38-40; Luke 6:38).

   Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. Luke 6:38

7. Love all men and trust the Lord to be your defense and your reward (Mt. 6:19-21; 25-34).

   Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
   Matthew 6:19-21

8. Overcome evil with good (Mt. 5:44-48; Rom. 12:21).

   You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

   This means that we:

   - Love your enemies.
   - Bless those who curse you.
   - Do good to those who hate you.
   - Pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

If we love those who love us we fulfill the Law of Moses. If we love those who hate us, we fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). We cannot do this without the Holy Spirit in our lives.

But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. Luke 6:32-36

Lesson 14
Jesus, The Power of God

I. Jesus came and demonstrated the power of the kingdom.

A. He was anointed with power at His baptism (Acts 10:38).

…how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

B. He came out from the wilderness in the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:13-14).

Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.

C. He ministered in the demonstration of the Spirit (I Cor. 2:4-5; I Th. 1:5).

Paul was speaking of his own ministry in his letter to the Corinthians, but Christ came in much the same way.

And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. I Corinthians 2:4-5

D. His words and His wisdom were accompanied by many mighty works (Mark 6:2; Luke 19:37; John 7:31).

Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!" Mark 6:1-2

E. He was the very wisdom of God and the power of God (I Cor. 1:24).

For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. I Corinthians 1:22-25

II. Jesus exercised power over many realms.

A. Power over the natural elements.

1. He walked on water (Mt. 14:22-32; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:15-21).

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. 23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. 24 But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. 25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." 28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." 29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" 31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."
Matthew 14:22-32

2. He calmed the wind (Mark 4:35-41).

   And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" 39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" Mark 4:37-41

   Notice that the testimony of people after the miracles reflects that the miracles were giving clues to Jesus' identity.

3. He multiplied bread and fish (Mt. 14:13-21; 15:32-39; Mark 6:30-44).

   On one occasion He fed 5000 with five barley loaves and two small fish and on another occasion He fed 4000 with seven loaves and a few fish. These numbers did not reflect women and children (Mt. 14:21; 15:38). Therefore, He easily could have fed 20,000 and 16,000 repectively.

B. Power to heal (Luke 5:17).

   Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

C. Power over unclean spirits (Luke 4:36-37).

   Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they

come out." And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

D. Power to forgive sins (Mt. 9:1-8; Mark 2:5-12; Luke 5:17-26).

Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them. 18 Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. 19 And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus. 20 When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." 21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? 24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." 25 Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. 26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!" Luke 5:17-26

One of the things that you learn from this is that when you hang out with Jesus you are going to see some strange things. Other translations say:

…amazing things… –NLT *…remarkable things…* –NIV

We have seen wonderful and strange and incredible and unthinkable things today! --Amp

E. The power over all of the works of the devil (Luke 10:19).

Jesus was able to give His disciples authority over all of the power of the enemy because He exercised it Himself and it was His to give.

III. The miracles of Jesus indicate His commitment to provide a complete salvation.

The miracles of Jesus are parables of God's love. Jesus came to destroy the works of darkness. The miracles are a physical demonstration to the senses of God's commitment to complete salvation of the spirit of man.

A. He wants to deliver us from every bondage of the spirit and everything that controls us (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37; Mt. 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39).

B. He wants to come along side of us with miraculous power to enable us to do what we cannot do in our own strength (Luke 5:1-11).

When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Luke 5:4-8

C. He wants to cleanse us from all defilement and touch us with His hand so that we might be a testimony to others (Mt. 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45).

Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." 41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." 42 As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. 43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, 44 and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." 45 However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction. Mark 1:40-45

D. He wants to heal us from the fever of sin so that we might be able to serve others (Mt. 8:14-15; Luke 4:38-39).

Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them. Luke 4:38-39

E. He wants to remove the sin in our lives that is keeping us from being productive and taking care of our responsibilities (Mt. 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26).

Jesus healed paralytics and those with withered hands. Their infirmity did not allow them to fully take care of themselves and be productive in the lives of others. When Jesus healed them their life and ministry was restored.

F. He wants to deliver us from the pit into which man has fallen and restore us to our original usefulness (Mt. 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11).

Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"--that they might accuse Him. 11 Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12 Of how much more

value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." 13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. 14 Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. Matthews 12:9-14

G. He wants to raise from death the servant qualities in our life that are dormant or lifeless at this point (Mt. 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10).

The centurion's servant was sick and was not able to serve. Jesus healed him and brought him back into a life of service.

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

H. He wants to restore all that has been lost to us (Luke 7:11-17).

When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Luke 7:13-15

I. He wants to calm the raging seas in our life and bring peace to our troubled hearts (Mt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41).

J. He wants to restore new life to things that had so much promise but now appear to be dead to us (Mt. 9:18, 23-26; Mark 5:22-23, 35-43; Luke 8:40; 41-42, 49-56).

While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live."…23 When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, 24 He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him. 25 But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. 26 And the report of this went out into all that land. Matthew 9:18, 23-26

K. He wants to cleanse us from all things that are sapping our strength and draining our finances (Mt. 9:19-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48).

Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, 26 and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. 28 For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." 29 Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. 30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" 31 But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" 32 And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. 33 But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. 34 And He said to her,

"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction." Mark 5:25-34

L. He wants to open our blinded eyes to a deeper revelation of Who He is (Mt. 9:27-31; Luke 18:35-43).

Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. 36 And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. 37 So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. 38 And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 39 Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 40 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, 41 saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." 42 Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." 43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God. Luke 18:35-43

M. He wants to heal our speech patterns so that they testify to the goodness of God (Mt. 9:32-34; 12:22).

Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"
Matthew 12:22-23

N. He wants to open our ears so that we will be able to respond to His voice (Mark 7:31-37).

Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." 35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it. 37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

O. He wants to deliver us from self-destructive behavior (Mt. 17:14-20; Mark 5:5).

The man had a boy who would throw himself into the fire. The man of the Gadarenes cut himself with stones.

P. He wants to bring complete not partial restoration to our lives (Mark 8:22-26).

Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. 23 So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the

town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. 24 And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking." 25 Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. 26 Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town."

Q. He wants to lift up those who have been bent over by the oppression of the devil and the circumstances of life (Luke 13:10-13).

Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. 12 But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." 13 And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

All of these miracles give us a complete picture of Jesus' ability to repair the damage that has been caused by sin. Sin has left us unable to walk, work, ear, see, stand and testify. Jesus wants us free from everything that hinders us from fulfilling all of God's word to us.

IV. Jesus' ability to do mighty works was affected by the hearts of the people.

A. Faith facilitated the working of miracles in Jesus' ministry (Mt. 8:10; 9:2, 22, 29; 15:28; Mark 5:34; 9:23-24; 10:52).

Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." Matthew 9:1-2

But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour. Matthew 9:22

Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." Matthew 9:29

B. Unbelief hindered the working of miracles in Jesus' ministry (Mt. 13:58; Mark 6:1-6).

Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. 2 And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! 3 Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him. 4 But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." 5 Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands

on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching. Mark 6:1-6

V. This same miracle-working ability was given to the church.

A. Jesus commissioned the twelve (Luke 9:1-2).

Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

B. Jesus commissioned the seventy (Luke 10:1, 17).

After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go…17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

C. Jesus commissioned all of us (Mark 16:17-18).

And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. John 14:12

Lesson 15
Jesus, The Lord of the Sabbath

I. Jesus was accused by the religious leaders of violating the Sabbath.

A. They were looking for any excuse to trap Him (Mt. 12:10; Mark 3:1-2; Luke 6:6-7; 14:1-6).

Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"--that they might accuse Him.
Matthew 12:9-10

So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. Luke 6:7

Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. 2 And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" 4 But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him, and let him go. 5 Then He answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" 6 And they could not answer Him regarding these things. Luke 14:1-5

B. They picked on an area for which they thought they could make a case.

II. Jesus did not respect what the religious leaders had done with the Sabbath and the rest of the law.

A. Under the Old Covenant, God had given them the fourth commandment regarding the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8, 10-11; 31:12-18; 35:2-3; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:12-15).

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Exodus 20:8

1. It was meant to be a day to celebrate God's act of creation (Ex. 20:11).

For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

2. It was meant to be a day of rest from labor (Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:14).

…but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. Deuteronomy 5:14

3. It was meant to be a time to reflect on their deliverance from bondage (Deut. 5:15).

   And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

4. It was meant to be a reminder of how God had separated them from the other nations (Ex. 31:13).

   Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: "Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you."

   Tell the people of Israel to keep my Sabbath day, for the Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between me and you forever. It helps you to remember that I am the LORD, who makes you holy. –NLT

B. They were restricted from doing certain things on the Sabbath.

1. They were not to cook or build fires for cooking on the Sabbath (Ex. 35:3; Num. 15:32-36).

   Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, "These are the words which the LORD has commanded you to do: Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day." Exodus 35:1-3

2. They were not to work and conduct their normal business affairs on the Sabbath (Neh. 13:15-22).

3. They were not to bear burdens on the Sabbath (Jer. 17:19-27).

   Thus says the LORD: "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers." Jeremiah 17:21-22

C. The religious leaders of the day had deified the law (John 5:16-18). They had in fact become worshippers of the law.

   For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. John 15:16

1. Jesus commended the Pharisees for their keeping of the letter of the law (Mt. 23:23).

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

Jesus described the righteousness of the Pharisees. Note: We will be looking at Matthew 23 more closely in a later class session.

a. They were accurate teachers of the law (Mt. 23:1-3).

b. They prayed often and long (Mt. 6:5; 23:14).

c. They fasted twice a week (Mt. 6:16-18).

d. They practiced stringent tithing (Mt. 23:23; Luke 18:18).

e. They were tireless evangelists (Mt. 23:15).

f. They exaggerated the requirements of the law (Mt. 23:5).

   They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

   - This included exaggerated phylacteries (See: Ex. 13:9, 16, Deut. 4:8; 11:18).

     "The word 'phylactery' comes from a word signifying to keep, preserve, or guard. The name was given because phylacteries were worn as amulets or charms, and were supposed to defend or preserve those who wore them from evil. They were small slips of parchment or vellum, on which were written certain portions of the Old Testament. The practice of using phylacteries was founded on a literal interpretation of that passage where God commands the Hebrews to have the law as a sign on their foreheads, and as frontlets between their eyes, (Ex.13:16; compare Pro. 3:1; 3:3; 6:21). One kind of phylactery was called a "frontlet," and was composed of four pieces of parchment, on the first of which was written Exodus12:2-10; on the second, Exodus 13:11-21; on the third, Deuteronomy 6:4-9; and on the fourth, Deuteronomy 11:18-21. These pieces of parchment, thus inscribed, they enclosed in a piece of tough skin, making a square, on one side of which is placed the Hebrew letter shin (ש sh) and bound them round their foreheads with a thong or ribbon when they went to the synagogue. Some wore them evening and morning; others only at the morning prayer." –Barnes Notes

   - This included exaggerated hem lines (See: Num. 15:38-40; Deut. 22:12).

     "This refers to the loose threads which were attached to the borders of the outer garment as a fringe. This fringe was commanded in order to distinguish them from ether nations, and that they might remember to keep the commandments of God (Num.15:38-40; Deut. 22:12). The

Pharisees made them broader than other people wore them, to show that they had special respect for the law." –Barnes Notes

g. They were conservative in their theology (Acts 23:8).

h. They believed in the miraculous and the supernatural (Acts 23:8).

i. They condemned their forefathers for rejecting the prophets and the word that they brought (Mt. 23:29).

j. They were the strictest sect of the Jews (Acts 26:5).

2. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for missing the spirit of the law (Mt. 23:23-24).

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

Blind guides! You strain your water so you won't accidentally swallow a gnat; then you swallow a camel! –NLT

a. They omitted the weightier matters of the law—justice, mercy and faith (Mt. 23:23).

b. Jesus indicated that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).

And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

c. Jesus indicated that our righteousness is to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 5:20).

For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

This means that while we still pay attention to and do our best to fulfill the letter of the law, we do what we do from the heart and pay equal attention to mercy, forgiveness and love.

D. The religious leaders of the day had amplified or added to the law to the point of making it an unreasonable burden.

1. The laws of washing (Mt. 15:2; Mark 7:3-4).

Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." Matthew 15:1-2

It wasn't that the disciples did not wash their hands before eating; they did not wash them according to the detailed prescription of their rabbinical traditions.

"They regarded external purity as of much more importance than the purity of the heart. They had many foolish rules about it respecting the quantity of water that was to be used, the way in which it should be applied, the number of times it should be changed, the number of those that might wash at a time, etc. Our Saviour did not think it proper to regard these rules, and this was the reason why they "found fault" with him." –Barnes Notes

2. The laws of the Sabbath.

   a. They insisted that when the disciples legally plucked grain from the field that they were in fact harvesting (Deut. 23:25; Mt. 12:1-2; Mark 2:23-24).

      At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!" Matthew 12:1-2

      It was lawful for them to pluck grain from the fields; it was lawful for them to eat on the Sabbath, but it was not lawful for them to harvest their crops on the Sabbath. Question: When the disciples grabbed a handful of grain were they simply eating or were they in fact harvesting the field?

   b. They insisted that when Jesus made mud and put it on the man's eyes He was working (John 9:6-7, 13-14).

      When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing. John 9:6-7

      They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. John 9:13-14

      Question: When Jesus did miracles was He working or was God in fact working? Did Jesus break the Sabbath or did God break the Sabbath?

E. The religious leaders of the day were more concerned about the letter of their laws than relieving the suffering of men.

   1. It is ironical because while the religious leaders were so concerned about the weekly Sabbath, the Jews as a nation never kept the other Sabbaths that were prescribed by God.

      a. There was the seventh year Sabbath where they were to let their fields lie fallow (Lev. 25:1-7).

b. There was the fiftieth year Sabbath or the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8-17). This meant in the Year of Jubilee they had two Sabbath years back to back.

2. The key to the seventh year Sabbath was the sixth year provision of the Lord (Lev. 25:18-22).

So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety. 19 Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety. 20 And if you say, "What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?" 21 Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. 22 And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat of the old harvest.

3. Not keeping the Sabbaths was the very reason why the Children of Israel were sent into captivity (II Chr. 36:20-21; Neh. 13:17-18; Dan. 9:2).

And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years. II Chronicles 36:20-21

Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."
Nehemiah 13:17-18

They had not kept the Sabbath of years for 490 years. God would give the land a forced rest period of seventy years (Seventy years times seven years equals 490 years).

F. The religious leaders were not interested in anything that would change their laws or their customs (Acts 6:14).

…for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.

III. Jesus presented Himself as the Lord of the Sabbath (Mt. 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5).

For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. Matthew 12:8

A. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath because He existed before the Sabbath existed (Col. 1:15-17).

