

# ONE: ANALYTICAL

Special studies examining twelve key time periods and events in the earthly life of Jesus:

- His Genealogies
- His Birth
- His Early Years in Nazareth
- His Baptism
- His Temptation
- His Soul Winning Activities
- His Preaching Activities
- His Promise to Build the Church
- His Transfiguration
- His Final Week
- His Crucifixion
- His Resurrection Appearances And Ascension

Dr. H. L. Willmington

GREAT TRUTHS FROM GOD'S WORD

# THE GENEALOGIES OF JESUS

## MATTHEW'S GENEALOGY

Mt. 1:1-17

- Matthew begins with Abraham and goes forward in time to Joseph.
  1. He gives the royal line of Joseph.
  2. He traces this line through Solomon, David's first son.
  3. His list includes forty-one names, four of which are women.
- This genealogy is remarkable for several reasons:
  1. It contains the names of four women -- Oriental and Mid-eastern genealogies rarely do this.
  2. All four women had questionable backgrounds.
    - a. Tamar was an ex-harlot (Mt. 1:3; Gen. 38:13-30).
    - b. Rahab was an ex-harlot (Mt. 1:5; Josh. 2:1).
    - c. Ruth was a former pagan (Mt. 1:5; Ruth 1:4).
    - d. Bath-sheba was a former adulteress (Mt. 1:6; 2 Sam. 11:1-5).
- But through the manifold and marvelous grace of God, the first of these women (Tamar) became the distantly removed grandmother of King David; the second (Rahab) became his great-great-grandmother; the third (Ruth) was his great-grandmother; and the fourth (Bath-sheba) became his beloved wife and mother of Solomon. (See Ruth 4:18-22.)
- Matthew opens and closes his genealogical account with three names.

*"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham...So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations."* (Mt. 1:1, 17)
- It can be seen that his genealogy records 41 generations consisting of three groups of 14 each:
  1. From Abraham to David
  2. From David to the Babylonian Captivity
  3. From the Babylonian Captivity to Christ
- To make these three groups of 14 each, Matthew omitted three generations, those of Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. Chronologically they should appear between the two names, "*Jehoram begat Uzziah*" in Mt. 1:8. There were probably several reasons why Matthew used this approach:
  1. As a memory device
  2. The number 14 is twice seven, the number of perfection.
  3. The name David, Israel's greatest king, has a numerical value in the Hebrew language which totals 14.

## LUKE'S GENEALOGY

Lk. 3:23-38

- Luke begins with Joseph and goes back to Adam.
  1. He gives the racial line of Mary.
  2. He traces this line through Nathan, David's second son.
  3. His list includes seventy-four names.
- Joseph's father is said by Matthew to be Jacob (Mt. 1:16), while Luke says he was Heli's son (Lk. 3:23). The ancient world often referred to their sons-in-law as their own sons. Thus it is possible that Heli was actually the father of Mary and the father-in-law of Joseph.
- Satan was keenly aware of the fact that the line leading to Christ would go through David's seed. He thus apparently attempted to break a link in the royal chain. With the advent of King Jeconiah (the 19th "link" from David), it appeared that the devil had succeeded, for God pronounced the following curse upon this wicked young ruler: "*Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a*

*man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."* (Jer. 22:30)

- This declaration did not mean he would have no children, for in 1 Chron. 3:17-18, some are named. (See also Mt. 1:12.) What it did mean is that by divine judgment this king would be considered childless as far as the throne of Judah was concerned. Whatever it meant, it seemed the royal line of David and Solomon had ground to a stop with Jeconiah (also called Coniah and Jehoiachin in the Old Testament) (See Jer. 22:24; 2 Kings 24:8.) But what a rude shock when the devil learned that God was not limited to one line. David had another son named Nathan, and it was through this line that Mary, the mother of Jesus, came.

# THE BIRTH OF JESUS

## THE INCARNATION OF JESUS

### Part One: Events Preceding His Birth

#### A. The Three Announcements

##### To Zacharias, About the Birth of John the Baptist

*"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, 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. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men." (Lk. 1:5-25)*

- This old couple doubtless had many things going for them.
  1. Both had experienced the new birth.
  2. Both were walking in the will of God.
  3. Each was apparently enjoying good health.
- But there was an unanswered prayer need which had burdened their hearts for a number of decades: *"And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years."* (Lk 1:7)
- We are informed in Luke 1:5 that Zacharias was from the course (or division) of Abijah. Because the priests became so numerous, and they could not all officiate at the altar, David divided them into twenty-four courses or classes. This act is described in 1 Chron. 24, which mentions the course of Abia (Abijah in Hebrew) as the eighth one. Josephus says that in his day there were about 20,000 priests. The Talmud says there were even more.

At Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, all of the priests served, but the rest of the year was divided up among the courses. Since there were so many in each course (an average of nearly 850, if Josephus' figure is accurate), the various duties were assigned by the casting of lots.
- The archangel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias the priest as he burned incense at the golden altar

in the Jerusalem temple (see Ex. 30:7; 2 Chron. 29:11). This is the first spoken message from heaven in more than 400 years. The last person before Zacharias to receive a message given by angels was named Zechariah (see Zech. 1-6).

- The name Gabriel means "God's hero," or "mighty man of God." He is one of the two most powerful and important good angels in the entire Bible. The other is Michael (Dan. 10:13, 21; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7). Both probably hold the title of archangel. How thrilling to realize that even in the birth announcement of Christ's forerunner, God chose the very best.
- This is the eighth of nine biblical births in which God himself intervened. They are:
  1. The birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 21:1)
  2. The birth of Jacob and Esau to Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 25:21)
  3. The birth of Reuben to Jacob and Leah (Gen. 29:31)
  4. The birth of Issachar to Jacob and Leah (Gen. 30:17-18)
  5. The birth of Joseph to Jacob and Rachel (Gen. 30:22-24)
  6. The birth of Samuel to Elkanah and Hannah (1 Sam. 1:19)
  7. The birth of Samson to Manoah and his wife (Judg. 13:1-2)
  8. The birth of John to Zacharias and Elisabeth (Lk. 1:57)
  9. The birth of Jesus to Mary (Lk. 2:7)
- The child was to be called John, which means *"the grace of Jehovah."* The name Zacharias means "God remembers," and the name Elisabeth means "his oath." Thus, at the birth of John the Baptist, God was remembering his covenant of grace made in Psa. 89:34-37 concerning David's seed, Jesus, to which John would serve as a forerunner. Note:

*"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven"* (Psa. 89:34-37). *"And he [John] shall go before him [Jesus] in the spirit and power of Elijah ... to make ready a people for the Lord."* (Lk. 1:17)
- John was to function as a Nazarite (Lk. 1:15). There is a difference between a Nazarite and a Nazarene:
  1. A Nazarite had to do with vocation. This is to say that the Nazarite took upon him a threefold vow (Num. 6:2-6).
    - a. He would abstain from wine.
    - b. He would not have his hair cut.
    - c. He would not come in contact with a dead body.
  2. A Nazarene had to do with location. This is to say that if one lived in the city of Nazareth, he was known as a Nazarene. Thus, while John was a Nazarite, Jesus became a Nazarene (Mt. 2:23). In fact, our Lord did not observe any of the three Nazarite vows.
    - a. He did partake of the fruit of the vine. He both created it (Jn. 2:1-10) and served it (Mt. 26:26-29).
    - b. He did cut his hair. Jesus was often looked upon as a Jewish rabbi, and it is known that they did cut their hair (Jn. 3:2).
    - c. He did come in contact with dead bodies. In fact, our Lord broke up every funeral he ever attended by raising the corpse (Lk. 7:14; 8:54; Jn. 11:43).
- John would be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. This is said also about two other men:
  1. Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5)
  2. Paul (Gal. 1:15)
- He would turn many Israelites to the Lord. This he did at the Lord's first coming, as Elijah will someday do at Christ's second coming (Mal. 4:5-6).
- As both he and his wife were advanced in years, Zacharias had some difficulty believing all this (as once did Abraham and Sarah (see Gen. 17:17; 18:12). The old priest is rebuked for this unbelief and would not be able to speak until the child was born (Lk. 1:20).
- The waiting crowd soon realized that something very strange had happened to Zacharias and that he could not pronounce the expected blessing upon them. No doubt many in that waiting crowd were there to help Zacharias celebrate a very special event, the burning of incense upon the golden altar. A priest could do this only once in his entire life. Others in the multitude were expecting to hear him pronounce the great Levitical blessing. In Num. 6:22-27 we read:

*"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them."*

- But on that day there was no celebration or benediction. Something far more exciting and eternal was about to happen. Zacharias returned home and soon his old and barren wife conceived a child.