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

B. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath because He made all of the days including the Sabbath (John 1:3). What is greater, the Sabbath or the One who created the Sabbath?

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

C. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath because He was the instrument of God to give the commandment to Moses in the first place (Acts 7:38).

This is he [Moses] *who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us…*

D. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath because He came to bring to fulfillment the reality of the Sabbath (Mt. 11:28-30; Heb. 4:3-11; Is. 28:12).

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
Matthew 11:28-30

IV. Jesus taught that the Sabbath was made for man and did not exclude man from continuing many religious or priestly functions.

A. Circumcision was practiced on the Sabbath (John 7:21-24).

Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

B. The priests functioned on the Sabbath. Jesus is our Great High Priest.

1. The priest waved the sheaf of first fruits on the Sabbath (Lev. 23:11).

2. The bread on the table of showbread was set up each Sabbath (Lev. 24:8; I Chr. 19:32).

3. Animal sacrifices were offered on the Sabbath (Num. 28:9-10; Ezek. 46:4). The truth is that there were more sacrifices on the Sabbath than on any other day of the week.

C. Other essential services were performed on the Sabbath. The king and his palace were guarded (II Kgs. 11:4-9).

D. There were times when the normal laws of the Sabbath were suspended for emergency situations.

1. David ate the showbread (Luke 6:3-4; I Sam. 21:6).

And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" But Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat? Luke 6:2-4

2. People could rescue their animals or relieve suffering (Luke 14:5-6; Deut. 22:4).

Then He answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" And they could not answer Him regarding these things. Luke 14:5-6

This is exactly what Jesus felt that He was doing when he healed people on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10-17).

Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. 12 But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." 13 And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14 But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." 15 The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? 16 So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" 17 And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him. Luke 13:10-17

But Jesus shot back, "You frauds! Each Sabbath every one of you regularly unties your cow or donkey from its stall, leads it out for water, and thinks nothing of it. So why isn't it all right for me to untie this daughter of Abraham and lead her from the stall where Satan has had her tied these eighteen years?" When he put it that way, his critics were left looking quite silly and

red-faced. The congregation was delighted and cheered him on.
Luke 13:15-17, Msg

V. Jesus taught that the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27).

A. Man needs rest to work.

B. Keeping the Sabbath should not be judged by outward appearance alone (John 7:24).

1. God is more interested in the internal than the external.

2. God is more interested in mercy and justice than in keeping the letter of the law (Hos. 6:6; Mic. 6:6-8; Mt. 9:13; 23:23-24).

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. Hosea 6:6

With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:6-8

C. Keeping the Sabbath does not relieve us from ministry to the suffering on any given day.

D. Man can keep the Sabbath outwardly yet never keep true Sabbath rest in the Spirit.

E. There can be no realization of spiritual Sabbath as long as there is sin and sickness in the world (John 5:17-18).

F. The only true Sabbath is in Christ. There can be no rest apart from Him.

G. The Sabbath was given as a sign and seal of the Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 31:12-17). However the believer in Christ is under the New Covenant in which every day is a "Sabbath" unto the Lord (Col 2:13-17; Rom. 14:5-9; Gal. 4:8-11).

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. 16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Colossians 2:13-17

Lesson 16
Jesus, The "I AM"

I. One of the ways that Jesus expressed His deity or relationship to the Father was by referring to Himself as or implying that He was the "I AM" (Mark 14:62; Luke 22:70; John 8:24, 28, 58).

Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. John 8:58

A. God had revealed Himself as the "I AM" (Ex. 3:14; 6:3).

Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'" Exodus 3:13-15

The term "I AM" is the Hebrew meaning of the word that is often rendered "Jehovah" in the Old Testament.

B. God revealed this name as His covenantal name.

In doing so He demonstrated His commitment to meet every need of those in covenant relationship with Him. God would be whatever we need Him to be including:

1. Jehovah Jireh or The Lord My Provider (Gen. 22:13-14).

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

God presents Himself as the One Who will provide atonement for us which we cannot provide for ourselves (Ps. 65:3; 79:9; Ezek. 16:63).

2. Jehovah Rapha or The Lord My Healer (Ex. 15:26).

…and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."

God presents Himself as our Doctor who can heal us inside and out (Ps. 103:3; 147:3).

3. Jehovah Nissi or The Lord My Banner (Ex. 17:14-15).

   Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner…

   God presents Himself as the One Who leads us forth into battle and gives us the victory. When you fight under the Lord's banner the victory is certain (See: Is. 11:10).

4. Jehovah M'Kaddesh or The Lord My Sanctifier (Ex. 31:13; Lev. 20:8; 22:32).

   Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: "Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you." Exodus 31:13

   God presents Himself as the One Who provides for our sanctification or holiness which is not something that we can do of ourselves.

5. Jehovah Shalom or The Lord My Peace (Judg. 6:24).

   Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face." Then the LORD said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die." So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace. Judges 6:22-24

   God presents Himself as the One Who makes it possible for us to have peace with God and as a result we do not need to be fearful in His presence (Ps. 29:11; Is. 26:12).

6. Jehovah Rohi or The Lord My Shepherd (Ps. 23:1).

   The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

   God presents Himself as the One Who cares for us the same way that a shepherd cares for his flock (Ps. 28:9; 80:1).

7. Jehovah Sabboath or The Lord of Armies (II Sam. 6:2).

   Again David gathered all the choice men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. II Samuel 6:1-2

God presents Himself as the One Who has a mighty army and He will fight for us as we put our trust in Him (I Sam. 14:6; 17:45-47; II Kgs. 6:16-17; 19:31).

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands." I Samuel 17:45-47

8. Jehovah Tsidkenu or The Lord My Righteousness (Jer. 23:6).

   In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

   God presents Himself as the One Who stands in our stead and becomes what we cannot become in ourselves—righteous (Ps. 23:3; Is. 46:13; 54:17).

9. Jehovah Shammah or The Lord Who is Present (Ezek. 48:35).

   All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE.

   God presents Himself as the One Who is in the midst of us and is always present and will never forsake us but will be an ever present help in time of trouble (Is. 12:6; Ps. 46:1, 4-5).

   God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

   There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. Psalm 46:4-5

C. God revealed His name as a triune name (Ex. 3:13-16).

   I AM – WHO – I AM

   1. The God of Abraham—I AM—The Father
   2. The God of Isaac—WHO—The Son
   3. The God of Jacob—I AM—The Holy Spirit

D. God's triune name was cloaked in mystery. Up to the incarnation there had always been a bit of a mystery surrounding the name of the Son, the central figure of the Godhead.

   1. Jacob inquired about the name (Gen. 32:29).

Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.

2. Samson's parents inquired after the name (Judg. 13:17-18).

   Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?" And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?"

   …it is a name of wonder? –NEB

   Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret? –KJV

3. Agur asked about the name (Pro. 30:4).

   Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know?

4. Isaiah indicated that His name was "wonderful" (Is. 9:6).

   For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

5. Gabriel announced that His name would be "Jesus" (Mt. 1:21).

   And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.

II. The Gospel of John particularly tells us that Jesus is the "I AM."

Jesus declared Himself to be the "I AM" in seven ways:

- I AM the Bread of Life
- I AM the Light of the World
- I AM the Door
- I AM the Good Shepherd
- I AM the Resurrection and the Life
- I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life
- I AM the True Vine

A. I AM the Bread of Life (John 6:35).

And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

Just as the Children of Israel lived off of the bread from heaven provided to them by the Father, we as believers live off of the bread that descended down from above—Jesus (John 6:31-33).

"Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Bread in most cultures of the day was considered to be the "staff of life." Along with water it was considered essential for one's daily existence (Gen. 21:14; Ezek. 4:16-17).

The principle ingredient in bread was flour. In order to make bread the wheat grains had to be beaten or ground into flour. Then it had to be put into a hot oven and baked until it was finished. All of this speaks of the process that Jesus went though on the cross to become our Bread of Life.

Bread was usually broken before it was consumed. Jesus on the night that He was betrayed broke bread with His disciples (Mt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19).

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Matthew 26:26

Every time that we celebrate communion we celebrate Jesus as the Bread of Life (I Cor. 10:16; 11:23-26).

B. I AM the Light of the World (John 8:12; 9:5).

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." John 8:12

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. John 9:5

I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. John 12:46

1. Outside of Christ the whole world is dwelling in darkness (Mt. 4:16; John 3:18-21; Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:13; I Pet. 2:9).

   He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God. John 3:18-21

2. Jesus is the light Who enlightens the life of every man who receives Him (Luke 1:79; John 1:4-9; 12:35-36).

   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. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. John 1:4-9

   a. He possesses the qualities of light.

      - Purity (I John 1:5)
      - Life (John 8:12)
      - Warmth (Ps. 104:2)
      - Healing (Mal. 4:2)

   b. He illuminates darkness (Mt. 4:16).

      The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.

C. I AM the Door (John 10:7-10).

   Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

   Jesus as the door of the sheep fold has two aspects to it.

   1. Jesus is the door of protection, keeping out the wolves and other enemies of the sheep.

      Jesus provides protection from:

      - Thieves (John 10:1, 8, 10)
      - Robbers (John 10:1, 8, 10)
      - Strangers (John 10:5)
      - Hirelings (John 10:12-13)
      - Wolves (John 10:12)

   2. Jesus is the door providing access to pasture and rest.

D. I AM the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-14).

   I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the

wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

1. Jesus describes His ministry to us as that of a "Shepherd."

   In doing so He brings in the picture of the people of God as sheep.

2. Jesus describes Himself as a "Good" Shepherd.

   a. There were shepherds who were not "good." These were shepherds who were characterized by:

      - Caring more for themselves than they do the sheep (Ezek. 34:3; John 10:13).
      - Exploiting the sheep for their own purposes (Ezek. 34:2).
      - Driving the sheep for their own personal gain (Ezek. 34:4).
      - Forgetting the sheep that have gone astray (Ezek. 34:4).
      - Abusing the sheep (Jer. 23:1).

      Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: 'Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. 4 The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. 5 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. 6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.'" Ezekiel 35:2-6

   b. There were shepherds who were "good." Psalm 23 defines what it means to be a "good" shepherd. These were shepherds who were characterized by:

      - Loving the sheep more than their own life (John 10:11).
      - Knowing the sheep in a personal way (John 10:14).
      - Providing lush pasture for the sheep (Ps. 23:2).
      - Protecting the sheep continually (John 10:27-29).

      The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;

for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Psalm 23

E. I AM the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25).

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live."

This statement was made by Jesus in the context of perhaps His greatest miracle—the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44).

Read through the entire story as time permits.

When we read this account we discover several things:

1. Jesus intentionally waited for Lazarus to die before coming on to the scene (John 11:6).

2. Jesus knew that He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead before He arrived in Bethany (John 11:4, 11-14, 40).

3. Jesus would use this incident to benefit His followers (John 11:15).

   Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him." John 11:14-15

4. Jesus presented Himself as the personification of resurrection and life (John 11:25-26).

5. Jesus wept because of the unbelief of the crowd (John 11:33, 35, 38).

6. Jesus had spent time with the Father regarding Lazarus before He called Him forth (John 11:41-42). It was already a completed work in His mind.

F. I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6).

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

This verse could be translated, "I am the true and living way."

1. Jesus is the Way.

   a. Jesus is the only way to God. He is the narrow way that leads to life (Mt. 7:13-14; I Tim. 2:5).

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time…
I Timothy 2:4-6

b. There are many ways to God that have been prescribed by man (Pro. 14:12).

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

c. Jesus is the one Who restored our path to God (Eph. 2:18; Heb. 9:8; 10:19-20). He is the Way-maker.

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh… Hebrews 10:19-20

d. Those who followed Jesus were called the people of the Way (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

2. Jesus is the Truth. Jesus did not merely bring truth, He is the Truth (John 1:17).

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Many philosophers have lived lives in pursuit of truth. Jesus is the only truth. By virtue of the fact that God's word is truth and Jesus was the Word made flesh, Jesus is the truth (John 17:17).

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

3. Jesus is the Life (John 1:4; 11:25; Col. 3:4).

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:4

Many people are looking for the key to life. Jesus is the only path to life (I John 5:12).

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. I John 5:11-13

a. He is the author of life (John 1:4).

b. He is the giver of life (I Cor. 15:45; II Tim. 1:1).

c. In Him is eternal life (John 3:15-16, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47).

G. I AM the True Vine (John 15:1-8).

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, 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 of itself, unless it abides in the vine, 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, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Jesus uses the analogy of the vine and branches. In doing so He teaches us things about ourselves and about Himself.

1. We understand that we are utterly dependent upon Him.

   a. We cannot bear fruit without Him (John 15:5).

   b. Without Him we wither and become good for nothing (John 15:6).

   c. When we abide in Him it gives us the right to ask for what we desire (John 15:7).

   d. When we abide in Him we will bring forth fruit (John 15:8).

2. We understand His ministry toward us.

   a. He provides us with the energy to produce fruit (John 15:4).

   b. He prunes us so that we can be even more fruitful (John 15:2).

   c. There will ultimately be a fiery judgment awaiting those who bear no fruit (John 15:6).

It is not difficult to see why the soldiers who came to arrest Jesus fell backward when Jesus revealed Himself as "I AM" (John 18:4-8).

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." "I told you that I am he," Jesus answered. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go."

–NIV

Note: There is a strong similarity between the "I AM's" of Jesus and the Jehovah names of God.

Lesson 17
The Opposition of Jesus

I. Jesus faced opposition from political leaders (Acts 4:27-28).

A. Jesus was opposed by the Herodians (Mt. 22:15-22; Mark 3:6).

Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. 16 And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. 17 Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? 19 Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. 20 And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" 21 They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 22 When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way. Matthew 22:15-22

B. Jesus was opposed by Roman authorities.

1. Herod the Great tried to kill Him in His infancy (Mt. 2:13-18).

2. Herod Antipas also opposed Jesus.

a. He killed John the Baptist (Mt. 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9).

b. He sought to kill Jesus (Luke 13:31-33).

On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You."

II. Jesus faced His primary opposition from the religious leaders (Mt. 16:21; 20:18).

A. Jesus was opposed by the religious hierarchy of the day.

Note to teacher: Review these groups as covered in Lesson 1

1. Jesus was opposed by the Chief Priests.

2. Jesus was opposed by the Pharisees.

3. Jesus was opposed by Sadducees.

4. Jesus was opposed by the scribes or lawyers.

B. Jesus was opposed because He did not have a high regard for their man-made customs (Mark 7:9).

And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!" –NIV

He basically accused them of holding their man-made traditions and customs above the Word of God.

1. Jesus and His disciples did not fast according to their regimen (Mt. 9:14; Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33).