#### To Mary, About the Birth of Jesus the Messiah

*"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her." (Lk. 1:26-38)*

- The angel did not say Mary was to be blessed above women, but among women. Note also that Luke tells us the first recorded person to call Jesus Savior was Mary. *"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour"* (Lk. 1:46-47). Mary needed salvation, as did all others (see Rom. 3:23).
- At this point, two questions can be raised regarding Luke 1:34-35:
  1. What was the real mystery involved in the incarnation and where did it take place? The supernatural element in the incarnation was not the birth of Christ, but rather his conception. He was born as all humans are born. It is vital to make this distinction, for he was not only as completely God as though he had never been man; he was also as completely man as though he had never been God. Thus, the actual miracle occurred not at Bethlehem, but in Nazareth.
  2. Why did the angel Gabriel rebuke Zacharias for his question and not rebuke Mary for her question?  
Zacharias: *"Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years."* (Lk. 1:18)  
Mary: *"How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"* (Lk. 1:34)
  3. Answer: Zacharias had for many years been praying for a son (Lk. 1:13), but when the announcement came, he doubted God's power to do this. When something wonderful happens sometimes the most surprised individual on earth is that very Christian who has been fervently praying for it to happen. However, there is no reason to believe that Mary had been praying to become the mother of Jesus.

Another classic example is found in the book of Acts. Peter was in prison awaiting execution, and when the Jerusalem believers heard of it, *"prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him"* (Acts 12:5). At God's command an angel staged a spectacular jailbreak. Upon being set free, Peter hurried to the prayer meeting to announce the good news. Note the amusing account: *"And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But*

she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished" (Acts 12:12-16). Peter had a harder time getting into that prayer meeting than he had had getting out of prison.

- Gabriel's response to Mary's question is thrilling indeed: "For with God nothing shall be impossible." (Lk. 1:37)
- Some twenty centuries previous to this, another woman had heard similar words: "Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." (Gen. 18:14)

#### To Joseph, About the Purity of Mary

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS." (Mt. 1:18-25)

- Note especially several key phrases in this passage:
  1. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS" (1:21a). This name, meaning "Jehovah is salvation" is found over 800 times in the New Testament which both opens and closes its pages with it!  
"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Mt. 1:1).  
"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Rev. 22:21).
  2. "He shall save his people from their sins" (1:21b). Thus, Jesus would come to rescue us NOT from our errors, or our shortcomings, but from our SINS!
  3. "Spoken... through the prophet" (1:22).
- This prophecy was of course a fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 (see Mt. 1:23). Some have questioned (unsuccessfully) the Hebrew word *Almah* in Isa. 7:14, saying it does not always mean virgin. However, there is absolutely no doubt whatsoever about the Greek word for virgin, which is *parthenos* and always, without exception, refers to a young girl totally devoid of sexual experience.
- Joseph arranged to make Mary his full, legal wife. Joseph must be considered by all standards of measurement a truly just man, with the spiritual maturity of a David, Moses, or Paul. In fact, the New Testament Joseph may be favorably compared to the Old Testament Joseph. Both had fathers named Jacob. Both had amazing maturity. Both received visions from God. Both were in Egypt. One was a type of Christ; the other was his legal guardian. In fact, had it not been for Judah's sin, Joseph would have been ruling from Jerusalem as the rightful king when Christ was born. It was he and not Herod who had the proper credentials to sit upon the throne of Israel.

#### B. The Three Songs of Praise

##### The Praise of Elisabeth to God

"And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." (Lk. 1:39-45)

- Never in the history of childbirth did two expectant mothers have more to talk about than these two women.

1. Here was Elisabeth, well past the childbearing years, but anticipating a baby.
2. Here was Mary, a young virgin, but now with child. This was the case because *"with God nothing shall be impossible"* (Lk. 1:37).

It should be noted that Elisabeth's unborn child is referred to twice as *"the babe"* (Lk. 1:41, 44), indicating Scripture's position on abortion. From the beginning, John was not looked upon as a developing mass of human tissue or a fetus, but as "the babe."

- But what about a therapeutic abortion? Consider the following: A therapeutic abortion occurs when a pregnant woman is persuaded (often by her doctor) that her unborn child presents an emotional or mental threat to her general well-being. Therefore, the most practical and painless solution (for the mother at least) is simply to kill the offending baby. There are two well-known instances in history in which this attitude toward unborn human life could certainly have been applied.

The first case involved that of an older woman, the wife of a respected religious leader, living in a large southern city. Present-day advice to her would have been: "Do you really feel it wise to complete this birth? Consider your age. The psychological strain upon you will be much greater than it would be on a younger woman. Then too, as an older parent, don't you think you'll have real problems adjusting to this infant? I mean, it might even affect your relationship with your husband. No, all things considered, it would be far better to terminate the potential problem right now."

The second case had to do with a teenage girl, engaged to a struggling young tradesman, living in a small northern town. Here there could be no doubt. A quick abortion would immediately solve the embarrassment and downright hostility which would certainly develop if the unborn baby was not destroyed.

Two simple and clear-cut cases for therapeutic abortion. Not quite. Could even the most calloused present-day abortion mill operator stomach the thought of Elisabeth (the older woman) and Mary (the teenager) with trembling hands and hearts awaiting the sharp instrument of some ancient abortionist?

### The Praise of Mary to God

*"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away."* (Lk. 1:46-53)

- In these verses Mary quotes from at least fifteen Old Testament sources and worships God for displaying His manifold characteristics! She refers to:
  1. His grace (Lk. 1:46-48)
  2. His power (Lk.1:51)
  3. His mercy (Lk.1:50)
  4. His holiness (Lk.1:49)
  5. His goodness (Lk.1:53)
  6. His faithfulness (Lk.1:54-56)

### The Praise of Zacharias to God

*"And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To*

*perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."* (Lk. 1:67-79)

- In this marvelous passage the old priest thanks God for keeping his promise regarding the fulfilling of two all-important Old Testament covenants, the Abrahamic Covenant (verse 73) and the Davidic Covenant (verse 69).
  1. The Abrahamic Covenant had to do with seed and soil. God promised Abraham he would father a great nation (seed) and be given a special land (soil). (See Gen. 12-15.)
  2. The Davidic Covenant had to do with a Sovereign God. God promised David that a male descendant from his line (Christ) would someday rule over that seed upon that soil (see 2 Sam. 7). *"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end"* (Lk. 1:32-33).
- Zacharias predicted that his son would be called *"the prophet of the Highest,"* as contrasted to Gabriel, who referred to Jesus as *"the Son of the Highest!"*

## **Part Two: Events Accompanying and Following His Birth**

### **From Nazareth to Bethlehem**

*"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child."* (Lk. 2:1-5)

- Joseph and Mary were brought to Bethlehem because of an enrollment decree which commanded each Hebrew citizen to be counted from that town where he or she was born. Note: This is the third all-important trip made to Bethlehem. Ruth and Naomi made the first journey (see Ruth 1:22). Samuel the prophet made the second (see 1 Sam. 16).
- Had it not been for the first trip, Ruth would not have met Boaz, both who would later become the great-grandparents of King David (Ruth 4:21-22).
- Were it not for the second trip, David would not have been anointed as King by Samuel!
- This is the only occasion in the scripture where Bethlehem is called the city of David. In all other instances Jerusalem is that city.

### **At Bethlehem**

*"And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which*

was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb." (Lk. 2:6-21)

- Some have considered the words of Lk. 2:7 as describing the fifth greatest day in human history! If this be the case, then:
  1. The fourth greatest day would occur some 34 years later on a hill outside the city of Jerusalem.-  
*"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left." (Lk. 23:33)*
  2. The third greatest day happened on a Sunday morning beside an empty tomb as announced by an angel-  
*"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." (Mt. 28:5-6)*
  3. The second greatest day transpired nearly six weeks later on Mt. Olivet immediately following Jesus' parting words to His apostles -  
*"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." (Acts 1:8-9)*
  4. The greatest day however is yet to occur. John the apostle describes it by the following thrilling words -  
*"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." (Rev. 7:15)*
- One may favorably contrast Lk. 2:7 with Dan. 2:11. In this Old Testament passage King Nebuchadnezzar had just ordered the death of his wise men because of their inability to relate a dream he had just experienced. These astrologers thereupon protested, exclaiming: *"And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is no other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."* But at the advent of the fifth greatest day in history all this would change.
- In Jn. 1:14 we read that the Word was made flesh. One of the most glorious truths of the incarnation was its eternity. This simply means that the results of this day will last forever. He still has and always will have a body of flesh and bone (see Lk. 24:39).
- In the 1960s an American astronaut wrote a book entitled Moon Walk. In it he related how he had left a pleasant, familiar, and safe place called earth and had landed on an alien, dangerous, and unfamiliar planet known as the moon. When rightly understood, Lk. 2:7 is the divine account of Earth Walk, for it begins the story of how God's Son left the beauty and safety of heaven to dwell upon an alien and sin-cursed planet, the wicked world of mankind.
- To rephrase the familiar nursery rhyme:
 

Mary had a little Lamb, His life was pure as snow.  
 And everywhere the Father led, the Lamb was sure to go.  
 He followed Him to Calvary, one dark and dreadful day,  
 And there the Lamb that Mary had washed all my sins away.
- Note just how the angels announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds: *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."* (Lk. 2:11)  
 An unknown author has written -

If our greatest need had been information  
 God would have sent us an educator.  
 If our greatest need had been technology  
 God would have sent us a scientist.

If our greatest need had been money  
God would have sent us an economist.  
If our greatest need had been pleasure  
God would have sent us an entertainer.  
But, alas, our greatest need was forgiveness and redemption  
So ... God sent us a Savior.