2. Jesus and His disciples did not observe their stringent Sabbath laws (Mt. 12:1-13; Mark 2:24; Luke 6:2, 7).

3. Jesus and His disciple did not observe their tradition concerning washing (Mt. 15:1-1-2; Mark 7:1-9).

C. Jesus was opposed because He did not dance when they said "Dance!" (Mt. 12:38-39; Luke 7:29-35). When they wanted to see a sign and He would not give them one (Mt. 16:1-4; Mark 8:11-12).

Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation." Mark 8:11-12

D. Jesus was opposed because He challenged their hypocrisy.

1. John the Baptist challenged hypocrisy at the Jordan (Mt. 3:5-12).

Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance…" Matthew 3:5-8

2. Jesus challenged them regarding their traditions (Mt. 15:1-14). The Pharisees were offended (Mt. 15:12).

Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

3. Jesus challenged them that all of their works were done to be seen of men (Mt. 6:1-7, 16-18; Mt. 23:5, 28).

But all their works they do to be seen by men. Matthew 23:5a

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.
Matthew 23:27-28

Take care! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired, because then you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give a gift to someone in need, don't shout about it as the hypocrites do--blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I assure you, they have received all the reward they will ever get. But when you give to someone, don't tell your left hand what your right hand is doing. Give your gifts in secret, and your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you. And now about prayer. When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I assure you, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly. Then your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you. When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered only by repeating their words again and again.
Matthew 6:1-7, NLT

a. They gave alms with they had people's attention (Mt. 6:1-4).

b. They prayed when and where others could see them (Mt. 6:5-6).

c. They prayed long, eloquent repetitious prayers (Mt. 6:7, 23:14).

d. They fasted with long and disfigured faces so people would know they were fasting (Mt. 6:16-18).

e. They loved the chief seats in the synagogue (Mt. 23:6).

f. They loved titles of respect (Mt. 23:7-10).

E. Jesus was opposed because He did not come the way in which the leaders had expected Messiah to come.

1. He associated with sinners (Mt. 9:11-13; Mark 2:16; Luke 5:30; 15:2).

As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Matthew 9:9-13

2. He did not come though their rabbinical schools (Mt. 21:23; Mark 11:27; Luke 20:1-2).

Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with

the elders, confronted Him and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?" Luke 20:1-2

3. He did not apply the law the same way that they did (John 8:3-12).

   Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst 4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. 7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." 8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." 12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

4. He did not come to establish an earthly kingdom (Luke 17:20-21).

   Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

F. Jesus was opposed because He referred to them in negative ways. Here are a few of the choice things that he called them.

   1. A wicked and adulterous generation (Mt. 12:38; 16:4)
   2. Sign-seekers (Mt. 12:38; 16:4)
   3. Brood of vipers (Mt. 12:34; 23:33)
   4. Evil men (Mt. 12:34)
   5. Murders of those sent by God (Mt. 21:34-45; 23:31, 34-39)
   6. Ignorant of the Scripture (Mt. 22:29)
   7. Hypocrites (Mt. 23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29; Mark 7:6; Luke 11:44)
   8. Sons of hell (Mt. 23:15)
   9. Blind guides (Mt. 23:16, 24)
   10. Fools and blind (Mt. 23:17, 19, 26; Luke 11:40)
   11. Full of extortion and self indulgence (Mt. 23:25)
   12. Whitewashed tombs full of dead men's bones (Mt. 23:27)
   13. Serpents (Mt. 23:33)
   14. Lovers of money (Luke 16:14)

G. Jesus was opposed because He pronounced judgment on the religious leaders.

1. He warned them of impending judgment (Mt. 12:38-42).

   Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here."

2. He uttered eight "Woes" in relation to them (Mt. 23:13, 14, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29).

   Read through Matthew 23 and highlight warnings.

H. Jesus was opposed because He warned people not to be like the religious leaders.

1. Jesus told the people that they had to be more righteous than the Pharisees (Mt. 5:20).

   For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

2. Jesus told the people not to follow the example of the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 23:2-3).

   Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

3. Jesus warned people of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mt. 16:5-12).

   Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread." But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?--but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

a. The leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy (Mt. 23:2-5; Luke 12:1).

b. The leaven of the Sadducees is a lack of belief in the supernatural (Acts 23:8).

c. The leaven of the scribes or lawyers is legalism (Luke 11:46).

d. The leaven of Herod is wickedness (Mark 8:15).

I. Jesus was opposed because of envy (Mt. 27:18; Mark 15:10; Acts 13:45).

For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. Matthew 27:18

1. Jesus always got the better of them in verbal debates (Mt. 22:15, 22, 33, 41-46; Mark 12:12).

Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. Matthew 22:15

When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way. Matthew 22:22

And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching. Matthew 22:33

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore. Matthew 22:41-46

2. Jesus was very popular among the people (Mt. 21:15; 22:46; Luke 19:37-40).

But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant. Matthew 21:15

3. Jesus was being referred to as the Messiah (John 7:32, 40-44).

Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. John 7:40-44

4. Jesus had multitudes that followed Him and they did not (John 11:47-48; 12:19).

   Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." John 11:45-48

   Then the Pharisees said to each other, "We've lost. Look, the whole world has gone after him!" John 12:19, NLT

III. Jesus' opposition demonstrated their animosity in several ways.

A. They continually were putting Him to the test (Mt. 19:3; Mt. 22:15; Mark 10:2; 12:13).

B. They watched Him carefully to catch Him in a mistake (Luke 6:7; 11:53-54; 14:1; Mark 14:1).

   So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. Luke 6:7

   And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail Him vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him. Luke 11:53-54

C. They joined forces to oppose Him (Mt. 22:34-40).

   1. Pharisees and Sadducees (Acts 23:6-8).

      The Sadducees even asked questions about things they did not believe (Mt. 15:23-33).

   2. Pharisees and Herodians (Mt. 22:15-22; Mark 3:6).

D. They accused Jesus of having a demon (Mt. 9:34; 12:24).

   As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." Mark 9:32-34

E. They tried to intimidate those who were inclined to follow Jesus (John 12:42-43).

Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

F. They sought to destroy Him (Mt. 12:14; Mark 3:6; 11:18; Luke 19:47-48).

Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. Matthew 12:14

And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him. Luke 19:47-48

G. They plotted to kill Him (Mt. 27:1; Luke 20:19; John 11:53-54).

Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples. John 11:53-54

They even tried to kill Lazarus (John 12:9-11).

Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

H. They arrested Him with the assistance of Judas (John 18:3).

Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

I. They sought out false witnesses to testify against Him (Mt. 26:59-60; Mark 14:56).

Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward… Matthew 26:59-60

Lesson 18-19
The Parables of Jesus

I. Jesus cloaked much of His teaching in parables.

A. Jesus switched from clear, well-outlined teaching to teaching in parables.

1. When Jesus began His teaching He was simple, clear and direct (See: Matthew 5-7).

You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. Matthew 5:38-42

2. In the latter half of His ministry, Jesus' teaching became veiled in symbolism that required interpretation (Mt. 13:34-35).

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."

a. The disciples of Jesus picked up immediately on the switch in style (Mt. 13:10).

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

b. The disciples themselves needed interpretation to understand this new style (Mt. 13:36b).

And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

B. Jesus made the change for specific reasons.

1. Jesus spoke in parables to conceal truth from those who were closed to the truth.

a. The religious leaders had just accused Jesus for the second time of being inspired by the devil (Mt. 12:24, Also: Mt. 9:34; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15).

Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. 23 And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" 24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." 25 But

Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Matthew 12:22-28

b. Jesus had just warned the leaders that they were verging on blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 12:31-32).

Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

- He warned them not to stand against God (Mt. 12:28, 30).

  He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. Matthew 12:30

- He warned them to change their hearts (Mt. 12:33-35).

  Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

- He warned them about impending judgment for the careless words that they were speaking (Mt. 12:36-37).

  But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

c. Jesus decided that He was not going to cast pearls before swine (Mt. 7:6).

Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

Don't give what is holy to unholy people. Don't give pearls to swine! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you. –NLT

d. Jesus would turn from those who were closed and focus on those who were open to His message.

Paul and Barnabas had a similar experience on their first missionary journey (See: Acts 13:44-46).

On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles."

2. Jesus spoke in parables to reserve truth for those we were open to the truth.

   Notice Jesus' explanation as to why He was now teaching in parables (Mt. 13:10-17).

   And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.' 16 But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17 for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

   Jesus spoke in parables because:

   a. The religious leaders and those who followed them had demonstrated that they had dull hearts and that they were spiritually hard of hearing and blind.

   b. He wanted to reserve His teaching for those who were sincere about learning from Him.

      A good way to translate verse 12 is as follows:

      For whoever has [an open and responsive heart]*, to him more* [truth and understanding] *will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have* [an open and responsive heart]*, even what* [opportunity] *he has will be taken away from him.*

To those who are open to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But to those who are not listening, even what they have will be taken away from them. –NLT

3. Jesus taught publicly to the multitudes in parables but He called His disciples to Him privately to explain the parables (Mt. 13:36).

   Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

II. Jesus spoke parables relating to many areas of life.

A. A parable is a short, simple story from which a moral lesson can be drawn.

1. It is a fictitious story that could be true.

2. It draws from images and events that would be familiar to the listener.

3. It is constructed of symbolism that must be interpreted to be understood.

   a. It must be understood based on the context of when it was spoken.

   b. It must be understood as an overall unit without too much emphasis on the particulars.

      That is, you cannot take the analogy further than its primary intended meaning by trying to capture a hidden meaning in every single word.

   c. It must not be used as a source of doctrinal formulation.

      There may actually be hypothetical aspects to a parable that are not consistent with reality or sound doctrine. To formulate a doctrine of heaven and hell from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus or the wise and foolish virgins would lead one astray. Doctrine can be confirmed in parables, but parables should never be the primary source of doctrinal theology.

4. It is aimed at communicating a spiritual truth (usually one primary truth).

   Some have said, "It is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning."

B. A partial listing of Jesus' parables includes the following:

1. The two debtors (Luke 7:41-50)
2. Sewing a new patch on old garment (Mt. 9:16).
3. Putting new wine into old wineskins (Mt. 9:9:17).
4. Sower of seeds in the field (Mt. 13:3-23).
5. The wheat and the tares (Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43)
6. The mustard seed (Mt. 13:31-32)

7. Leaven (Mt. 13:33)
8. The treasure hidden in the field (Mt. 13:44).
9. The pearl of great price (Mt. 13:45-46)
10. The dragnet (Mt. 13:47-50)
11. The instructed scribe (Mt. 13:52)
12. The good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37)
13. The rich fool (Luke 12:16-21)
14. The barren fig tree (Luke 13:6-9)
15. The great supper (Luke 14:15-24)
16. Building a tower (Luke 14:28-30)
17. Going to war (Luke 14:31-33)
18. The lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7; Mt. 18:10-14)
19. The lost coin (Luke 15:8-10)
20. The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)
21. The unjust steward (Luke 16:1-8)
22. The rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)
23. The unprofitable servants (Luke 17:7-10)
24. The persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8)
25. The Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:10-14)
26. The unforgiving servant (Mt. 18:23-35)
27. The householder (Mt. 20:1-16)
28. The two sons (Mt. 21:28-31)
29. The vineyard (Mt. 21:33-44)
30. The marriage supper (Mt. 22:2-14)
31. The faithful and wise servant (Mt. 24:45-51)
32. The wise and foolish virgins (Mt. 25:1-12)
33. The talents (Mt. 25:14-30)

III. Many of Jesus parables were given as general instruction concerning principles of the Kingdom of God.

A. The parables of building a tower and going to war teach us that we need to count the cost before we engage in a project or a conflict (Luke 14:28-33). This can be applied to many avenues of life particularly that of following the Lord and answering His call to discipleship.

Note the context of this parable:

Multitudes were following Jesus and He wanted them to know the cost of following Him to be sure that they were willing to pay the price (Luke 14:25-27).

Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

Moral: Before you set out on any endeavor be sure to count the cost so that you can finish what you start.

B. The parable of the two debtors teaches us that the greater sense of personal unworthiness or need that we have the greater our appreciation will be for what God has indeed done for us (Luke 7:41-50).

Note the context of this parable:

A sinful woman who had been forgiven by Jesus washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. When the Pharisee who had invited Him to dinner showed contempt for this, Jesus explained why she was so appreciative.

Moral: Those who are forgiven much love much.

C. The parable of the unforgiving servant teaches us that we must be agents of God's mercy in the same way that He has demonstrated His mercy toward us and be anxious to forgive others no matter how big we perceive their offense toward us to be (Mt. 18:23-35).

Note the context of this parable:

Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Matthew 18:21-22

Moral: Forgive others the same way that you want God to forgive you.

D. The parable of the sower who went out in the field to sow teaches us the importance of controlling the condition of our hearts so that the Word of God can take root in our lives and we can bear Kingdom fruit (Mt. 13:3-9, 18-23).

E. The parable of the good Samaritan teaches us that we have a responsibility to demonstrate God's love to those who have need when it is in our power to do so (Luke 10:30-37).

Note the context of this parable:

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Luke 10:25-29

F. The parable of the rich fool teaches us that the possessions that we have are not merely for the purpose of lavishing greater and greater luxury on ourselves, but we are to use them to glorify God and to help others (Luke 12:16-21).

Note the context of this parable:

Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Luke 12:13-15

Moral: Use your money wisely while you are alive because it will not help you after you are dead.

G. The parable of the unjust steward teaches us that no matter who we are, if we will use the resources that God has placed in our hands to win people for Christ we will have much fruit in heaven (Luke 16:1-13).

H. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus teaches us that we only have one opportunity to live for God and to do what is right toward others. Once we die there is no more opportunity for us to ease our judgment or to reach out to our loved ones who do not believe (Luke 10:19-31).

I. The parable of the persistent widow teaches that when we make our requests known to the Lord in prayer it is to be more than a casual entreaty, but we are to press in until we have what we desire (Luke 18:1-8).

Note the context of this parable:

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart… Luke 18:1

J. The parable of the talents teaches us that God has given every one of us something that we can use for Him. He not only expects us to use what He has given us, He expects a return on what He has given to us (Mt. 25:14-30).

Moral: Use it or lose it.

IV. Most of Jesus' parables were given as an indictment of the religious leaders of the day.

A. The parable of sewing a new patch on old garment (Mt. 9:16) and putting new wine into old wineskins (Mt. 9:9:17) teach that you cannot take Jesus New Covenant teachings and just add them to the laws and traditions under the Old Covenant.