- Observe how the shepherds came, and how they left.
  1. They *"came with haste"* (Lk. 2:16).
  2. They left and *"made known abroad....concerning this child"* (Lk. 2:17).
- At this point, let us stop and consider several questions that may be raised concerning those events leading up to the birth of the Savior.
  1. Why did Joseph and Mary wait so long before coming to Bethlehem? We know that both believed the angel's message about the Babe in Mary's womb, and they doubtless were well aware of the prophecy in Micah 5:2 which stated that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem.

Why did they wait until the last moment to come? In fact, one is somewhat led to believe that had it not been for the decree of Caesar Augustus they might not have come at all.  
Answer: No satisfactory answer has been found by this author. It is best to conclude that Joseph (man of God that he was) had good reasons for acting in the manner that he did. The reader may desire to explore this further.
  2. Why didn't Mary and Joseph stay with their relatives in Bethlehem? The inns of those days were rather notorious, and Joseph must have been desperate to subject his pregnant wife to the sin and noise of such a place. But, of course, they were denied even this. Answer: It would have been too difficult to explain (or to expect them to understand) the nature of the virgin birth. Every gossip in town doubtless knew by this time that Joseph and Mary had been married only six months, and there she was, expecting a baby at any moment. Was the father Joseph? Did the child belong to some stranger? Thus, to spare his beloved wife all this, Joseph did not call upon their relatives.
  3. Why was Jesus born in a place which apparently housed animals? Answer: Because lambs are usually born in barns. This was God's Lamb.
  4. Why did the angels appear to the shepherds first? Answer: What other earthly group than shepherds would better understand what God had just accomplished? These were men who raised lambs and later sold them for sacrificial purposes in the temple (see John 1:29; 10:11). Note: They would eventually understand that in the past the sheep had died for the shepherd, but soon the Shepherd planned to die for the sheep (see John 10:11).
  5. Why did God use the angels in the first place? Answer:
    - a. Because angels are interested in the things of salvation (see 1 Pet. 1:12; Exod. 25:20; Dan. 12:5-6; Lk. 15:10; Eph. 3:10).
    - b. Because they were present at the creation of this world and shouted for joy (Job 38:7). It is only logical, therefore, that God would allow them to be on hand at the presentation of the Savior of this world.
- Finally, Luke records Mary's reaction to all this:

*"But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart "* (Lk. 2:19).

It can be rightly said Mary probably had more to ponder than any other person in human history! Consider:

  1. As she first held the tiny infant in her arms, Mary may have pondered:  
*"This is incredible! My little babe, not yet five minutes old, is already infinitely older than His mother and as old as His Father!"*
  2. As he received the milk from her breast, perhaps she pondered:  
*"Miracles of miracles! I'm actually feeding the Bread of Life who once fed my ancestors with bread from heaven during their 40 years trek in the wilderness!"*
  3. As she washed his soiled diapers, she might have marveled:  
*"Who would believe it? I'm performing this thankless task for that One who once created the earth, the sun, moon, and stars!"*

## In Jerusalem

*"And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the LORD, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said," (Lk. 2:22-28).*

- Jesus was brought to the temple to be dedicated to the Lord.
  1. He was at least forty days old at this time, for Mary would have been considered ceremonially impure until forty days had elapsed following childbirth (see Lev. 12:2-4; Exod. 13:2)
  2. Two offerings were to be brought (Lev. 12:6).
    - a. A yearling lamb as a burnt offering
    - b. A young pigeon or turtledove as a sin offering
  3. However, if the family was poor, God would accept two birds (Lev. 12:8). Joseph and Mary offered these birds in place of the lamb.
- Simeon describes Mary's small son in seven-fold fashion. He was and would become:
  1. The Lord's Christ (2:25)
  2. God's salvation (2:30)
  3. The light of the Gentiles (2:32a)
  4. The consolation of Israel (2:25)
  5. The glory of Israel (2:32b)
  6. The judge of the lost (2:34a)
  7. The joy of the saved (2:34b)
- Note Simeon's prophecy in 2:35:

Some thirty-four years later, Mary would stand at the foot of a hideous Roman cross outside the city of Jerusalem, watching her firstborn Son die in agony. Surely at that awful moment the full significance of Simeon's strange words would fall with crushing weight upon her soul.

## Back in Bethlehem

*"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." (Mt. 2:1-12)*

- Here is a concise two-fold summary of Herod the Great, second son of Antipater, and a descendant of Esau.
  1. Herod the brutal -- He became King of the Jews through the favor of the Romans. Able and courageous, but jealous and cruel, he became half-insane toward the close of his life and tried

to murder everybody who seemed to threaten his throne. He killed his wife Marianne and three of his sons. He killed his son Antipater just five days before his own death. He commanded a large group of the nobles among the Jews to be assembled and killed at his death in order that there should be a sufficient amount of mourning.

2. Herod the builder -- Josephus, the Jewish historian, writes:

"To conciliate the Jews, who had been alienated by his cruelties, he with much address proposed to reconstruct their ancient temple which Solomon had originally built, though it has been shrewdly suspected that he entertained the sinister motive to possess himself of the public genealogies collected there, especially those relating to the priestly families, unto whom they were of paramount importance and interest. It is said that he thereby hoped to destroy the genealogy of the expected Messiah, lest He should come and usurp His kingdom. However, that may be, he endeavored to make the Jewish nation understand that he was doing them a great kindness without cost to them, and he promised that he would not attempt to build them a new temple, but merely restore to its ancient magnificence the one originally built by David's son. For the restoration made by Zerubbabel upon the return of Israel from the captivity of Babylon seems to have fallen short in architectural measurement, in height some sixty cubits, and the whole was becoming marked with decay. To this end Herod took down the old temple to its very foundations, and engaged one thousand wagons to draw stones and ten thousand skilled workmen to teach the priests the art of stonecutting and carpentering."

The temple proper which he erected was one hundred cubits in length and twenty cubits in height. It was constructed of white stone, each one being twenty-five cubits long and eight in height. Surmounting this structure was a great white dome adorned with a pinnacle of gold, suggestive of a mountain of snow as seen from afar.

The Jewish tradition holds that the temple itself was built by the priests in one year and six months, when they celebrated its completion with Jewish feasts and sacrifices; but that the cloisters and outer enclosures were eight years in building. However that may be, additions were made continuously from year to year, so that though Herod began the rebuilding in 20 B.C., as a whole it was literally true that the temple was built in forty and six years, when the Jews so asserted to Jesus (Jn. 2:20).

But the end was not yet, for the work was really continued until A.D. 64, just six years before the final destruction of the temple (Ant. XV. Ch. 11).

- A brief overview of the wise men's visit might consist of eight questions and answers:
  1. Who were these wise men? It is thought that they were perhaps a group of religious astronomers living in the Mesopotamian area.
  2. How did they associate the star with Christ? There are several possibilities. In the fourteenth century, B.C., a prophet from their area named Balaam had spoken of this star (see Num. 24:17). They also had the writings of Daniel, who had been prime minister of both Babylon and Persia some six centuries before Christ. Daniel, of course, wrote much about the second coming.
  3. Why did they come? These men were doubtless acquainted with the various religions of the East and knew the emptiness of them all. It would seem that they followed this star to find peace and purpose for their lives.
  4. When did they arrive in Bethlehem? It was perhaps not until some two years after the angels announced his birth to the shepherds. He is referred to as "*the young child*" (Mt. 2:9, 11, 13-14), and is not a tiny babe at this time. When Herod later attempted to destroy this unknown Babe, he had all children in the Bethlehem area two years and under slain (Mt. 2:16).
  5. How many wise men came? There is no evidence that there were three. On the contrary, the group may have numbered from two to several hundred or more. Tradition, however, claims that there were but three and that their names were Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar.
  6. Why did the star, after leading the wise men to Jerusalem, apparently disappear for a brief time and then reappear, taking them directly to Bethlehem? It may be that God intended this visit for the sake of the Jewish leaders. However, they had degenerated to such a level that they were unwilling to travel down the road a few miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to see if their Messiah had really come. But here was a group of sincere Gentiles who had traveled across a hostile and extended desert to find him.
  7. Was the star a regular one? The astronomer Kepler said there was a conjunction of the

planets Jupiter and Saturn about this time in history. However, by no stretch of the imagination could a planet or star located thousands of millions of miles from earth function in the precise way this star did as recorded by Matthew: *"The star. . . came and stood over where the young child was"* (Mt. 2:9). It is not at all unreasonable, however, to suggest that the star was actually a New Testament appearance of that Old Testament Shekinah Glory cloud that led Israel across the desert.