B. The parable of the barren fig tree teaches that when Jesus came to the nation of Israel He expected to find a certain type of fruit, but He did not find it (Luke 13:6-9). He searched for three years in His ministry yet did not find it.

He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' But he answered and said to

him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'"

John the Baptist was the first to warn the leaders of their lack of fruitfulness (Mt. 3:8-10).

Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Later on in Jesus ministry He cursed a fig tree that was all leaves but bore no fruit (Mt. 21:18-19).

Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.
Matthew 21:18-19

C. The parable of the great supper teaches us that the Jews and the religious leaders who were the first ones invited to the supper made every excuse not to come. Eventually the invitation went out to "whosoever will may come" (Luke 14:15-24). Ultimately the original invitees who made excuses never tasted of the prepared meal.

So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind." And the servant said, "Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room." Then the master said to the servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper."
Luke 14:21-24

D. The parable of the prodigal son can be interpreted in several ways (Luke 15:11-32).

1. It can speak of the great love that the Father has for all of His children no matter how they may have spoiled their goods and mistreated Him.

2. It can also speak of two groups of people.

    a. The prodigal son who squandered his inheritance can be seen as the Gentiles or at least those who did not stay true to the faith.

    b. The elder brother can be seen to represent the Jews or those who never strayed but remained faithful to the religious systems of the day.

Context of the parable:

Jesus was trying to explain to the murmuring Pharisees why He was reaching out to tax collectors and sinners (Luke 15:1-2). The Pharisees were much like the murmuring elder brother who did not appreciate the father's openness to his straying brother. The elder brother was jealous of the father's attention.

E. The parable of the two sons again represents the religious leaders and the publicans, sinners and rebellious (Mt. 21:28-32).

"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' 29 He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. 30 Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him."

1. The first son represents those were rebellious at first but later repented and responded in obedience.

2. The second son represents the religious leaders of the day who "say and do not" (Mt. 23:3). They make a good profession, but they do not follow through.

When they heard this, all the people, including the unjust tax collectors, agreed that God's plan was right, for they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and experts in religious law had rejected God's plan for them, for they had refused John's baptism. Luke 7:29-30, NLT

F. The parable of the vineyard is one of the clearest parables that Jesus told relating to the religious leaders of the day and they did not miss His intent (Mt. 21:33-46).

"Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' 39 So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" 41 They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." 42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? 43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you

and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." 45 Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

There are several things that Jesus revealed in this parable.

1. Those who work the vineyard are not the actual landowners, they are merely stewards who will have to give an account.
2. God expected there to be fruit from His vineyard.
3. Those in charge of the vineyard mistreated the servants (prophets) sent by the owner.
4. The religious leaders of the day knew that Jesus was the Son of God and rightful heir. They did not kill Him out of ignorance, but jealousy.
5. Because of their rejection of the Son, the vineyard would be put into the hands of another nation that would bring forth the desired fruit (I Pet. 2:8-9).
6. The foundation of this new order would be personal brokenness and a right relationship to the Stone that the builders rejected.

V. Jesus' seven parables of the Kingdom may be a prophetic reference to the seven periods of church history.

A. Each of the parables of the Kingdom stands on its own and contains important truth.

1. Sower of seeds in the field (Mt. 13:3-23).
2. The wheat and the tares (Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43)
3. The mustard seed (Mt. 13:31-32)
4. Leaven (Mt. 13:33)
5. The treasure hidden in the field (Mt. 13:44).
6. The pearl of great price (Mt. 13:45-46)
7. The dragnet (Mt. 13:47-50)

B. However, these parables may also be a prophetic reference to the future ages of the church.

As one studies the seven parables of the kingdom as given by Jesus in Matthew 13, one is struck by the similarity of these seven parables with the events associated with the seven periods of Church history.

1. The Parable of the Sower

This parable speaks of the Apostolic Church period (30-100 A.D.) when the seed of the word of God was sown into the earth. This is the age of expansion in relation to the Church. The seed was received in different ways and brought forth various levels of fruitfulness.

2. The Parable of the Wheat and Tares

   This parable speaks of the Persecuted Church period (100-313 A.D.). Although the Church went through seasons of persecution during this period, it was also a period in which many of the early heresies concerning the nature of Christ arose. Those who preached these heresies were as tares among the wheat; they were "sons of the wicked one" (Mt. 13:38). These tares would continue to grow throughout the church age to be finally separated at the coming of the Lord.

3. The Parable of the Mustard Seed

   This parable indicates that the kingdom of God expanded to such a level that even the birds of the air were able to lodge in its branches. This parable speaks of the Imperial Church period when Christianity became a state religion and many unregenerate people took refuge in its branches because of political expediency and, in some cases, because they had no options.

4. The Parable of the Leaven

   This parable indicates that there was leaven introduced into the pure measures of meal that eventually caused the whole lump to be leavened. This parable speaks of the Medieval Church period (313-1453 A.D.) where one has to search diligently to find a true expression of the Church. That which was called "the church" in that era was filled with corruption of all sorts.

5. The Parable of the Treasure in the Field

   This parable speaks of a new season of restoration where individuals discovered truth that had been hidden in the field of the Word. It speaks of the Reformed Church period (1453-1648 A.D.) where many of the reformers had to literally lay down their lives for truths or treasures from the Word of God that were in the process of being restored to the church.

6. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

   This parable speaks of the Fragmented Church period (1648-1948 A.D.) when many precious pearls were discovered. These were pearls of truth that served as the catalyst for new groups and denominations to arise.

7. The Parable of the Dragnet

   This is the last parable and it speaks of the last period of church history (1948-Present). It deals with the great ingathering of fish and the days of harvest. It speaks of a harvest where some of every kind is brought in that is followed by a separation of the good and the bad, the wheat and the chaff, the sheep and the goats.

Lesson 20
The Prophetic Ministry of Jesus

I. Jesus was openly acknowledged as a prophet.

A. He was prophesied to be a prophet (Deut. 18:15, 18-19; Acts 3:22-23).

I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.
Deuteronomy 18:18

B. He thought of Himself as a prophet (Mt. 13:57; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24; 13:33; John 4:44).

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. Matthew 13:56-57

C. He was readily perceived to be a prophet (Mt. 21:11, 46; Mark 6:15; Luke 7:16; 24:19; John 4:19; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17).

Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him." Luke 24:18-20

II. Jesus prophesied about many things that would come.

A. Jesus prophesied concerning His own death, burial and resurrection (Mt. 12:40; 17:22-23; 20:17-19; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34; Luke 9:21-22, 43-45; John 2:19-21; 12:27-36).

Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.
Matthew 17:22-23

Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again." Matthew 20:17-19

And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, "Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men." But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so

that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.
Luke 9:43-45

B. Jesus prophesied the desertion and betrayal by His disciples (Mt. 26:21, 31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:36-38; 16:32).

Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.
Matthew 26:31-35

C. Jesus prophesied the coming of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; John 7:37-39; 14:25-26; 15:26-26).

These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:25-26

D. Jesus prophesied about the persecution of His followers (Mt. 10:16-26; John 15:20).

Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. 21 Now 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. 22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.
Matthew 10:16-23

1. He said that they would be put out of synagogues (John 9:22; 16:2).

His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. John 9:22

These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have

told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.
John 16:2-4

2. He said that they would be delivered up to councils (Mt. 10:17; See: Acts 4:1-22; 5:26-42; 22:26-36).

   Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will 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 worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.
   Matthew 10:16-20

3. He said that they would be brought before governors and kings (Mt. 10:18; See: Acts 24:1-25:27).

4. He said that some would be betrayed by close relatives (Mt. 10:21).

   Now 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 for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. Matthew 10:21-22

5. He said that some would be put to death for their faith (Mt. 10:21; 20:23; See: Acts 12:1-2).

6. He said that those who put them to death will believe they are doing a service to God (John 16:2; Phil. 3:6).

E. Jesus prophesied judgments against the unrepentant cities and nations.

   Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you. Matthew 11:20-24

   1. He pronounced judgment upon Chorazin and Bethsaida (Mt. 11:20-21; Luke 10:13-14).

   2. He pronounced judgment upon Capernaum (Mt. 11:22-23; Luke 10:15-16).

   3. He pronounced judgment upon Jerusalem (Mt. 23:37-24:2; Luke 19:41-44; Luke 21:20).

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." Luke 19:41-44

a. He indicated that their enemies would put them under siege (Luke 19:43).

b. He indicated that the temple would be thoroughly destroyed (Mt. 24:2; Mark 13:1-2; Luke 19:44; 21:6).

c. He indicated that the city would be leveled (Luke 19:44).

d. He indicated that the Jewish people would be taken into captivity to other nations (Luke 21:23).

e. He indicated that the city would be under Gentile control for a long season (Luke 21:24).

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.
Luke 21:20-24

F. Jesus prophesied concerning the end of the age (See: Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21).

Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 are all chapters that answer the disciples' questions concerning the future (Mt. 24:3; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7).

Now as He sat 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?"

They asked about three things:

- When will these things be (Most likely a reference to the destruction of the temple)?
- What will be the signs associated with the Second Coming?
- What will be the signs or marks of the end times or the end of the age?

Jesus answered their questions as follows:

1. He indicated that the end times would be times of great deception (Mt. 24:4, 24; Mark 13:5; Luke 21:8).

   And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." Matthew 24:4-5

   a. There will be many false and deceptive ministries (Mt. 24:5; Mark 13:6).

      - False prophets (Mt. 24:11)
      - False christs (Mt. 24:23-24; Mark 13:21-22)

      Then if anyone says to you, "Look, here is the Christ!" or, "Look, He is there!" do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand. Mark 13:21-23

   b. There will be many deceptive signs and wonders (Mt. 24:24; Mark 13:22; II Th. 2:9).

      For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. Matthew 24:24

   c. There will be many false and deceptive doctrines (I Tim. 4:1).

      Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons…

2. He indicated that there would be problems that would cause the nations distress and perplexity and would cause people's hearts to melt in fear (Luke 21:25).

   And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
   Luke 21:25-26

   And down here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides. The courage of many people will falter because of the fearful fate they see coming upon the earth, because the stability of the very heavens will be broken up. –NLT

3. He indicated that there will be wars and rumors of war (Mt. 24:6; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9).

   And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will

rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Matthew 24:6-8

a. There will be inner turmoil or insurrections within nations (Luke 21:9, 25).

But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately. Luke 21:9

...insurrections…--NLT

…revolutions… --NIV

…riots… --CEV

…uprisings… --MSG

And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Luke 21:25-26

And down here on earth the nations will be in turmoil… --NLT

b. Nations will rise against nations (Mt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10).

c. Kingdoms will rise against kingdoms (Mt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10).

4. He indicated that there will be natural disasters.

a. There will be famines (Mt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11).

There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. Luke 21:11

b. There will be wide spread and unusual diseases (Mt. 24:7; Luke 21:11).

…and in many places people will starve to death and suffer terrible diseases. –CEV

c. There will be troubles or birth pangs (Mark 13:8; See: Rom. 8:22).

And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows. Mark 13:8

Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains. –NIV

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Romans 8:22

d. There will be earthquakes even in unusual places (Mt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11; See Heb. 12:25-29).

And there will be earthquakes in various places… Mark 13:8

e. There will be tidal waves (Luke 21:25).

And down here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides. –NLT

5. He indicated that there will be persecution against Christians (Mt. 24:9-10; Luke 21:12).

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Matthew 24:9-10

a. This will involve a general hatred even on a national level (Mt. 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17).

b. This will involve betrayal within one's own immediate family (Mark 13:12; Luke 21:16).

Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. Mark 13:12

c. This will involve trial before religious councils and government officials (Mark 13:9; Luke 21:12-13).

But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.

d. This will involve imprisonment (Luke 21:12).

But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. Luke 21:12a

e. This will involve torture and death (Mt. 24:9; Mark 13:9; Luke 21:16).

But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. Mark 13:9a

You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. Luke 21:16

f. This will involve the apostasy of some who will become betrayers (Mt. 24:10).

At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other… Matthew 24:10

6. He indicated that the spiritual climate will be both positive and negative.

a. On the negative side there would be a general condition of lawlessness and spiritual apathy (Mt. 24:12-13).

And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

b. On the positive side the Gospel would go forth powerfully (Mt. 24:14; Mark 13:10).

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:14

7. He indicated certain things about the time of His return.

a. That His return will be sooner for the sake of the elect (Mt. 24:22; Mark 13:20).

And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. Matthew 24:22

b. That when He returns it will happen quickly (Mt. 24:27).

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

c. That His coming will catch people by surprise (Mt. 24:36-44, 50; Mark 13:32-37).

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning--lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!
Mark 13:32-37

d. That there will be signs in the heavens (Mt. 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:11, 25). The powers of the heavens will be shaken (Luke 21:26).

…and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.
Luke 21:11b

…for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Luke 21:26b

- Sun darkened
- Moon turned to blood
- Stars falling

e. That He will return in the clouds with power and great glory (Mt. 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27).

Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. Mark 13:26

f. That there will be the sound of a trumpet (Mt. 24:31).

And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

g. That His return will be mourned by those who rejected Him (Mt. 24:30).

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

h. That the elect will be gathered together to Him by the angels (Mt. 24:31; Mark 13:27).

i. That judgment will follow His coming (Mt. 24:50-51).

…the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

8. He indicated how people must anticipate His return.

a. They should not live carelessly (Luke 21:34).

But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.

b. They should be ready at all times (Mt. 24:44).

Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

c. They should watch and pray (Mt. 24:42; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 21:36).

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. 34 It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. 35 Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning--36 lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!
Mark 13:32-37

d. They should be on guard and not fall for the deceptions (Mt. 24:4).

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you."

e. They should be patient and endure (Mt. 24:13; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:19).

But he who endures to the end shall be saved. Matthew 24:13

f. They should lift up their heads (Luke 21:28).

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.

g. They should anticipate their redemption (Luke 21:28; See: Rom. 8:23).

Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Romans 8:23

Lesson 21
Jesus' Rejection and the Road to the Cross

I. Not everyone responded favorably to Jesus and His ministry.

Many stumbled over Him or were offended by Him (Luke 7:23).

And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.

A. Jerusalem, the center of Judaism, missed its day of visitation (Luke 13:34; 19:41-44).

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing. Luke 13:34

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." Luke 19:41-44

1. The Pharisees did not like Him because He challenged their traditions and exposed their hypocrisy (Mt. 15:1-2, 12).

2. The Sadducees did not like Him because His ministry in the realm of the supernatural challenged their belief system (Luke 20:27).

3. The chief priests did not like Him because His servant style of leadership challenged their political ambitions (Mt. 21:42-44).

4. The religious leaders did not like Him because they were envious of the praise of men that Jesus readily received even from children (Mt. 21:15).