8. What gifts did they offer him?

- a. They gave him gold, which spoke of his deity.
- b. They gave him frankincense, which spoke of his humanity.
- c. They gave him myrrh, which spoke of his future sufferings. Reg Grant writes:  
"During her life, Mary would see Jesus receive the gift of myrrh on five occasions; twice from Gentiles and three times from Jews."
  - (1) On the first occasion, the Magi brought myrrh from the east in honor of Jesus as King of kings (Mt. 2:11). This event anticipated the worship Christ will receive from the Gentile nations in the future kingdom.
  - (2) The second occasion found Jesus in the home of Simon the Pharisee receiving myrrh from the loving hand of a contrite woman who approached Jesus as her great High Priest, the One who could forgive her many sins (Lk. 7:36-50).
  - (3) The third offering of myrrh came from the devout Mary of Bethany as she anointed Christ for his burial prior to his death. This showed that she understood the sacrificial nature of his ministry in a way that even his closest disciples had failed to grasp.
  - (4) Just before the crucifixion, the Roman soldiers offered Christ a fourth 'gift' of myrrh mixed with wine--a kind of narcotic to dull the pain--but he refused it.
  - (5) The fifth and final offering came from the hand of Nicodemus when he provided a mixture of myrrh and aloes for anointing Christ's body following his crucifixion (Jn. 19:39). (*Kindred Spirit*, Winter 1988, pp. 13-14.)

#### From Bethlehem to Egypt

*"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."* (Mt. 2:13-18)

- A divine irony is seen here. In the Old Testament God led his chosen people out of Egypt to escape Satan's wrath, but in the New Testament he leads his beloved Son into Egypt to escape this same wrath.

#### From Egypt to Nazareth

*"But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."* (Mt. 2:19-23)

- This passage records the final of three dreams given by God to Joseph in relation to the

incarnation of Jesus (see Mt. 1:20; 2:13, 20).

- It also marks the only occasion where Jesus is personally referred to as a Nazarene (Mt. 2:23). In a later passage His followers are described as belonging to "the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5).

# THE EARTH YEARS OF JESUS IN NAZARETH

## THE SILENT YEARS OF JESUS IN NAZARETH

### From Age Two to Twelve

*"And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him ... And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Lk. 2:39-40, 51-52)*

- How did Jesus develop as a human being?

While most liberal theologians tend to deny the deity of Jesus, evangelicals often downplay his humanity. As has been often observed, while upon this planet, our Lord was as much God had he never been man, but also as much man had he never been God. The second part of this statement is vital in rightly understanding his earthly ministry, lest we think of him in terms of gliding about down here with angelic movements, always looking upwards at the golden halo which surrounded his head. All this of course is pious nonsense, as demonstrated by the two key words "*grew*" and "*increased*," as found in Luke 2. How, then, did Jesus develop as a human being?

1. He increased in wisdom (mental maturity). Nowhere are we told he possessed total knowledge, allowing him to instantly understand all things as a baby. In fact, to the contrary, most conservative theologians believe that while he indeed retained his divine attributes, such as his omniscience, he did not, however, use them, but depended completely upon the Holy Spirit (see Phil. 2:5-8; Lk. 4:18; Jn. 3:34.)

Thus, later in his ministry Jesus employed the Scriptures in a very effective way indeed in dealing with both his friends (Lk. 24:25-27) and his foes (Mt. 4:1-11; 22:29), but only because he had faithfully studied the Hebrew Bible as a lad.

2. He increased in stature (physical maturity). There is positive evidence in the Gospel accounts that our Lord was a strong and powerfully built man. An indication of this can be seen by his ability to intimidate on two separate occasions the greedy money changers in the temple (see Jn. 2:13-16; Mt. 21:12-13).

We are told that Joseph was a carpenter (Mt. 13:55), and it is not unreasonable to conclude that Jesus also learned this trade as a boy. However, in New Testament times a carpenter probably worked more with stone than wood, due to the abundance of the first. Our Lord thus had the opportunity to build strong muscles by diligently moving and molding those stones.

3. He increased in favor with God (spiritual maturity). Even though he was the unique Son of God and had, before Bethlehem, enjoyed unparalleled fellowship with his Father (Jn. 17:5), he nevertheless cultivated his quiet time with God during long hours of prayer upon the hills surrounding Nazareth. The time involved was probably early morning, as suggested by his adult prayer habit: "*And in the morning, rising up a great while being day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.*" (Mark 1:35)

Not only was he faithful in prayer but also in attending his Father's house to hear the Word of God expounded. "*And 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 for to read.*" (Lk. 4:16)

4. He increased in favor with man (social maturity). Although he was sinless, Jesus apparently did not display his righteousness in a way that turned people off. To the contrary, he seemed to be well received among the citizens of Nazareth. It is true that his younger half brothers would later turn against him (Jn. 7:5). However, for the most part he was viewed in a positive light. This characteristic was carried over into his public ministry. We are told "*the common*

*people heard him gladly*" (Mk. 12:37). Crowds flocked to hear him (Lk. 8:19; 19:3). Parents brought their children to him (Mk. 10:13). Both the sick (Mt. 9:18) and needy sinners sought him out (Lk. 19:1-4).

What is the primary lesson from all the above? Simply this: While on earth, as a human being, Jesus Christ carefully and consistently developed his mental, physical, spiritual, and social features in such a way as to bring the greatest possible amount of glory to his Father and the greatest possible good to his fellow man. As redeemed human beings, God desires for us to do the exact same thing.

- Did he go to school? Some would say no, based on these verses in John's gospel: *"Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."* (Jn. 7:14-16)

However, the phrase "having never learned" may have referred to the learning offered in a rabbinical school. In other words, the Jewish leaders were amazed that Christ could speak with such spiritual knowledge and authority, since he had never been enrolled in their religious schools.

Jesus as a boy had doubtless learned Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. He later would read from a Hebrew scroll in Nazareth (Lk. 4), teach the multitudes in Aramaic, and converse with Pilate in Greek. He may have read the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, which was a noncanonical account relating the testimony of Jacob's twelve sons. He surely also would have been familiar with well-known Jewish books on the sacred Law and writings.

- Do we know anything concerning his early years? In reality we possess no hard facts whatsoever about Jesus from age two to age twelve. However, E. F. Harrison has suggested the following: Jesus' Boyhood--This hamlet of Nazareth in northern Palestine was a miniature of the whole country in the sense that its situation afforded ready contact with the outside world, yet considerable separation from it, the very features Israel historically had enjoyed. Their land lay at the crossroads of the world but was detached by its peculiar topography, which confined the flow of travel largely to the lowlands, passing by the plateau where the life of the nation centered.

From the hill back of Nazareth, Jesus as a boy must often have scanned the horizon in all directions. Travelers attest to the magnificence of the view from this spot. The panorama would include the Mediterranean Sea to the west, Mount Carmel and the plain of Sharon south of it, the broad valley of Esdraelon, with Mount Tabor on the north, the hill of Moreh and Mount Gilboa on the south, and Samaria beyond--all of these in an almost perfect line north and south. To the east, beyond the depression made by the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan, rose the hills that marked the beginning of the Bashan-Gilead country. To the north lay the somewhat broken terrain of Galilee, rising to plateau proportions in the distance, with glistening Mount Hermon to the northeast capping the scene.

No patriotic son of Israel could allow his eye to sweep these vistas without being reminded of the stirring events of history that would forever be associated with them: Elijah's triumph over the prophets of Baal, the victory of Deborah and Barak, the crushing of the Midianites by Gideon and his band, the lamented death of Saul and Jonathan--these and other episodes would easily rise out of the past and in fancy be reenacted. Yes, Nazareth was secluded, but just beyond its sheltering quiet lay the world of affairs. Its immediate gift to Jesus was an opportunity to live a life of simplicity. More remotely, it provided a door of entrance to the busier and more complex life in which he would minister.

Nazareth depended for its livelihood upon the tillage of its grainfields and the cultivation of its vineyards and groves, which ranged up and down the neighboring hills. Though his labor kept him in the village, Jesus loved the out-of-doors, and must have often tramped through the countryside enjoying its sights and sounds. Years later, when he chose to slip away from human companionship to commune with the Father, he was remaining true to the influences of the environment of the early days.

Judging from his parables Jesus must have cultivated early in life the habit of observing what went on around him. He saw that not all the sower's seed fell on good ground. He knew that a good tree was needed to insure good fruit.

"He had many times stuffed dried grass into his mother's stove to heat it for baking, grass that only a short time before had been growing in the field. Perchance he had watched Mary light a

lamp and look carefully for the coin that had slipped from her hand and rolled out of view. Whether indoors or out he was alert to all that was going on. This panorama of early days furnished him with many a true-to-life illustration as he stood before the multitude and taught." (Everett F. Harrison, *A Short Life of Christ*, pp. 56-57.)

- Do we have any fictitious accounts of his early childhood? There are a number of Apocryphal Gospels (*apocryphal* means "hidden") that attempt to "fill us in" on the details, but their accounts are nonsensical.