   But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant.

B. Rome's appointed leaders missed their opportunity to receive Jesus.

1. Herod and Herodias did not like Him because both John the Baptist's statements and Jesus' purity of life challenged the ruler's personal morality (Mark 6:17-19; Luke 13:31-33).

   For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your

brother's wife." Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not. Mark 6:17-19

A few minutes later some Pharisees said to him, "Get out of here if you want to live, because Herod Antipas wants to kill you!" Jesus replied, "Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out demons and doing miracles of healing today and tomorrow; and the third day I will accomplish my purpose. Yes, today, tomorrow, and the next day I must proceed on my way. For it wouldn't do for a prophet of God to be killed except in Jerusalem!" Luke 13:31-33, NLT

2. Herod did not like Him because He would not perform miracles on cue to entertain him (Luke 23:6-12).

When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. 7 And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. :8 Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. 9 Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. 11 Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. 12 That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

C. Many of the multitudes walked away from Jesus as He talked about deeper levels of commitment.

1. When Jesus' teaching got demanding many decided not to follow Him any more (John 6:60-69).

Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" 61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. 64 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 would betray Him. 65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." 66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

2. When Jesus expected people to give up their "other gods" to follow Him some preferred their idols and walked away from Him (Mt. 19:21-22).

Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

D. His own countrymen and brothers were offended by Him and His teaching (Mt. 13:57; Mark 6:3; John 6:41-42; 7:1-5). They undoubtedly accused Him of being a "holier-than-thou."

After this, Jesus stayed in Galilee, going from village to village. He wanted to stay out of Judea where the Jewish leaders were plotting his death. 2 But soon it was time for the Festival of Shelters, 3 and Jesus' brothers urged him to go to Judea for the celebration. "Go where your followers can see your miracles!" they scoffed. 4 "You can't become a public figure if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, prove it to the world!" 5 For even his brothers didn't believe in him. 6 Jesus replied, "Now is not the right time for me to go. But you can go anytime, and it will make no difference. 7 The world can't hate you, but it does hate me because I accuse it of sin and evil. 8 You go on. I am not yet ready to go to this festival, because my time has not yet come." 9 So Jesus remained in Galilee. John 7:1-9, NLT

II. On several occasions those who opposed Jesus tried to arrest Him or harm Him in some way (Mt. 12:14; 21:46; Mark 3:6; Luke 6:11).

But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus. Luke 6:11

A. They were not able to take Him because they feared the people (Mt. 26:4-6; Mark 12:12; 14:1-2; Luke 20:19; 22:1-2).

And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people--for they knew He had spoken this parable against them. Luke 20:19

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. Luke 22:1-2

B. They were not able to take Him because it was not yet His time (John 7:6-8, 30, 44; 10:31, 39).

Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. John 7:30

1. Sometimes Jesus seemed to just be able to walk through the angry mob undetected (John 10:31, 39).

Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand. John 10:39

2. Other times Jesus hid from those who were seeking His life (John 8:59).

Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. John 8:59

III. As Jesus continued in ministry He became aware that the time of His death was approaching (John 12:27-36).

"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. 28 Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." 29 Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." 30 Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." 33 This He said, signifying by what death He would die. 34 The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" 35 Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

A. He was aware that He was going to be betrayed (John 6:64, 70-71).

Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve. John 6:70-71

B. He was aware that this was going to be His last visit to Jerusalem (Mt. 20:17-18).

Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death…"

C. He successfully eluded capture until God's appointed time (John 11:53-57).

Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. 54 Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples. 55 And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. 56 Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think--that He will not come to the feast?" 57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees

had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.

D. As the end approached, He allowed Mary to anoint Him for burial (Mt. 26:12; Mark 14:8; John 12:1-8).

Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. 2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. 3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. 4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. 7 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. 8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."
John 12:1-8

Because of the order of events surrounding the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, the customary anointing of the body at death would not happen in a timely manner (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56; 24:1-3).

And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. Luke 23:55-24:3

It is worthy of note that Jesus had three such anointings in His earthly ministry.

1. His feet were anointed by a woman who was a sinner (Luke 7:36-50). This woman washed His feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.

2. His feet were anointed by Mary six days before the Passover at her house in Bethany (John 12:1-8). She anointed His feet with costly oil and wiped them with her hair.

3. His head was anointed with costly oil by a woman two days before the Passover at the house of Simon the leper in Bethany (Mt. 26:6-13).

These three anointing speak of the three anointed offices of the Old Testament—prophet, priest and king.

IV. Jesus tried to prepare His disciples for His crucifixion.

A. He told them what the religious and political leaders would do (Mt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19; 26:1-2; Mark 8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34; Luke 9:21-22, 43-45; 18:31-34).

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Matthew 16:21

Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.
Matthew 17:22-23

Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again." Matthew 20:17-19

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." Matthew 26:1-2

It is amazing how many times (at least four) Jesus told His disciples what was going to happen, but it seemed to be hidden from their ears (Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:45; 18:31-34).

Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day." But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him. Mark 9:30-32

Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken. Luke 18:31-34

When you put all of the verses together, Jesus told them quite a lot about what was about to happen.

1. He told them that He would be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes.

2. He told them that this would happen in conjunction with the Passover (Mt. 26:2).

3. He told them that He would be condemned to death.

4. He told them that He would be mocked.

5. He told them that He would be scourged.

6. He told them that He would be spit on (Mark 10:34).

7. He told them that He would be crucified.

B. He told them what they would do (Mt. 26:31-35).

Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'" Matthew 26:31

1. He indicated that they would all stumble (Mark 14:27; John 16:32).

Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. John 16:32

2. He indicated that Peter would deny Him three times (Mt. 26:24, 69-75; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:36-38).

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me." Luke 22:31-34

3. He indicated that one of them would betray Him (John 13:21).

When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

C. He told them what He would do (Mt. 20:19).

He would rise again on the third day!

V. Jesus gave Jerusalem one last chance to receive Him when He entered the city for the last time (Mt. 21:1-10; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19).

A. He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey (Mt. 21:1-7; Mark 11:1-7; Luke 19:28-35).

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; 2 and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it. 3 And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you

doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here." 4 So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. 5 But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?" 6 And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go. 7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. Mark 11:1-7

What is the significance of the fact that Jesus rode a donkey into the city?

1. It fulfilled prophecy that He should do so (Mt. 21:4-5; Zech. 9:9).

   All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

2. This day in the initial Passover calendar was the day that the lamb was to be selected for the Passover meal (Ex. 12:3-6).

   It had to be a spotless male and was to be set aside four days prior to its slaying.

   Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: "On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

   Jesus entered Jerusalem on the tenth day and was killed on the fourteenth day.

3. It symbolized the fact that He was coming as an ambassador of peace.

   If He had been riding on a horse it would have symbolized war. The Second Coming will be completely different when He comes riding a white horse (Rev. 6:2; 19:11).

4. Kings and princes would commonly ride on donkeys especially in times of peace.

   Solomon rode a mule at his inauguration as king (I Kgs. 1:33-34). Jesus is the greater than Solomon.

   The king also said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, 'Long live King Solomon!'"

B. He was welcomed as a king and a conquering hero (Mt. 21:8-11).

1. The disciples laid their cloaks on the donkey.

   The practice of putting one's clothing under the feet of or to provide a seat for someone was an acknowledgment of a duly appointed and anointed authority. Notice what was done when Jehu was proclaimed as king (II Kgs. 9:13).

   Then each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!"

2. Palm branches and clothing were thrown down in His path.

   In our day it would be much like rolling out the red carpet for Him on which to enter the city.

   Carrying or waving palm and other branches was symbolic of victory and success (Rev. 7:9-10).

   After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

3. The people shouted "Hosanna!"

   "When persons applied to the king for help, or for a redress of grievances, they used the word hosanna, meaning 'Save now! or, Save, we beseech thee! - redress our grievances, and give us help from oppression!' Thus both the words and actions of the people prove that they acknowledged Christ as their king, and looked to him for deliverance (See II Sam 14:4; II Kgs. 6:26; Ps. 118:25)." --Clarke's Commentary

   Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD. Psalm 118:25-26

4. He was proclaimed as the "Son of David" which was a reference to His kingly right (Mark 11:10; Luke 1:32).

   And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end. Luke 1:31-33

   They were welcoming both the king and the kingdom.

Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! Mark 11:10

5. He was proclaimed as coming in the name or the authority of the Lord God Almighty (Mark 11:10).

6. The Pharisees wanted Jesus to rebuke the multitudes for their displays of honor (Luke 19:39-40).

   And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

C. He wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44).

D. He cleansed the temple for the second time (Mt. 21:12-13; Luke 19:45-48; Compare John 2:13-17).

   Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him…
   Luke 19:45-47

   You cannot bring discipline to something until you have first wept over it.

VI. Judas was the instrument that Satan used to betray Jesus (Mt. 26:14-16; Luke 6:16; 22:3-6; John 6:70-71; 13:27; 17:12).

A. Judas let his love for money get the better of him (Mt. 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11; John 12:4-6).

1. Judas became a traitor, but he was not born that way (Luke 6:16).

   …Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.

2. Judas had a problem with money (John 12:4-6; I Tim. 6:9-10).

   But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.
   John 12:4-6

   But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. I Timothy 6:9-10

3. Judas gave the devil a foothold in his life (Luke 22:3; John 13:27).

   Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude. Luke 22:2-6

   Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." John 13:27

4. Judas' love for money led him to make the ultimate choice—money or Jesus (Mt. 26:14-16; Luke 22:3-6; Acts 1:25).

   Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him. Matthew 26:14-16

   I wonder how much money was the tipping point for Judas. Would he have betrayed Jesus for twenty pieces of silver? They say everyone has a price. What would it take for you to betray Jesus?

   Question: How did Judas get put over the money box? Most likely he volunteered for the job. Matthew might have been a better choice. The man who serves the Lord for what he can get will serve the devil if he offers him more.

5. Judas betrayed Jesus after eating together at the table, which was considered the worst kind of betrayal (Compare: I Cor. 11:27-29).

B. Jesus let Judas know that He knew he was the betrayer (Mt. 26:22-25; Luke 22:21-23; John 13:26-27).

   1. He let Him know in a way that demonstrated love for Judas.

      a. He knelt before Judas and washed his feet (John 13:3-6).

      b. He dipped His hand with Judas in the sop at dinner (Mt. 26:23-25; John 13:26-27).

         He answered and said, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it." Matthew 26:23-25

Note the practice of dipping in the sop or sauce. William Barclay in his *Daily Study Bible* makes the following observation,

"For the host to offer the guest a special tidbit, a special morsel from the dish, was again a sign of special friendship. When Boaz wished to show how much he honored Ruth, he invited her to come and dip her morsel in the wine (Ruth 2:14)…When Jesus handed the morsel to Judas, again it was a mark of special affection. And we note that even when Jesus did this the disciples did not gather the import of His words. That surely shows that Jesus was so much in the habit of doing this that that it seemed nothing unusual. Judas had always been picked out for special affection."

The Messianic Psalms actually confirm this idea that Judas was a very dear and trusted friend to Jesus (Ps. 41:9; 55:12-14).

Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. Psalm 41:9

In fact, it is very likely that with John sitting next to Jesus on His right side, Judas was sitting next to Jesus on His left side. This was certainly a place of honor.

2. In letting him know, He also gave him an opportunity to change (John 13:26-28).

   Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him.

Question: Was Judas predestinated as a vessel of dishonor? Was he predestined to be the betrayer? Was there any choice in his becoming "the son of perdition" (John 17:12)?

Answer: Judas was at all times a free will being. He had many choices along the way. We know that Jesus had to go to the cross. Did that journey even require a Judas? Judas only made the work of the religious leaders easier. Without Judas they would have still found a way. Judas was chosen with the rest of the twelve to be a vessel of honor. His love for money coupled with a series of bad choices led to his tragic end.

Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

II Timothy 2:19-21

Lesson 22
The Arrest and Trials of Jesus

I. Jesus spent His final hours of freedom in communion with the Father (Mt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46; John 17).

A. He went to His usual place of prayer (John 18:1-2).

This was a customary place for Him. This is why Judas knew where He would be.

When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples.

B. He went with His disciples.

1. He had eight of His disciples wait at the gate of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36; Mark 14:32).

2. He took His three closest disciples further inside (Mt. 26:37-18; Mark 14:33).

3. He went on alone to wrestle with God (Mt. 26:39; Mark 14:35).

Compare to the three places in the Tabernacle of Moses, the outer court, the holy place and the most holy place.

C. He expressed His sorrow of soul (Mt. 26:38; Mark 14:34).

1. He was in agony of soul (Luke 22:44).

2. He sweat drops of blood (Luke 22:44).

D. He spent three sessions in prayer.

1. In session one He asked the Father to let the cup pass from Him, but He committed Himself to the will of the Father (Mt. 26:39-41; Mark 14:35-36).

He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will." Mark 14:35-36

2. In session two He asked the same thing again, but He committed Himself to the will of the Father (Mt. 26:42-43; Mark 14:39).

3. In session three He asked the same thing again, but He committed Himself to the will of Father (Mt. 26:44-46; Mark 14:41).

4. After each session, Jesus found the disciples sleeping (Mt. 26:40-41).

Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

5. In the context of these three sessions, Jesus prayed His High Priestly prayer (John 17:1-26).

   a. He prayed for Himself (John 17:1-5).

   b. He prayed for His disciples (John 17:6-19).

      - That they would be kept from the evil one.
      - That none would be lost.
      - That they would be one.
      - That they would possess the joy of the Lord.
      - That they would be sanctified through the Word of Truth.

   c. He prayed for all believers (John 17:20-26).

      - That they would be one.
      - That they would be with Him where He is.
      - That they might behold His glory.
      - That they would be filled with the love of God.

6. In this context Jesus found heavenly support from the angels (Luke 22:43; See: Mt. 4:11).

   Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

E. He made the ultimate commitment to the will of God.

1. He would take the sin of mankind upon Himself (II Cor. 5:21).

   For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2. He would pay the price of death (Phil. 2:8).

   And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

II. Jesus was arrested by the chief priests and the temple guard (Mt. 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:1-11).

Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. John 18:3

A. Judas identified Jesus with a kiss (Mt. 26:48-50; Mark 14:43-45; Luke 22:47-48).

B. Jesus revealed Himself as the "I AM" (John 18:4-8).

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" 5 They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. 6 Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." 8 Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,"

C. The people took Jesus in to custody (Mark 14:46).

D. Jesus asked the soldiers to let the rest of the disciples go free (John 18:8-9).

E. Peter attempted to fight with his sword and cut off a man's ear (Mt. 26:51-54; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:49-50; John 18:10). It is interesting that only John named Peter as the impetuous disciple.

Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?" John 18:10-11

1. Jesus reminded them that the sword was not the answer.

2. Jesus reminded them that He could have called twelve legions of angels to rescue Him (Mt. 26:53).

3. Jesus reminded them that all of the things that were happening had to happen to fulfill prophecy and the will of God (Mt. 26:54, 56; John 18:11).

   But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.
   Matthew 26:56

4. Jesus healed the man's ear (Luke 22:51).

F. Jesus addressed the multitudes involved in the arrest (Mt. 26:55-56; Mark 14:48-49; Luke 22:52-53).

Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

G. All of the disciples fled (Mt. 26:56; Mark 14:50).

One man ran away naked (Mark 14:51-52). Mark is the only Gospel that records this incident. Many scholars believe that Mark was actually this man.

Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

III. Jesus went through a series of trials (Mt. 26:57-27:31; Mark 14: 53-15:20; Luke 22:66-23:25; John 18:12-19:6).

A. Jesus' first trial was before the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas the high priest (Mt. 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65).

Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance. Luke 22:54

1. They tried to get false witnesses to testify (Mt. 26:59-61).

Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"

2. Jesus initially refused to answer the charges against Him (Mt. 26:62-63).

3. Jesus pleaded guilty to His claim to be the Son of God (Mt. 26:63-64).

And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

4. The high priest tore his garments upon hearing the confession of Jesus (Mt. 26:65).

5. The high priest charged Jesus with blasphemy and pronounced Him worthy of death (Mt. 26:65-66).

Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."

6. Jesus was mocked and beaten (Mt. 26:67-68).

Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"

B. Jesus' second trial was before Pilate the governor of Judea (Mt. 27:1-2, 11-26; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-).

1. Pilate first tried to understand the charges against Jesus (John 18:29-30).

   Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?" They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you." Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law. Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death…" John 18:29-31

2. Pilate discerned that it was a religious matter and tried to refer the case back to the Sanhedrin (John 18:31).

3. The religious leaders insisted that Pilate keep the matter because they did not have the power to put anyone to death (John 18:31-32).

4. At this trial Jesus acknowledged to Pilate that He was the king of the Jews (Mt. 27:11; Mark 15:2; John 18:33-34).

   Then Pilate went back inside and called for Jesus to be brought to him. "Are you the King of the Jews?" he asked him. Jesus replied, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?" "Am I a Jew?" Pilate asked. "Your own people and their leading priests brought you here. Why? What have you done?" Then Jesus answered, "I am not an earthly king. If I were, my followers would have fought when I was arrested by the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." Pilate replied, "You are a king then?" "You say that I am a king, and you are right," Jesus said. "I was born for that purpose. And I came to bring truth to the world. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true." John 18:33-37, NLT

   However, He did qualify His kingship by indicating that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36-37).

5. At the rest of this trial Jesus answered them nothing (Mt. 27:14; Mark 15:3-5).

6. Pilate announced that he could find no fault in Jesus (John 18:38b).

   And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all."

7. When Pilate found out that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Him to Herod (Luke 23:6-7).

Note: The exact order of events before Pilate is pieced together from all of the Gospel accounts. The difficulty arises in that Luke is the only one who records the trial before Herod.

C. Jesus' third trial was before Herod (Luke 23:6-12).

When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. 7 And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. 8 Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. 9 Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. 11 Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. 12 That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

1. Initially Herod welcomed the opportunity to see someone he had heard so much about hoping He would do a miracle for him (Luke 23:8).

2. Herod's excitement turned to anger when Jesus did not answer him or respond to the hostile crowd (Luke 23:10-11).

3. Herod's men treated Jesus with contempt and mocked Him (Luke 23:11).

4. Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate having found no fault with Him (Luke 23:15).

5. A new friendship was somehow formed between Herod and Pilate (Luke 23:12).

D. Jesus' fourth trial was back before Pilate for official sentencing (Mt. 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:12-25).

1. Pilate admitted that He could find no fault with Jesus (Luke 23:13-15).

Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. I will therefore chastise Him and release Him"
Luke 23:13-16

2. Pilate tried to simply chastise Jesus for the sake of the accusers and release Him (Luke 23:16-17).

3. Pilate's wife warned him not to have anything to do with that "just man" (Mt. 27:19)

While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."

4. Pilate tried to free Jesus by giving them the choice of Barabbas or Jesus (Luke 23:17-25).

5. The chief priests persuaded the people to demand Jesus' crucifixion and the release of Barabbas (Mt. 27:20-23; Mark 15:13-14; Luke 23:21).

6. Pilate again insisted that he could find no reason to crucify or even hold Jesus (Mt. 27:23; Mark 15:14; Luke 23:22).

   But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

7. Pilate washed his hands of the matter (Mt. 27:24).

   When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."

   This is poor leadership. You cannot just wash your hands of a situation like this and allow mob rule to prevail.

   The history of Pilate is not a good one. He was brought up on charges to the Roman authority a few of years later for the way he handled a perceived insurrection. He never went to trial but was banished to exile where it is believed he eventually committed suicide.

8. The people in the mob invoked the curse of innocent blood upon themselves (Mt. 27:25; See: Deut. 19:10-13; II Kgs. 24:4).

   And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children." Matthew 27:25

   Exactly forty years (the space of repentance) after this declaration by the people the city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed (Num. 35:33).

   So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.

   Notice that Jeremiah was in a similar place to Jesus when the people wanted to kill him for telling the truth (Jer. 26:14-16).

   "As for me, here I am, in your hand; do with me as seems good and proper to you. But know for certain that if you put me to death, you will surely bring innocent blood on yourselves, on this city, and on its inhabitants; for truly the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing." So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God."

9. Pilate ultimately succumbed to mob pressure and delivered Jesus to his soldiers to be tortured and then crucified (Mt. 27:15; Luke 23:23-25).

IV. While Jesus was on trial, other things were taking place.

A. Peter denied Christ in the courtyard three times (Mt. 26:58, 69-75; Mark 14:66-72). On two occasions it was the accusations of young girls that triggered his denial.

B. Judas committed suicide (Mt. 27:3-10; See also: Acts 1:18-19).

Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" 5 Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. 6 But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." 7 And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8 Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, 10 and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me." Matthew 27:3-10

1. He realized that he had betrayed innocent blood (Mt. 27:4).

2. He tried to return the money (Mt. 27:3, 5).

3. He found no peace and committed suicide by hanging himself (Mt. 27:5).

C. Barabbas was freed from prison (Mt. 27:15-26; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-40).

Think of the story of Barabbas as a picture of everyone of our lives.

1. He was guilty of insurrection.
2. He was in a prison house of his own making.
3. He was under the sentence of death.
4. His life was exchanged for the "innocent" life of another.
5. He was declared pardoned as another died in his place.

V. The religious leaders broke many of their own laws in condemning Jesus.

A. They violated Old Testament laws given by Moses.

1. They were to make diligent inquisition in a capital case (Deut. 13:12-14; 19:18).

Under Jewish law, an exhaustive search into the facts presented by the witnesses should have occurred.

2. They held a trial in a private home. Judgments were to take place in the temple area before the whole council not in private dwellings such as the house of Caiaphas (Deut. 17:8-13; Mt. 26:3).

3. No trials were allowed on Sabbath days or the Passover (Deut. 16:8: Mt. 26:5; 27:15). Having such a trial would be considered "work" and would have to be done on other days of the week.

4. They were required by law to have multiple witnesses to bring any matter to trial (Deut. 17:6; 19:5; Mt. 26:60, 63-66; Mark 14:55).

   One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. 16 If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, 17 then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. 18 And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, 19 then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. 20 And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. 21 Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.
   Deuteronomy 19:15-21

5. They listened to the testimony of false witnesses (Ex. 20:16; 23:1-2; Mt. 27:59-61).

   You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice.
   Exodus 23:1-2

6. They could not get multiple witnesses to agree (Num. 35:30; Mark 14:56, 59).

   Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty. Numbers 35:30

7. They were to release the prisoner if the witnesses did not agree (Num. 35:30; Deut. 19:15).

8. They were not to slander their neighbor (Lev. 19:16; Mt. 26:61).

9. They did not bring judgment against the false witnesses. False witnesses were to reap the judgment that they had intended for the accused (Deut. 19:18-19).

10. They followed a multitude to do evil (Ex. 23:2; Pro. 1:8-16).

My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; 9 For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck. 10 My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. 11 If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait to shed blood; let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause; 12 let us swallow them alive like Sheol, and whole, like those who go down to the Pit; 13 we shall find all kinds of precious possessions, we shall fill our houses with spoil; 14 cast in your lot among us, let us all have one purse"--15 My son, do not walk in the way with them, keep your foot from their path; 16 for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood. Proverbs 1:8-16

11. They joined hands to slay "innocent blood" (Ex. 23:7; Num. 35:33; Deut. 19:10, 13; Mt. 27:4, 20, 25).

12. They were not to accept or give a reward for shedding innocent blood (Ex. 23:8; Deut. 27:25).

    Cursed is the one who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.
    Deuteronomy 27:25

13. They were not to swear by God's name (Ex. 20:7; Lev. 5:1; Mt. 26:63).

    And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Matthew 26:63

14. The high priest was not to rend his clothes (Lev. 21:10; Mt. 26:65).

    He who is the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes… Leviticus 21:10

15. They were only allowed to minister up to forty stripes and only for those who had been proven guilty (Deut. 25:1-3; Luke 23:18-25).

16. Jesus' inheritance (including all possessions) was to go to His brothers, not the soldiers (Num. 27:8-9).

    And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: "If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers."

17. They were covetous toward Jesus fame and following (Ex. 18:21; Mt. 27:18).

    Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.
    Exodus 18:21

18. They bribed soldiers to lie about Jesus resurrection (Mt. 28:11-15; Deut. 16:19).

B. They violated their own laws of the Sanhedrin.

1. They were not to carry out a capital crime at night. The Jewish laws stated that "Criminal processes can neither commence nor terminate but during the course of the day."

2. The trial was completed in one day. This was in direct violation to the law which required verdicts to be issued on the day following the completion of a trial.

3. The day following the sentencing the Sanhedrin was required to review the whole process.

4. The trial at the Sanhedrin was to be open. Their meeting was secret.

5. The arrest was made as the result of a bribe given to a co-conspirator or accomplice. This too was contrary to their laws.

6. The Sanhedrin unanimously condemned Him to death which under the law would have definitely acquitted Him. The Sanhedrin code provided that at least one member of the court should serve as defense counsel for the accused.

7. The chief priests violated the Sabbath with all of the activities surrounding Jesus trial.

8. The charges against Jesus were changed during the trial.

   He was initially charged with blasphemy based upon His statement that He would be able to destroy and rebuild the Temple of God within three days, as well as His claim to be the Son of God. When He was brought before Pilate, the charge was that Jesus was a King and did not advocate paying taxes to the Romans (Luke 23:2).

This is what the Lord says about all of these events:

These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren. Proverbs 6:16-19

Lesson 23
The Crucifixion of Jesus

I. Many symbolic things happened in conjunction with Jesus' suffering and death.

A. Some of these things were inspired by men.

1. This included the purple robe the soldiers put on Jesus (Mark 15:17, 20; John 19:2, 5).

   Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His head, and began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him. Mark 15:16-20

   Purple was the most precious of colors and in ancient times it always was associated with royalty and kingship (Judg. 8:26; Luke 16:19).

2. This included the reed scepter that was put in His hand (Mt. 27:28-29).

   And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

   The scepter that was given Him in this scene is nothing like the one that He holds in His hand as the King of kings and Lord of lords (Num. 24:17; Heb. 1:8).

   A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel…
   Numbers 24:17b

   But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom." Hebrews 1:8

3. This included the crown of thorns (Mt. 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5).

   A crown speaks of kingly authority. The thorns remind us of the curse upon the ground that affected Adam and Eve. Jesus has another crown on His head now (Heb. 2:9; Rev. 6:2; 14:14).

   But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. Hebrews 2:9

And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.
Revelation 6:2

4. This included the site of the crucifixion—Golgotha (Mt. 27:33; Mark 15:22; John 19:17).

   And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. John 19:17-18

   Golgotha was a place outside of the city or camp.

   a. Outside the camp was a place for certain sacrifices (Heb. 13:11-14).

      For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

   b. Outside the camp was a place where the scapegoat was sent on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:10, 20-22).

      But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness…20And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. 21 Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. 22 The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

5. This included the rending of the high priests garments (Mt. 27:65).

   It was officially against the law for the high priest to rend his garments (Lev. 21:10), but when he did he was, in fact, signaling the end of the Aaronic priesthood that was associated with the Old Covenant. Jesus would bring in a new priesthood after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:11-17).

6. This included the casting of lots over Jesus garment (Mt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:24).

   They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be…" John 19:24a

Jesus garment is a symbol of His priesthood. Unlike the high priest's garments that were torn in half, Jesus tunic was preserved from tearing and was preserved as whole.

7. This included the total disfigurement of Jesus by torture (Is. 52:14).

   Jesus would suffer as much as any man so that we could be free from suffering. He was literally beaten beyond recognition.

   Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men…

   Many were amazed when they saw him--beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know he was a person. –NLT

   Many were horrified at what happened to him. But everyone who saw him was even more horrified because he suffered until he no longer looked human. –CEV

8. This included His crucifixion between criminals (Is. 53:12; Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37).

   Jesus would be identified with sinners in every way in order to qualify as our sin bearer.

9. This included the inscription over Jesus on the cross (Mt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19-22).

   Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.''" Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." John 19:19-22

B. Some of these things were inspired by God.

1. This included the darkness over the face of the earth (Mt. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44).

   Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. Mark 15:33

   God is light and the source of all light (I John 1:5; I Tim. 6:14-16). Darkness is the absence of light. Jesus came as the light of the world. When He became our sin bearer the light went out.

2. This included the earthquakes that occurred in conjunction with His death (Mt. 27:51, 54).

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split… Matthew 27:51

3. This included the rending of the veil in the temple (Mt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

   This veil symbolized the Old Covenant. It spoke of limited access into the presence of God. The veil spoke even prophetically of Jesus body on the cross. Notice it was torn from top to bottom not bottom to top. This is something that God accomplished. This opened the way to the Father through the broken body of Jesus and His work on the cross (Heb. 10:20).

   Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. Hebrews 10:19-23

II. Jesus' suffering and death had been foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament.

A. Many of the prophets foretold of Jesus suffering.

1. Jesus would come on a donkey (Zech. 9:9; Mt. 21:5; John 12:15).

2. There would be plots to kill Jesus (Ps. 2:2; Mt. 21:38).

3. Jesus would reestablish the temple as a house of prayer (Is. 56:7; Mt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46).

4. Jesus would be sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12; Mt. 26:15).

5. Jesus would be smitten and His followers would scatter (Zech. 13:7; Mt. 26:31; Mark 14:27).

6. Jesus would be silent in the face of accusation (Is. 53:7; Mt. 26:63; 27:14; Mark 15:28).

7. Jesus would be hit with the palm of their hands (Is. 50:6; Mt. 26:67; Luke 22:64).

8. Jesus would be beaten severely (Is. 53:5; Mt. 27:26).

9. Jesus would be spit upon and have His beard plucked (Is. 50:6; Mt. 26:67-68; 27:30).

10. Jesus would be numbered among transgressors (Is. 53:12; Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37).

11. Jesus would intercede for those who crucified Him (Is. 53:12; Luke 23:34).

12. Judas would regret his actions and the pieces of silver would be thrown in the sanctuary (Zech. 11:13; Mt. 27:5).

13. The betrayal money would buy a potter's field (Zech. 11:13; Mt. 27:7).

14. There would be darkness over the whole land (Amos 8:9; Mt. 27:45; Mark 15:33).

15. Jesus would be buried in a rich man's tomb (Is. 53:9; Mt. 27:57-60).

16. Jesus' side would be pierced (Zech. 12:10; John 19:34).

B. The Book of the Psalms gives the fullest picture of Jesus' road to the cross.

1. The people would sing hosannas (Ps. 118:25-26; Mt. 21:9; Mark 11:7-11; Luke 19:38; John 12:13).

2. The children would proclaim praise (Ps. 8:2; Mt. 21:16).

3. Jesus would be betrayed by a friend (Ps. 41:9; 55:12-14; Mt. 26:49-50; John 13:18).

4. Jesus would be condemned by false witnesses (Ps. 35:11; 109:2-3; Mt. 26:59-60; Mark 14:57-58).

5. Jesus would be hated without a cause (Ps. 35:19; John 15:24-25).

6. Jesus would be mocked (Ps. 22:7-8; Mt. 27:31; Luke 23:35).

7. Jesus would thirst on the cross (Ps. 69:21; John 19:28).

8. Jesus would be offered gall and vinegar to drink (Ps. 69:21; Mt. 27:34; Mark 15:36; John 19:29).

9. Jesus' garments would be divided by the casting of lots (Ps. 22:18; Mt. 27:35; John 19:24).

10. Jesus would be starred at on the cross by His enemies (Ps. 22:11-13; Mt. 27:36).

11. Jesus would be looked up by His relatives from afar (Ps. 38:11; Luke 23:49).

12. Jesus would be reviled (Ps. 22:7-8; Mt. 27:39).

13. People would wag their heads at Jesus (Ps. 22:7-8; 109:25; Mt. 27:39).

14. Jesus would be indicted for trusting in God (Ps. 22:8; Mt. 27:43).

15. Jesus would be pierced in His hands and feet (Ps. 22:16; Zech. 13:6; John 20:25).

16. Jesus would cry out because of His forsakenness (Ps. 22:1; Mt. 27:46; Mark 15:34).

17. Jesus would commit His spirit to the Father (Ps. 31:5; Mark 23:46).

18. Jesus' bones would not be broken (Ex. 12:46; Psalm 34:20; John 19:32-36).

Psalm 22:1-22, NLT

My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me? Why do you remain so distant? Why do you ignore my cries for help? 2 Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer. Every night you hear my voice, but I find no relief. 3 Yet you are holy. The praises of Israel surround your throne. 4 Our ancestors trusted in you, and you rescued them. 5 You heard their cries for help and saved them. They put their trust in you and were never disappointed. 6 But I am a worm and not a man. I am scorned and despised by all! 7 Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads, saying, 8 "Is this the one who relies on the LORD? Then let the LORD save him. If the LORD loves him so much, let the LORD rescue him!" 9 Yet you brought me safely from my mother's womb and led me to trust you when I was a nursing infant. 10 I was thrust upon you at my birth. You have been my God from the moment I was born. 11 Do not stay so far from me, for trouble is near, and no one else can help me. 12 My enemies surround me like a herd of bulls; fierce bulls of Bashan have hemmed me in! 13 Like roaring lions attacking their prey, they come at me with open mouths. 14 My life is poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax, melting within me.15 My strength has dried up like sunbaked clay. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You have laid me in the dust and left me for dead.16 My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet. 17 I can count every bone in my body. My enemies stare at me and gloat. 18 They divide my clothes among themselves and throw dice for my garments.19 O LORD, do not stay away! You are my strength; come quickly to my aid! 20 Rescue me from a violent death; spare my precious life from these dogs. 21 Snatch me from the lions' jaws, and from the horns of these wild oxen. 22 Then I will declare the wonder of your name to my brothers and sisters. I will praise you among all your people.

III. Jesus' last words on the cross were significant in relation to His mission.

Jesus' seven last words include the following:

A. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

1. In this statement Jesus provided an example for His own teaching (I Pet. 2:19-25).

   For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

   Jesus had taught that we were to:

   a. Love our enemies (Mt. 5:43-48; Luke 6:27).
   b. Bless those who curse us (Mt. 5:44; Luke 6:28).
   c. Do good to those who hate us (Luke 6:27).
   d. Pray for those who despitefully use us (Mt. 5:44).

2. In this statement Jesus reinforced His teaching on forgiveness (Mt. 18:21-22).

   If Jesus could actually forgive in light of what He had just been through, every one of His followers should be able to do the same. No one has ever had more to forgive or been more unjustly treated than Jesus.

3. In this statement Jesus acknowledged that most of the Jewish people and the Romans did not realize Who they were killing (John 16:2; Acts 3:17).

   But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. 16 And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 17 "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord…" Acts 3:14-19

   Compare the death of Stephen (Acts 7:59-60).

   And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

B. "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

1. Initially both thieves joined with the crowd in mocking Jesus (Mt. 27:44; Mark 15:32).

2. Eventually, one of the thieves realized the wrong and asked for mercy (Luke 23:40-42).

Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us. But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

1. He realized that Jesus was innocent.
2. He acknowledged Jesus as his Lord (I Cor. 12:3).
3. He understood that Jesus was the king of a kingdom (John 3:3).

3. Jesus made it very clear about where His spirit would be following His death (Luke23:43).

C. "Woman, behold your son…behold your mother" (John 19:25-27).

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

1. This verse implies that Joseph was dead.

2. This verse helps us to see that Jesus as the firstborn son was taking His human responsibilities serious to the end (Ex. 20:12; I Tim. 5:8).

3. This verse shows us the unique relationship between Jesus and the Apostle John (John 13:23; 20:221:7, 20, 24). John was faithful at the foot of the cross when Jesus' own natural brothers were afar off. His natural brothers still seemed to be unsure of who Jesus really was.

D. "Eli Eli lema sabachthani?" or "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" Mt 27:46; Mark 15:34; Ps. 22:1).

Just prior to Jesus making this statement the sun was darkened (Mt. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44). So God did not only withdraw His presence, but He even withdrew the light of the sun. For three hours Jesus dwelt in darkness.

1. The fact that Jesus cried with a loud voice suggests that this sense of abandonment was the cause of His greatest agony on the cross.

a. The word for "forsaken" literally means "abandoned."

b. This suggests that Christ's greatest suffering through this whole experience was spiritual suffering rather than natural suffering (Compare: Luke 22:44).

2. Jesus abandonment by the Father was evidence that Jesus had now become "sin" personified and the Father turned His back on "sin" (II Cor. 5:21).

a. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus had committed to the will of God to become sin.

b. Now on the cross that is exactly what happened (Hab. 1:13a).

You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness.

3. Jesus experienced the great gulf of separation from the Father that is caused by sin and that is experienced by every man apart from Christ.

What a contrast this was to the "open heavens" that Jesus experienced previously (Luke 4:21) and the intimate relationship that He had with the Father.

4. On the cross Jesus experienced the wrath of God against sin (Ps. 69:1-3; Is. 53:4).

E. "I thirst" (John 19:28).

The level of thirst that Jesus suffered on the cross is graphically described in Psalm 22:15.

My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.

Jesus was offered a drink two times during His time on the cross.

1. The first drink was offered by the soldiers and He refused it (Mt. 27:33-34).

And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.

a. The first drink was sour wine mingled with gall.

b. The purpose of this drink was to deaden His pain. Gall was a mild poison that would have the effect of slightly anesthetizing Jesus.

c. When Jesus realized what it was He would not drink it. Jesus was not going to minimize His suffering for our sins. He would pay the full debt and experience the full brunt of God's wrath.

2. The second drink was asked for by Jesus when He realized that all things had been accomplished (John 19:28-30).

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

This drink was most likely there for the soldiers but now was given to Jesus.

F. "It is finished" (John 19:30).

Jesus came to the earth with a specific purpose in mind. He had some business to take care of for the Father. The price that had to be paid for the redemption of mankind had been met in Jesus sufferings and death (Mt. 1:21; John 6:39; 17:1-3).

1. The phrase "It is finished" could also be translated "It is completed."

2. This word is also sometimes translated, the debt "has been paid" (Mt. 17:24).

G. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46, Ps. 31:5).

And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last. Luke 23:46

1. This verse demonstrates that Jesus' life was not taken from Him, He laid His life down (John 10:18).

2. This thought is confirmed by the fact that the soldiers observed that Jesus died sooner than was expected (Mark 15:44).

3. This verse also confirms where Jesus' spirit would be after His death (Ps. 16:10; 49:15; Acts 2:31).

VI. The cross which was an instrument of cruelty and punishment has become a thing of beauty.

Why do Christians wear a cross around their neck? Why not a gallows or an electric chair? Because it was on the cross that Jesus paid the price for our redemption and provided for all men to be saved and restored to God. Now the cross is a thing of beauty.

The Beauty of the Cross

Christ was abandon so that you would never be alone.
Christ became sin so that you could be righteous.
Christ was punished so that you could receive mercy.
Christ died so that you could experience life.
Christ became a curse so that you could be free from the curse.
Christ was taken captive so you could be free from bondage.
Christ was falsely charged so that you could not be charged.
Christ was stripped naked so that you could be clothed with royal robes.
Christ was condemned so that you could experience no condemnation.
Christ submitted to death to deliver you from death's power.
Christ carried your grief so you could have joy unspeakable.
Christ's body was torn so that you might be healed and whole.
Christ was humiliated and debased that you might be exalted.
Christ was forsaken by the Father so you might have full access.

--Bill Scheidler

The following Article was downloaded from the internet:

A Physician Testifies About the Crucifixion

by Dr. C. Truman Davis

About a decade ago, reading Jim Bishop's The Day Christ Died, I realized that I had for years taken the Crucifixion more or less for granted -- that I had grown callous to its horror by a too easy familiarity with the grim details and a too distant friendship with our Lord. It finally occurred to me that, though a physician, I didn't even know the actual immediate cause of death. The Gospel writers don't help us much on this point, because crucifixion and scourging were so common during their lifetime that they apparently considered a detailed description unnecessary. So we have only the concise words of the Evangelists: "Pilate, having scourged Jesus, delivered Him to them to be crucified -- and they crucified Him."

I have no competence to discuss the infinite psychic and spiritual suffering of the Incarnate God atoning for the sins of fallen man. But it seemed to me that as a physician I might pursue the physiological and anatomical aspects of our Lord's passonate some detail. What did the body of Jesus of Nazareth actually endure during those hours of torture?

This led me first to a study of the practice of crucifixion itself; that is, torture and execution by fixation to a cross. I am indebted to many who have studied this subject in the past, and especially to a contemporary colleague, Dr. Pierre Barbet, a French surgeon who has done exhaustive historical and experimental research and has written extensively on the subject.

Apparently, the first known practice of crucifixion was by the Persians. Alexander and his generals brought it back to the Mediterranean world -- to Egypt and to Carthage. The Romans apparently learned the practice from the Carthaginians and (as with almost everything the Romans did) rapidly developed a very high degree of efficiency and skill at it. A number of Roman authors (Livy, Cicer, Tacitus) comment on crucifixion, and several innovations, modifications, and variations are described in the ancient literature.

For instance, the upright portion of the cross (or stipes) could have the cross-arm (or patibulum) attached two or three feet below its top in what we commonly think of as the Latin cross. The most common form used in our

Lord's day, however, was the Tau cross, shaped like our T. In this cross the patibulum was placed in a notch at the top of the stipes. There is archeological evidence that it was on this type of cross that Jesus was crucified.

Without any historical or biblical proof, Medieval and Renaissance painters have given us our picture of Christ carrying the entire cross. But the upright post, or stipes, was generally fixed permanently in the ground at the site of execution and the condemned man was forced to carry the patibulum, weighing about 110 pounds, from the prison to the place of execution.

Many of the painters and most of the sculptors of crucifixion, also show the nails through the palms. Historical Roman accounts and experimental work have established that the nails were driven between the small bones of the wrists (radial and ulna) and not through the palms. Nails driven through the palms will strip out between the fingers when made to support the weight of the human body. The misconception may have come about through a misunderstanding of Jesus' words to Thomas, "Observe my hands." Anatomists, both modern and ancient, have always considered the wrist as part of the hand.

A titulus, or small sign, stating the victim's crime was usually placed on a staff, carried at the front of the procession from the prison, and later nailed to the cross so that it extended above the head. This sign with its staff nailed to the top of the cross would have given it somewhat the characteristic form of the Latin cross.

But, of course, the physical passion of the Christ began in Gethsemane. Of the many aspects of this initial suffering, the one of greatest physiological interest is the bloody sweat. It is interesting that St. Luke, the physician, is the only one to mention this. He says, "And being in Agony, He prayed the longer. And His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground."

Every ruse (trick) imaginable has been used by modern scholars to explain away this description, apparently under the mistaken impression that this just doesn't happen. A great deal of effort could have been saved had the doubters consulted the medical literature. Though very rare, the phenomenon of Hematidrosis, or bloody sweat, is well documented. Under great emotional stress of the kind our Lord suffered, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat. This process might well have produced marked weakness and possible shock.

After the arrest in the middle of the night, Jesus was next brought before the Sanhedrin and Caiphus, the High Priest; it is here that the first physical trauma was inflicted. A soldier struck Jesus across the face for remaining silent when questioned by Caiphus. The palace guards then blind-folded Him and mockingly taunted Him to identify them as they each passed by, spat upon Him, and struck Him in the face.

In the early morning, battered and bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night, Jesus is taken across the Praetorium of the Fortress Antonia, the seat of government of the Procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate. You are, of course, familiar with Pilate's action in attempting to pass responsibility to Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch of Judea. Jesus apparently suffered no physical mistreatment at the hands of Herod and was returned to Pilate. It was in response to the cries of the mob, that Pilate ordered Bar-Abbas released and condemned Jesus to scourging and crucifixion.