Foster writes: "In order to give an idea of the character of stories told in these Apocryphal Gospels, the following summary is offered of the records given in the First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ. The author pretends to have his information from Caiaphas, the High Priest. As Joseph and Mary are going to Bethlehem to be taxed they stop outside the town in a cave. Joseph goes in search of a Hebrew woman to act as midwife, but returns to find the cave filled with great lights and the Infant in the arms of His mother. The old Hebrew woman is cured by touching the child. The shepherds come and make a fire ready for the family. The heavenly hosts appear and sing. As an Infant in the cradle, Jesus informs Mary that He is the Son of God. The Wise Men preserve one of His swaddling clothes, which proves indestructible. When Jesus is presented in the temple, He shines like a pillar of light and the angels stand around adoring Him. When the family flees to Egypt, they stop in a city, a great idol falls from its pedestal, and the son of the priest is healed of infirmity. They flee to the haunts of robbers who are frightened away by a miraculous noise. Water is supplied by springs bursting forth. All sorts of cures are performed by the afflicted touching the child, his clothing, or by being sprinkled with the water in which he has been bathed. A young man who had been bewitched and turned into a mule is miraculously cured by the infant's being placed upon his back, and is married to a girl who had just been cured of leprosy. Joseph and Mary pass through a country infested by robbers. Titus, a humane thief, offers Dumachus, his comrade, forty goats to let Joseph and Mary pass without giving the alarm. The Infant prophesies that the two thieves shall be crucified and that Titus shall go before Him into Paradise. Jesus works miracles in Memphis and they return to Nazareth. Here Jesus and other boys play together and make clay figures of animals. Jesus causes them to walk and also makes clay birds which he causes to fly, eat, and drink. He goes to a dyer's shop and throws all the clothes into the furnace, but brings them forth again unharmed and miraculously dyed. The king of Jerusalem gives Joseph an order for a throne. Joseph works on it for two years in the king's palace and makes it two spans too short. Jesus lengthens it by a miracle. He miraculously widens or contracts the gates, milk pails, or boxes not properly made by Joseph. (The Youth of Jesus in the Apocryphal Gospels, Foster, pp. 286-288)

#### At Age Twelve

*"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them." (Lk. 2:41-50)*

- This is but the first of many incidents in which people were astonished at the words and wisdom of Christ. This is recorded:
  1. Following his Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 7:28)
  2. At the end of his lecture in Nazareth (Mt. 13:54)
  3. During his debate with the Pharisees in Jerusalem (Mt. 22:33)
- Note also that Jesus spoke his first recorded words: *"I must be about my Father's business."* Compare these with the words he spoke en route from heaven's glory to Bethlehem's manger.

*"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me ... Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." (Heb. 10:5, 7)*

- Our Lord thus began His ministry by referring to the Father. Some twenty years later He would complete it in similar fashion, as seen through His first and last utterance on the cross:

*"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots." (Lk. 23:34)*

*"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." (Lk. 23:46)*

### **From Age Twelve to Thirty**

*"And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli." (Lk. 3:23)*

*"And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" (Mt. 13:53-56)*

- Here it can be readily seen that with the exception of His birth, worship by the shepherd and wise men, and temple visit at twelve, we know almost nothing regarding the first thirty years of our Lord's earthly walk.
- In fact, of the 89 chapters in the four gospel accounts, only four are given over in describing the first thirty years of His life!

# THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

*"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Mt. 3:13-17)*

## The Three Persons Involved

- This is the clearest illustration of the doctrine of the Trinity in the entire Bible.
  1. The Father speaks from heaven.
  2. The Son stands in the water.
  3. The Holy Spirit descends.
- This marks the first of three occasions on which the Father orally expressed his approval of the Son.
  1. Here at the baptism
  2. On the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17:5)
  3. In Jerusalem (Jn. 12:28)
- This first approval is especially significant because of when it occurred. At this time our Lord had yet to perform one miracle or preach one sermon. Yet his life had already won the favor of the Father. We are prone to reverse this, assuming God awaits spectacular works before he can officially approve us. But to the contrary, divine sanction rests upon present day attitudes and not upon future achievements. In fact, the first is the root from which the second becomes the fruit.

An example of this principle can be seen in the life of Timothy, whom Paul praised in the most glowing manner: *"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I received news about you. I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel."* (Phil. 2:19-22, NW)

This, then, described the fruit of Timothy's ministry. But what of the root? The apostle speaks of this during his final epistle: *"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* (2 Tim. 3:14-15)
- Apparently the divine approval from heaven was given to reassure BOTH John and Jesus as seen by the three gospel accounts. Thus:
  1. Matthew records the Father as saying, *"This is my beloved Son."* (Mt. 3:17)
  2. Mark and Luke record the Father as saying, *"You are my beloved son."* (Mk. 1:11; Lk. 3:21)
  3. Finally, the event gives us the first reference to Jesus' prayer life: *"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened."* (Lk. 3:21)

## The Five Reasons Involved

- Why was Christ baptized? Here it may be stated that his baptism totally refutes that false doctrine of baptismal regeneration, that is, the claim that one must be baptized to be saved. The Savior of all people did not need to be saved himself. But why, then, was he baptized?
  1. He was baptized in order to identify with the message of John the Baptist. Actually, there were two aspects to John's message:
    - a. *"God's kingdom is at hand! The Messiah is here!"*
    - b. *"Repent therefore of your sin and be baptized to demonstrate this repentance."* Thus Christ

was baptized to identify with the first part of John's message, while the converts fulfilled the second aspect.

2. He was baptized so that John would know that Jesus was the true Messiah. *"And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."* (Jn. 1:33)
3. He was baptized to signal the beginning of his work as the Messiah. This was similar to the Old Testament minister who began his ministry at age thirty after a special ordination service.
4. He was baptized to identify himself with the office of the prophet, priest, and king. In the Old Testament, all three were anointed in connection with their office. In Lev. 8 is described the threefold anointing of a priest. He was first washed with water, then anointed with oil, then finally with blood. Christ submitted to the first two of these (water baptism and the oil of the Spirit), but not to the third.
5. He was baptized to show that he had the total approval and support of both other members of the Trinity, the Father and Holy Spirit.

#### The Six Examples Involved

- This is the first of various baptisms mentioned in the Gospel accounts. The word baptism means *"to identify with."*
  1. The baptism of John the Baptist--This was national baptism (see Mk. 1:4)
  2. The baptism of Jesus
    - a. With water by John (Mt. 3:15)
    - b. With the Holy Spirit by the Father (Mt. 3:16)
  3. The baptism of sin upon Christ at Calvary (Lk. 12:50; Mt. 20:22)
  4. The baptism of the Holy Spirit upon believers at Pentecost (Mt. 3:11b)
  5. The baptism of God's wrath upon sinners during the tribulation (Mt. 3:11b; 3:12; 13:30)
  6. The baptism of believers (Mt. 28:19)

# THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

*"Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." (Mt. 4:1-11)*

## Temptation and the Son of God

- In what ways can the temptations experienced by the first Adam and the second Adam be compared and contrasted?
  1. The comparison--In his first epistle, John separated all temptations into three general categories or groups (1 John 2:16). These are: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
    - a. The first Adam was tempted in each area (Gen. 3:6).
      - (1) *"The tree was good for food"* (the lust of the flesh).
      - (2) *"It was pleasant to the eyes"* (the lust of the eyes).
      - (3) *"A tree desired to make one wise"* (the pride of life).
    - b. The second Adam was tempted in each area.
      - (1) *"Command that these stones be made bread"* (the lust of the flesh).
      - (2) *"The devil...showeth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them"* (the lust of the eyes).
      - (3) *"Cast thyself down: for.. he shall give his angels charge concerning thee"* (the pride of life).
  2. The contrast
    - a. The first Adam was tempted in a beautiful garden, while the second Adam met Satan in a desolate wilderness.
    - b. The first Adam experienced total failure, while the second Adam was completely victorious.
- Did Satan know whom he was tempting? He did indeed. The account in Mt. 4:3 and 4:6 is in the indicative mode in the Greek and should be rendered, *"Since you are the Son of God."*
- What benefits did Satan offer him?
  1. First temptation: To fill his stomach (and thus depend upon his own resources).
  2. Second temptation: To jump off the temple (and thus force the hand of the Father).
  3. Third temptation: To grasp the kingdoms of this world (and thus refuse Calvary).
- What trick did Satan use during the second temptation? He attempted to confuse Christ by quoting Scripture out of context (compare Mt. 4:6 with Psa. 91:11-12). In essence, he did the same thing in dealing with the first Adam (Gen. 3:1).
- Why are Jesus' temptations associated with a period of forty days? This number is often one of tempting or testing as found in the Bible. Examples would be:
  1. Moses (Ex. 24:18; 34:28)
  2. Israel (Deut. 8:2-3)
  3. Elijah (1 Kings 19:8)
  4. Goliath (1 Sam. 17:16)
- Did Satan really have the right to offer Christ *"all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them"*

(Mt. 4:8)?

1. In a shallow and temporary sense, yes (see John 14:30; Eph. 2:2; 6:12; 1 John 5:19; Rev. 13:7).
  2. In the deepest and most eternal sense, no. *"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potters vessel" (Psa. 2:6-9). "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. 11:15)*
- How did Christ answer Satan? By the Word of God.
    1. First temptation: *"It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* (Compare Mt. 4:4 with Deut. 8:3.)
    2. Second temptation: *"It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."* (Compare Mt. 4:7 with Deut. 6:16.)