There is much disagreement among authorities about the unusual scourging as a prelude to crucifixion. Most Roman writers from this period do not associate the two. Many scholars believe that Pilate originally ordered Jesus scourged as his full punishment and that the death sentence by crucifixion came only in response to the taunt by the mob that the Procurator was not properly defending Caesar against this pretender who allegedly claimed to be the King of the Jews.

Preparations for the scourging were carried out when the Prisoner was stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. It is doubtful the Romans would have made any attempt to follow the Jewish law in this matter, but the Jews had an ancient law prohibiting more than forty lashes.

The Roman legionnaire steps forward with the flagrum (or flagellum) in his hand. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each. The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus' shoulders, back, and legs. At first the thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles.

The small balls of lead first produce large, deep bruises which are broken open by subsequent blows. Finally the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped.

The half-fainting Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood. The Roman soldiers see a great joke in this provincial Jew claiming to be king. They throw a robe across His shoulders and place a stick in His hand for a scepter. They still need a crown to make their travesty complete. Flexible branches covered with long thorns (commonly used in bundles for firewood) are plaited into the shape of a crown and this is pressed into His scalp. Again there is copious bleeding, the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body.

After mocking Him and striking Him across the face, the soldiers take the stick from His hand and strike Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp. Finally, they tire of their sadistic sport and the robe is torn from His back. Already having adhered to the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, its removal causes excruciating pain just as in the careless removal of a surgical bandage, and almost as though He were again being whipped the wounds once more begin to bleed.

In deference to Jewish custom, the Romans return His garments. The heavy patibulum of the cross is tied across His shoulders, and the procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves, and the execution detail of Roman soldiers headed by a centurion begins its slow journey along the Via Dolorosa. In spite of His efforts to walk erect, the weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious blood loss, is too much. He stumbles and falls. The rough wood of the beam gouges into the lacerated skin and muscles of the shoulders. He tries to rise, but human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance.

The centurion, anxious to get on with the crucifixion, selects a stalwart North African onlooker, Simon of Cyrene, to carry the cross. Jesus follows, still bleeding and sweating the cold, clammy sweat of shock, until the 650 yard journey from the fortress Antonia to Golgotha is finally completed.

Jesus is offered wine mixed with myrrh, a mild analgesic mixture. He refuses to drink. Simon is ordered to place the patibulum on the ground and Jesus quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action being careful not to pull the arms to tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The patibulum is then lifted in place at the top of the stipes and the titulus reading "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" is nailed in place.

The left foot is now pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The Victim is now crucified. As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists excruciating pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain -- the nails in the writs are putting pressure on the median nerves. As He pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet.

At this point, as the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by his arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, he is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen. It was undoubtedly during these periods that He uttered the seven short sentences recorded:

The first, looking down at the Roman soldiers throwing dice for His seamless garment, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

The second, to the penitent thief, "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

The third, looking down at the terrified, grief-stricken adolescent John -- the beloved Apostle -- he said, "Behold thy mother." Then, looking to His mother Mary, "Woman behold thy son."

The fourth cry is from the beginning of the 22nd Psalm, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?"

Hours of limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain where tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins...A terrible crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

One remembers again the 22nd Psalm, the 14th verse: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels."

It is now almost over. The loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level; the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissue; the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain.

Jesus gasps His fifth cry, "I thirst."

One remembers another verse from the prophetic 22nd Psalm: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou has brought me into the dust of death."

A sponge soaked in posca, the cheap, sour wine which is the staple drink of the Roman legionaries, is lifted to His lips. He apparently doesn't take any of the liquid. The body of Jesus is now in extremes, and He can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. This realization brings out His sixth words, possibly little more than a tortured whisper, "It is finished."

His mission of atonement has completed. Finally He can allow his body to die.

With one last surge of strength, he once again presses His torn feet against the nail, straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His seventh and last cry, "Father! Into thy hands I commit my spirit."

The rest you know. In order that the Sabbath not be profaned, the Jews asked that the condemned men be dispatched and removed from the crosses. The common method of ending a crucifixion was by crurifracture, the breaking of the bones of the legs. This prevented the victim from pushing himself upward; thus the tension could not be relieved from the muscles of the chest and rapid suffocation occurred. The legs of the two thieves were broken, but when the soldiers came to Jesus they saw that this was unnecessary.

Apparently to make doubly sure of death, the legionnaire drove his lance through the fifth interspace between the ribs, upward through the pericardium and into the heart. The 34th verse of the 19th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John reports: "And immediately there came out blood and water." That is, there was an escape of water fluid from the sac surrounding the heart, giving postmortem evidence that Our Lord died not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure (a broken heart) due to shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the pericardium.

Thus we have had our glimpse -- including

the medical evidence -- of that epitome of evil which man has exhibited toward Man and toward God. It has been a terrible sight, and more than enough to leave us despondent and depressed. How grateful we can be that we have the great sequel in the infinite mercy of God toward man -- at once the miracle of the atonement (at one ment) and the expectation of the triumphant Easter morning.

Lesson 24
The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus

I. There were many things that happened in conjunction with the resurrection of Jesus both naturally and spiritually.

A. From a natural point of view, Jesus died, was buried and rose again.

Note: When you put all of the Gospel accounts together, the following appears to be the order of events.

1. The body of Jesus was requested by Joseph of Arimathea (Mt. 27:57-58; Mark 15:42-45; Luke 23:52; John 19:38). Joseph was a member of the council. He was a good and a just man who had not consented to the condemnation of Jesus (Luke 23:50-51).

   Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. Luke 23:50-53, NIV

2. Nicodemus anointed the body of Jesus with myrrh and aloes (John 19:39).

   And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

3. Jesus' body was wrapped in a linen cloth and laid in a new tomb that Joseph had prepared for himself (Mt. 27:59-60; Mark 15:46; Luke 23:53; John 19:40-42).

   It should be noted that Jesus would only need this tomb for a few days and Joseph could have it back.

4. A large stone was rolled in front of the tomb (Mt. 27:60).

   …and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.

5. The tomb was sealed and a Roman guard was placed outside to ensure that no one tampered with the body (Mt. 27:66).

   On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how."

So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard. Matthew 27:62-66

6. There was a great earthquake (Mt. 28:2).

   And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

7. An angel from heaven came and rolled the stone away and sat on the stone (Mt. 28:2-3).

8. The guards were immobilized from fear (Mt. 28:4).

   And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

   Eventually those same guards came around and left the scene. Normally in such a case the guards would have been executed for allowing this kind of thing to happen (Acts 12:18-19).

   Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that they should be put to death.

   a. The guards reported what had happened to the chief priests (Mt. 28:11).

      Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Matthew 28:11-15

   b. The members of the Sanhedrin bribed the soldiers to say that the body was stolen by the disciples (Mt. 28:12-13).

   c. The members of the Sanhedrin assured the soldiers that they would use their influence to keep them out of trouble (Mt. 28:14-15).

9. The women came to see the tomb to accomplish the normal preparations (Mt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1; John 20:1).

   a. They brought spices to anoint His body (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56; 24:1).

   b. They came early in the morning on the first day of the week (Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1).

c. They wondered who would help them roll the large stone away from the opening of the tomb (Mark 16:3). Remember that the stone did not need to be rolled away to let Jesus out. It was rolled away to let others in.

d. When they arrived they found the stone rolled away (Mark 16:4; Luke 24:2; John 20:1).

e. When they entered the tomb they saw angels in the tomb (Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4).

10. The angel announced to the women that Jesus had risen (Mt. 28:5-7; Mark 16:6-7; Luke 24:5-8).

But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. Matthew 28:5-8

11. The women ran to tell the disciples what had happened (Mt. 28:8; Mark 16:8; Luke 24:9).

12. Initially the disciples did not believe the reports (Mark 16:10-13; Luke 24:11).

She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. Mark 16:10-11

13. Peter and John went with Mary Magdelene to the tomb to substantiate the story (Luke 24:12; John 20:3-10).

14. The disciples went back home (John 20:10).

15. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdelene as she lingered outside of the tomb (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-17).

16. Jesus met the other women on the road (Mt. 28:9-10; Mark 16:9-11).

17. Jesus appeared to Peter (Luke 24:34; I Cor. 15:5).

B. From a spiritual point of view, Jesus fulfilled His responsibility as our High Priest and Mediator of the New Covenant.

While much was transpiring outside of the tomb, Jesus was doing amazing things in the spirit realm.

1. His spirit ascended to the Father and He presented His sinless blood in the heavenly sanctuary (Luke 23:46; Heb. 9:11-15; 12:24; Col. 1:20).

"Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Luke 23:46

So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that great, perfect sanctuary in heaven, not made by human hands and not part of this created world. Once for all time he took blood into that Most Holy Place, but not the blood of goats and calves. He took his own blood, and with it he secured our salvation forever.
Hebrews 9:11-12, NLT

2. He descended into Hades, conquered Satan, spoiled principalities and powers, conquered sin and death, and released the captives (the righteous dead) from Paradise or Abraham's bosom (Hos. 13:14; Ps. 16:10; 68:18; Acts 2:27; Col 2:14; Luke16:19-31; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 1:18).

   For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' Acts 2:27

   And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Colossians 2:13-15

3. He ascended into heaven with the spirits of the righteous dead (Eph. 4:8-10).

   This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:8, NIV

4. He physically rose from the dead with other saints of old (Mt. 27:51-53). In doing so He became the first fruits of them that sleep (I Cor. 15:20-23).

   Notice that some of those who had died in faith got a personal tour of the Holy Land from Jesus, Himself!

   Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves ***after His resurrection****, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.* Matthew 27:51-53

   But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. I Corinthians 15:20-23

5. He ascended to the Father to present His glorified body (John 20:17, 27; Luke

23:43). He presumably took those with Him who had risen with Him as a kind of firstfruits.

When Jesus first appeared to Mary after His resurrection He warned her not to touch Him.

Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'" John 20:17

Compare: John 20:27 a little while later.

Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

a. Christ's resurrection body was physical in nature. It was not a spirit or ghost. As such,

   - It could be touched (John 20:24-29).

   - It could receive food (John 21:11-13).

b. Christ's resurrection body was different from His pre-resurrection body.

   - It could simply appear in the room (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 26).

     Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." John 20:19

   - It could vanish out of sight (Luke 24:31).

     Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

   - It looked different than His pre-resurrection body (Luke 24:13-16; John 20:14-15; 21:4, 12; Mk. 16:12).

     Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. John 20:14

     But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. John 21:4

     After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either. Mark 16:12-13

c. Christ's resurrection body was heavenly, glorious and immortal, that is, it can never die again (Rom. 6:9-10; I Cor. 15:20, 42-57; Phil. 3:21; Rev. 1:18).

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.
Romans 6:8-10

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. Philippians 3:20-21

6. He returned to earth to prepare His disciples for His permanent departure.

II. After Christ's resurrection He appeared to His followers on numerous occasions.

A. Christ appeared to His followers offering many infallible proofs of His resurrection (Acts 1:3). Note the following:

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Acts 1:1-3

- He appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9).
- He appeared to women (Mt. 28:9).
- He appeared to Peter (I Cor. 15:5).
- He appeared to two disciples (Luke 24:15-31).
- He appeared to ten apostles without Thomas (John 20:19, 24).
- He appeared to the eleven with Thomas (John 20:26-28).
- He appeared to seven disciples who were fishing (John 21:1-24).
- He appeared to eleven apostles (Mt. 28:16-17).
- He appeared to five hundred people (I Cor. 15:6).
- He appeared to James (I Cor. 15:7).
- He appeared to the eleven apostles (Acts 1:2-9).

B. Christ appeared to Paul after His ascension (Acts 9:4-6; 22:7-10; 26:12-18; I Cor. 15:8).

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After

that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. I Corinthians 15:3-8

C. It is interesting to note that there is no record of Jesus appearing to the religious leaders and those who had rejected Him (Compare: Luke 16:31).

Then he said, "I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment." Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And he said, "No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent." But he said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead." Luke 16:27-31

III. During the time between the resurrection and the ascension significant things took place.

A. Christ had some significant encounters with His followers to build their faith and set them on course.

1. He doubly assured Thomas (John 20:24-29; Luke 24:36-40).

2. He ate with His disciples on multiple occasions (Luke 24:41-43; John 21:12-14; Acts 1:4, NIV, Compare: Mt. 26:29).

I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom. Matthew 26:29

3. He provided them with a miracle catch of fish (John 21:1-11). This time the net did not break (Compare: Luke 5:6).

4. He gave a unique, three-fold challenge to Peter (John 21:15-19).

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." John 21:15

The message that Jesus was communicating was, "if you want to express love to Me reach out to My people and feed them that which they need—take care of My spiritual body, the Church."

B. Christ prepared His followers for His departure.

1. He breathed the Holy Spirit into the apostles (John 20:19-22).

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples

were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to 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.

2. He commissioned them for the work of building the church and extending the Kingdom (Mt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:47-48; John 20:19-20; Acts 1:2).

   The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen…
   Acts 1:1-2

   He commissioned or commanded them to:

   - Preach the Gospel in all the world and to every creature (Mark 16:15).
   - Be witnesses to Him from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:47-48).
   - Bring deliverance and healing (Mark 16:17-18, See Luke 9:1-6; 10: 1-12).
   - Make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:18).
   - Baptize those who respond (Mt. 28:19, Compare Acts 2:38-39).
   - Tend to them as a shepherd (John 21:15-20).
   - Teach them the whole counsel of God (Mt. 28:20, Compare Acts 20:27).

3. He instructed them to wait for the empowering of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8).

   Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49

   And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:4-8

IV. After completing His ministry on earth, Jesus ascended into heaven.

Christ physically ascended into heaven as a forerunner to us who believe (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; 2:33-34; Heb. 6:20; 10:12).

And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.
Luke 25:50-52

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." Acts 1:9-11

This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."' Acts 2:32-35

A. Christ has been exalted by God (Phil. 2:9; Eph. 1:20-21; Acts 5:31; 7:55-56).

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Philippians 2:9-11

…and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.
Ephesians 1:19-21

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. Acts 5:30-31

B. Christ sat down at the right hand of God (Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1).

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Colossians 3:1

C. Christ was placed as the head of all things to the Church (Eph. 1:22-23).

And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
Ephesians 1:22-23

D. Christ was crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9; Eph. 1:22; I Pet. 1:21; 3:22).

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. Hebrews 2:9

Who [Jesus Christ] has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. I Peter 3:22

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

John 20:30-31

And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

John 21:25