This temptation was probably an attempt for him to prematurely (and wrongly) fulfill Malachi 3:1: *"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."*

Satan's supreme object in the temptation ordeal was to cause Christ to act by himself, independent of the Father. Just what does it mean to tempt God? Israel is said to have tempted God on ten specific occasions en route to the promised land (see Num. 14:11, 22; Heb. 3:9). It means simply to presume upon the goodness of God. It refers to using this goodness in a selfish way. It means to force God's hand on something. Had Christ actually jumped from this temple pinnacle, God would have been forced to step in and save Christ from smashing his physical body on the ground below.

3. Third temptation: *"Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."* (Compare Mt. 4:10 with Deut. 6:13. See also James 4:7.)

Dr. Everett F. Harrison writes the following about the third temptation: "In this final episode Satan is unmasked. Gone is any suggestion that he is working for the best interests of the Son of God. No citation from Scripture is offered. Satan reveals the inmost secret of his being. Much as he enjoys the distinction of being the prince of this world, a distinction only sin has enabled him to achieve, he covets something else infinitely more. He would be like the Most High. He would receive to himself what is most characteristically and exclusively the prerogative of God, namely, worship. A true angel abhors the very thought of being worshiped (Rev. 22:8-9), but this fallen angel fiercely, cravenly covets it. That such an offer was extended to Jesus is a testimony to his greatness. The stakes are high. When Satan made Judas his victim, his bait was a mere thirty pieces of silver. Indeed Satan could not well offer a lesser inducement to our Lord, for the nations were the promised inheritance of the Messiah and the uttermost parts of the earth were his anticipated possession (Psa. 2:8). In Psalm 2 this passage follows immediately the divine recognition of the sonship of the Messiah, the focal point of the temptation. 'Ask of me,' says God, but Satan brazenly usurps the place of the Almighty." (*A Short Life of Christ*, p. 90)

As can be seen, Christ quotes from the book of Deuteronomy each time. It is no accident that higher criticism in Germany began with Deuteronomy in its vicious attack against the Bible.

- Is this the only time Satan tempted Christ? No. In Luke 4:13 we are told: *"And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season."* Note especially the last three words. Satan tempted Christ all through his ministry. At least three specific instances come to mind here in which, at a later date, Satan continued his tempting work against Christ.
  1. As expressed by the 5,000 men Christ fed--*"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (Jn. 6:15). "Bypass the cross and grab the crown!"*
  2. As expressed by Simon Peter--*"from that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began*

to rebuke him, saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord.- this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men*" (Mt. 16:21-23). "Don't even talk about the Cross!"

3. As expressed by the mob at Calvary—"And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, *Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross*" (Mt. 27:39-40). "Come down from the cross!"
- What happened after the wilderness temptation? "*Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*" (Mt. 4:11) Heaven's angels played an important part in the earthly ministry of Christ.
  1. They announced his birth (Lk. 1-2; Mt. 1).
  2. They later ministered to him in Gethsemane (Lk. 22:43).
  3. They announced his resurrection (Mt. 28:6).
- Could Christ have sinned during the temptation experience? He could not; God cannot sin. The Bible declares:
  1. He knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21).
  2. He did no sin (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15).
  3. He had no sin (1 John 3:5; John 14:30). (See also Heb. 7:26.)
- What then was the purpose for the temptation? The purpose was not to see if he would, but to prove that he could not sin. During the settling of the West a railroad company faced a problem. A bridge spanning a deep chasm gained the reputation of being unsafe. Careful examination by railroad officials showed this to be totally unfounded, but the rumor persisted. Finally, a train was formed made up of only heavy locomotives. For an entire day as hundreds watched, this train crossed and recrossed the bridge. Why was this done? Did the railroad engineers arrange the experiment to see if the bridge would hold, or did they do it to prove it would hold? The obvious answer here may be applied to the purpose of Christ's temptations. The purpose was to provide the believer with an experienced high priest (see Heb. 4:15; 2:18).

### Temptation and the Saint of God

- Were both God and Satan involved in the temptation of Christ? Is this the case also, when we are tempted? The answer to both questions is yes. The reason for this is seen in the twofold meaning of the word temptation.
  1. First meaning--To test in a good sense with the goal of confirming one in matters of righteousness
    - a. As experienced by Jesus— "*Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil*" (Mt. 4:1). "*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*" (Heb. 4:15)
    - b. As experienced by believers-- "*And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.*" (Gen. 22:1)
  2. Second meaning--
    - a. As experienced by Jesus--Satan made a desperate attempt to entice Jesus into evil.
    - b. As experienced by believers— "*And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel*" (1 Chron. 21:1). "*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God., for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*" (James 1:13-14)
- In light of this, is it ever (or always) a sin for the believer to be tempted? It all depends upon just who has led us into the temptation itself!
  1. If our guide has been the Holy Spirit (as was the case here in Matthew 4), then it can be said that not only is temptation not a sin, it is actually both an honor and an opportunity.
    - a. It is an honor because it demonstrated that God can trust us. He knows just how much we can withstand (Ps. 103:13-14), and will not allow the temptation to go beyond that limit (1 Cor. 10:13). This is why both James and Peter could describe temptation in such a positive light. "*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. Blessed is the man*

*that endureth temptations for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:2, 12) "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:6-7)*

- b. It is an opportunity because we can use it to grow spiritually and to strengthen our faith. Paul writes of this: *"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there, was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12:7-10)*
2. If, however, our guide has been the old nature (as is often the case with us), then the temptation will prove harmful and even disastrous. James had this kind of guide in mind when he warned: *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God., for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:13-15)*

James was saying that we should not "tempt" temptation. Note the admonition of Solomon: *"Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent." (Prov. 6:27-29)*

It has been correctly observed that while a believer may find it impossible to control himself under certain circumstances, he or she can always control the circumstances themselves.

An airline captain who had flown gigantic Boeing 747 passenger jetliners for years was once asked to define what constituted a great pilot. He replied: "A great pilot is an expert flier who never allows his plane to encounter those flying conditions which would require all of his greatness and expertise."

# THE SOUL WINNING ACTIVITIES OF JESUS

## THE PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS OF JESUS

### Jesus and His First Apostles

#### Andrew and Peter

*"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?, They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peters brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." (Jn. 1:35-42)*

1. Andrew called Jesus "Messias" [Messiah] (Jn. 1:41). This title is found only three other times in the entire Bible.
  - a. As used (twice) by the angel Gabriel (Dan. 9:25-26)
  - b. As used by the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:25)
2. Jesus calls Peter "Cephas," which is translated, "a stone." God's purpose is to change people's names (and character). (See Rev. 3:12.)
  - a. He changed Abram to Abraham (Gen. 17:5).
  - b. He changed Sarai to Sarah (Gen. 17:15).
  - c. He changed Jacob to Israel (Gen. 32:28).
  - d. He changed Saul to Paul (Acts 13:9).

Note, however, that Peter at this point was anything but a rock. He was, in fact, in a practical sense, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14). Actually, Jesus' description of Peter here can be compared to the one he once gave the timid Gideon in the Old Testament, referring to him as "thou mighty man of valour" (Judg. 6:12). But for Peter, all this would change after Pentecost.
3. Without realizing it, Andrew answered Job's perplexing question:
  - a. Job: "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" (23:3).
  - b. Andrew (to Peter): "We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (Jn. 1:41).

#### Philip and Nathanael

*"The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Phillip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Phillip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Phillip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Phillip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Phillip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (Jn. 1:43-51)*

1. We note that Philip, a new convert, did not have a full understanding of the virgin birth, but he

- was still an effective witness. (He refers to Jesus as *"the son of Joseph."*) Nathanael was bothered by Philip's "Jesus of Nazareth" title. He doubtless realized that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. In addition, he probably had a low view of Galileans. Nazareth was the town which housed the Roman garrison for the northern regions of Galilee. In light of this, most Jews would have little to do with that city. In fact, those who lived there were looked down upon as compromisers. Thus, to call one a "Nazarene" was to use a term of utter contempt.
2. Philip wisely refused to argue, but invited him to "come and see." His approach was the one suggested in the Psalms: *"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."* (Psa. 34:8)
  3. Nathanael was amazed that Jesus knew he had been sitting under a fig tree when Philip talked to him. The Savior always dealt with people on their own level.
    - a. He dealt with Nathanael under a fig tree (Jn. 1:48).
    - b. He dealt with Zacchaeus up a sycamore tree (Lk. 19:4-5).
    - c. He dealt with a dying thief on a cruel tree (Lk. 23:39-43).
  4. Nathanael was promised he would someday see heaven open and the angels ascending and descending upon Christ. This happened at the ascension (see Acts 1:9-11).
  5. Although Nathanael addressed him as the Son of God and King of Israel (1:49), our Lord referred to himself as the Son of man (1:51). This was by far his favorite title for himself. He used it more times than any other name. Nathanael and Philip are the first to hear it.
  6. Note: It is thrilling to observe that our Lord's first recorded prediction was not concerning his suffering, death, or even resurrection, but the promise that he would someday ascend. As Isaiah once declared of God: *"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."* (46:9-10)

#### Jesus and Nicodemus

*"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mothers womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* (Jn. 3:1-16)

- Note the character of this man:
  1. He was a Jewish religious leader (Jn. 3:1).
  2. He was a member of the Pharisees (Jn. 3:1).
  3. He was a well-known teacher (Jn. 3:10).
  4. He was, however, lost!
- Why did he come by night? We do not know, and it is unfair to brand him a coward. Perhaps the heavy schedules of both men required this.
- What did Nicodemus know about Jesus? He knew he was from God because of his supernatural miracles. (Compare Jn. 3:2 with 20:30-31.)

- Nicodemus was told he had to be born again. This is the first of but three occasions on which the term "*born again*" is found in the Word of God (see Jn. 3:3, 7; 1 Pet. 1:23). However, John often uses the phrase "*born of God*" (see Jn. 1:31; 1 Jn. 3:9; 4:7; 5:18).
- What did Jesus mean by his expression, "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*" (Jn. 3:5)? Here five main views have been offered:
  1. He was referring to baptismal regeneration. This, of course, is totally refuted by other biblical passages (see Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Cor. 1:17; Rom. 5:1).
  2. He was referring to that watery sac, the placenta, which accompanies physical birth. Thus he contrasted physical birth with spiritual birth.
  3. He was saying that the one requirement to live on this earth is to have had a physical birthday; and likewise, the one requirement to someday live in heaven is to have a spiritual birthday. Those who hold this view point to 3:6 where they feel Jesus clarifies his position.
  4. He was referring to John's baptism of repentance in the Jordan, which baptism the Pharisees had rejected. (Compare Lk. 3:3 with 7:30.)
  5. He was referring to the Word of God (the water) and the Spirit of God (Spirit), without which no man can ever be saved (see Jn. 16:8-11; Rom. 11:6-15).

Advocates of this position point out that water in the Bible is often the recognized symbol for the Word of God (see Psa. 119:9; Jn. 4:14; Eph. 5:25-26; Titus 3:5).

- Although this man was both a ruler and a religious leader, he needed the new birth. Note Jesus' question in 3:10, "*Art thou a master of Israel, and knoweth not these things?*" In the Greek the definite article is used, meaning, "*Are you the teacher in Israel?*" Nicodemus may have been the most famous teacher of his day.
- In John 3:12 Jesus connects earthly things with heavenly things, indicating that a right view of the second is based squarely on a right view of the first. This only serves to emphasize the supreme importance of accepting at face value the historical words of Moses concerning creation (Gen. 1-2), as one would do with Christ's words concerning redemption.
- Jesus illustrated his visitor's need by referring to Moses and the brazen serpent. (Compare John 3:14 with Num. 21:9.) On this occasion in the Old Testament account, God had sent poisonous serpents to punish rebellious Israel. The people repented and a cure was provided. A serpent of brass was placed atop a wooden pole where all could view it. Anyone bitten needed only to look upon the brass serpent to be healed.

To paraphrase, here is what Jesus told Nicodemus: "*Nicodemus, like those Old Testament Israelites, you have been bitten by a serpent--the serpent of sin. It is an incurable and fatal bite. But soon God is going to erect a crosslike pole just outside Jerusalem. And on that cross he will place a Savior.*"

- It may be said that one cannot fully grasp the most famous verse in the Bible, John 3:16, unless he has some understanding of its background, which is found in John 3:14. "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.*"
- Did Nicodemus accept Jesus as Savior? Two later events strongly testify that he did indeed!
  1. He defends Jesus before the Pharisees
 

*"Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."* (Jn. 7:50-52)
  2. He helps in preparing the body of Jesus for burial
 

*"And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand."* (Jn. 19:39-42)
- If Jesus quoted the words in John 3:16, then Nicodemus had the supreme honor of being the very first person to hear both the most important and greatest verse in all the Bible!
  1. It is the most important verse, because it contains the gospel in a nutshell.
  2. It is the greatest verse, because it contains nine of the most profound truths ever recorded:

"For God"!-- The greatest Person  
 "So loved the world" -- The greatest truth  
 "That he gave" -- The greatest act  
 "His only begotten Son" -- The greatest gift  
 "That whosoever" -- The greatest number  
 "Believeth in him" -- The greatest invitation  
 "Should not perish" -- The greatest promise  
 "But have" -- The greatest certainty  
 "Everlasting life" -- The greatest destiny

- The following features may be observed in summarizing Jesus' dealings with Nicodemus:
  1. He was accessible. We are told (3:2) that Nicodemus came *"by night."* All too often a busy and successful Christian leader is anything but accessible to those who may desperately need godly counsel.
  2. He was single-minded. The only issue Jesus wanted to discuss was the born again experience. He refused to be side-tracked by the opening flattery of Nicodemus. Note the first statement from each man:  
 Nicodemus: *"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him"* (Jn. 3:2). Jesus: *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3).
  3. He was clear and concise. Realizing Nicodemus's confusion, Jesus related three helpful illustrations to explain the new birth.
    - a. A physical illustration— *"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"* (Jn. 3:5-6).
    - b. A natural illustration— *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit"* (Jn. 3:8).
    - c. A scriptural illustration— *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up"* (Jn. 3:14).
  4. He was well-informed. He knew the background of Nicodemus. *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"* (Jn. 3:10)
  5. He was impartial. Even though Nicodemus was no doubt well-known and successful in the political, financial, and religious world, our Lord dealt with him for what he was, a poor lost sinner.

#### Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

*"When therefore the LORD knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well. and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then halt thou that flying water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have*

*no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband- in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." (Jn. 4:1-42)*

- After realizing that the Pharisees were pitting him against John in a baptismal contest, Jesus quickly left the Judean area. Our Lord did not come to compete with John, but rather to be crucified for him, along with all other sinners.
- Note the phrase, *"He must needs go through Samaria."* H. A. Ironsides observed: "An orthodox Jew would cross the Jordan near Jericho and make his way up through Perea, and then cross back near the Sea of Galilee in the north. But the Lord Jesus Christ did not take that route. A stern legalist would not go through Samaria; but the Lord Jesus Christ took that direct road because of the very fact that He was anxious to meet these poor Samaritan sinners that He might reveal the truth to them. 'He must needs go through Samaria.' Long before the creation of the world it had been settled in the counsels of eternity that he was to meet a poor, sinful, Samaritan woman that day. He could not forego that appointment." (*Gospel of John*, John Loizeaux Brothers, N.Y., 1954, p. 138.)
- Our Lord's perfect humanity is clearly revealed through the following word in 4:6 – *"Jesus, therefore, being wearied with his journey..."*
  - He would later again experience this utter exhaustion in a boat during a storm (Mk. 4:35-38). In addition, Jesus knew extreme hunger (Mt. 4:2), and thirst (Jn. 19:38).
  - Jesus was thus as much God had He been not man, but also as much man had He not been God.
- During His conversation with the Samaritan woman, Jesus contrasted two things:
  1. Living water with liquid water (4:13-14).
  2. Real worship with ritual worship (4:20-24).
- The woman spoke of a mountain in 4:20 --The mountain referred to here was Mount Gerizim, especially sacred to the Samaritans.
  1. Abraham and Jacob had built altars in that general vicinity (Gen. 12:7; 33:20).
  2. The people of Israel had been blessed from this mountain (Deut. 11:29; 27:12).
  3. The Samaritans had built a temple on Mount Gerizim around 400 B.C., which had later been destroyed by the Jews.
- Jesus reveals an incredible fact about the Father at this time:
 

*"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and*

*in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."* (Jn. 4:23)

The implications here are staggering indeed! We are told that the omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, sovereign and holy creation actually desires indeed, seeks the worship of His finite and sinful creatures!

- It was at this time that Christ made the first recorded announcement that he indeed was the anticipated Messiah. This revelation was given to an immoral woman (Jn. 4:26). Later, the Savior would make the first resurrection appearance in his new body before another woman, who had been possessed of devils--Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:11-18).
- Note the progressive revelation regarding the identity of Jesus as given by the Holy Spirit to this woman:
  1. *"How is it that thou, being a Jew... ?"* (4:9)
  2. *"Art thou greater than our father Jacob... ?"* (4:12)
  3. *"I perceive that thou are a prophet."* (4:19)
  4. *"Is this not the Christ?"* (4:29)
- The Samaritan woman will thus become one of the two greatest soul winners in the entire gospel account and both were former pagan Gentiles! Compare her tremendous testimony in Jn. 4:28-30, 39, with that of a former demon possessed man from Gadara (Mk. 5:18-20).
- The title given to Jesus by the Samaritan man, *"Savior of the world"* (4:42) is found only here and in 1 John 4:14 --*"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."* (1 John 4:14)
- This passage contains one of the greatest examples for soul winners in the entire Bible. Note a few of its practical points:
  1. Jesus refused to argue with the woman.
  2. He avoided getting entangled by various theological concepts.
  3. He never browbeat her, even though she was a great sinner.
  4. He repeatedly spoke of the living water, which was the real (and only) issue.
  5. He concluded by pointing her to himself (4:26).
  6. The Christian has only to lift up his eyes to see the bountiful harvest of lost souls all around him.
  7. Christians sometimes sow seed that will be reaped by others, but they often reap seed planted by another. God alone gives the increase (see 1 Cor. 3:5-9).

#### Jesus and the Woman Taken In Adultery

*"Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lilted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."* (Jn. 8:1-11)

- The wicked Jewish leaders altered the Law somewhat as seen by their statement in verse 5.
  1. The manner of execution was not prescribed unless the woman was a betrothed virgin (Deut. 22:23-24).
  2. The Law also required both parties to be killed (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22).
- There is only one Old Testament instance in which this law was carried out (see Num. 25:7-8).
- This account is the only one in the gospel record where Jesus is described as writing something.
- What did he write? It has been suggested that he may have written down the names of those

Pharisees standing there who had secretly committed adultery. Consider Paul's words at a later date: *"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God... thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?"* (Rom. 2:17, 22)

- The reason of course why Jesus did not write or author a book while here on earth was that, in the ultimate sense He was a book! John begins his gospel account by referring to this: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* (Jn. 1:1)  
The Greek term *Logos* (here translated word) denotes a thought, a concept, an expression. In other words the very life of Jesus served to reveal both God's thoughts and work!
- In essence it can be seen that Jesus dealt with this poor sinful woman in three-fold fashion.
  1. He was accessible— *"And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them"* (Jn. 8:2). Note: In John 3, Nicodemus met Christ late at night. Here the woman taken in adultery would meet him "early in the morning."
  2. He did not condemn her, nor did he permit the self-righteous Pharisees to condemn her. Our Lord did not come to damn sinners, but rather to deliver them. *"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."* (Mt. 12:20)
  3. He both forgave and instructed her. *"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."* (Jn. 8:11)

#### Jesus and Mary and Martha

*"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."* (Lk. 10:38-42)

- We are all too often so busy in ministering for the Lord, that we neglect our ministering to the Lord. Note an event in the early days of the Antioch church: *"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Bamabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."* (Acts 13:1-2)
- Martha was simply too busy. She was allowing the good to become the enemy of the best. To rephrase this truth: Our worship of Christ is more important and must precede our work for Christ.

#### Jesus and A Rich Young Ruler

Here we will allow both Matthew and Mark to record this meeting:

*"And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God., but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up. what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."* (Mt. 19:16-26)

*"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." (Mk. 10:17-22)*

- The rich young ruler was confused in regards to four things. Jesus corrects all four errors.
- First confusion and correction -
  1. The confusion: concerning the deity of Christ— *"There came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master..."* (Mk. 10:17)
  2. The correction— *"And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God."* (Mk. 10:18)
 

The rabbi had no room whatsoever in their theology for the idea that the promised Old Testament Messiah would actually be God himself. Thus, Jesus may have been saying, *"In light of the fact that God alone is good, are you still willing to call me good Master?"*
- Second confusion and correction -
  1. The confusion: concerning the vanity of works-- *"What good thing shall I do, that I might have eternal life?"* (Mt. 19:16)
  2. The correction— *"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."* (Mt. 19:17)
 

(Note: Christ then lists five of the Ten Commandments.)

    - a. Honor thy father and mother (fifth)
    - b. Thou shalt do no murder (sixth)
    - c. Thou shalt not commit adultery (seventh)
    - d. Thou shalt not steal (eighth)
    - e. Thou shalt not bear false witness (ninth)

He does not, however, list the first commandment (Thou shalt have no other gods before me), nor the tenth (Thou shalt not covet), the very two already broken by the rich young ruler. Apparently Christ wanted him to come to this conclusion himself.
- Third confusion and correction -
  1. The confusion: concerning the depravity of man— *"The young man lath unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet"* (Mt. 19:20)? Had he really done this? A case could be made concerning the possibility of observing the first nine commandments, but only in an outward and external manner. However, no human could ever even remotely keep the Tenth Commandment, which is an inward law, dealing with the heart— *"Thou shalt not covet"* (Exod. 20:17).
  2. The correction – *"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."* (Mt. 19:21)
- Fourth confusion and correction -
  1. The confusion: concerning the captivity of riches-- *"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions"* (Mt. 19:22)
 

A rabbi once visited a miserly old man who was known far and wide for his greed. Pointing out the window, the rabbi asked him what he saw. "Well," he said, "I see children playing and adults walking." The rabbi then placed a mirror in front of the old man. "Now," he asked, "what do you see?" "Oh," replied the man, "I see myself!" In a quiet tone, the rabbi observed: "I have just shown you two pieces of glass. Concerning the first, you saw people, but concerning the second, you saw only yourself. The reason you could not see human beings through the second was because it has been coated with a thin layer of silver."
  2. The correction – *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven, And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But*

*Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." (Mt. 19:23-26)*

- In conclusion, five facts may be seen in regards to the rich young ruler:
  1. He asked the right question - "How can I receive eternal life?"
  2. He asked in the right way - He ran and knelt.
  3. He asked the right person - He addressed his concerns to Jesus.
  4. He asked at the right time - This may have been his first and only encounter with Jesus.
  5. He however, tragically, responded in the wrong way.

### Jesus and Zacchaeus

- As seen from the perspective of the publican
  1. Zaachaeus the sinner— *"And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich." (Lk. 19:1-2)*
  2. Zaachaeus the seeker--This man wanted to meet Jesus but had a problem.
    - a. The source of his problem— *"And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature." (Lk. 19:3)*
    - b. The solution to his problem— *"And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way." (Lk. 19:4)*
  3. Zaachaeus the saved
    - a. The request of the Savior— *"And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house." (Lk. 19:5)*
    - b. The response of the publican— *"And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully." (Lk. 19:6)*
    - c. The reaction of the crowd— *"And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." (Lk. 19:7)*
  4. Zaachaeus the Spirit-controlled
    - a. As witnessed by his own testimony— *"And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." (Lk. 19:8)*
    - b. As witnessed by Jesus' testimony— *"And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Lk. 19:9-10)*
- As seen from the perspective of the Savior
  1. Jesus saw Zaachaeus. *"And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him" (Lk. 19:5a).*
  2. Jesus knew Zaachaeus. *"And said unto him, Zaachaeus" (Lk. 19:5b).*
  3. Jesus loved Zaachaeus. *"Make haste, and comedown; for today I must abide at thy house" (Lk. 19:5c).*
  4. Jesus saved Zaachaeus. *"And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham" (Lk. 19:6, 9).*

# THE PREACHING ACTIVITIES OF JESUS

## THE PREACHING ACTIVITIES OF JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

On five specific occasions Jesus went out on an extended preaching mission. On two specific occasions he sent his disciples out on an extended preaching mission.

- The preaching tours of Jesus
  1. First tour—*"And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all."* (Lk. 4:14-15)
    - a. This tour took place shortly after his temptation in the wilderness (Lk. 4:1-13).
    - b. All his preaching missions apparently were centered in the Galilean area and not in Judea and Jerusalem. The reason for this seemed to be the intense hostility he experienced whenever he was in Jerusalem (see Jn. 10:31; 11:8).
  2. Second tour-- *"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan."* (Mt. 4:23-25) This was undoubtedly his most successful crusade, with people flocking to hear him from Galilee, Judea, Syria, and the surrounding country.
  3. Third tour—*"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."* (Mt. 9:35)
    - a. Here we are told the motivation prompting all his tours. *"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."* (Mt. 9:36)
    - b. This tour also has a command attached to it. *"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."* (Mt. 9:37-38)
  4. Fourth tour— *"And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities"* (Mt. 11:1)
    - a. Just prior to this tour our Lord had sent out his twelve disciples (Mt. 10).
    - b. During this tour he is visited by two messengers sent by the imprisoned John the Baptist (Mt. 11:2).
  5. Fifth tour—*"And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance."* (Lk. 8:1-3)

These women, converted during his final preaching crusade would later render fruitful service to their Savior.

    - a. They were present at the crucifixion (Mt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40-41; Lk. 23:49, 55)
    - b. They were present at the resurrection (Lk. 24:1-11)
    - c. Mary Magdalene was the first human being to see the risen Christ (Jn. 20:11-18)
- The preaching tours of Jesus' disciples--As has been previously noted, Jesus sent a group of his disciples out on two occasions. These events are described in Matthew 10 and in Luke 10. The following offers both a contrast and comparison between these two groups.
  1. The group in Matthew 10
    - a. The number involved was 12 (Mt. 10:1)

- b. All 12 are named (Mt. 10:2-4)
  - c. They were to preach a specific message. *"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Mt. 10:7)
  - d. They were given power to *"heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and to cast out devils"* (Mt. 10:8).
  - e. They were to preach only to Jews. *"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."* (Mt. 10:5-6)
  - f. They were to travel lightly. *"Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat."* (Mt. 10:9-10)
  - g. They were to expect persecution. *"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles"* (Mt. 10:16-18)
  - h. They were promised the anointing of the Holy Spirit. *"But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."* (Mt. 10:19-20)
    - i. The results of their preaching trip are not recorded.
2. The group in Luke 10
- a. The number involved was 70 (Lk. 10:1).
  - b. None of the 70 are named.
  - c. They were to preach a specific message. *"Say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."* (Lk. 10:9)
  - d. They were given power to heal the sick and to cast out demons (Lk. 10:9, 17).
  - e. They were not restricted to preach only to the Jews. *"After these things the LORD appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come."* (Lk. 10:1)
  - f. They were to travel lightly (Lk. 10:4).
  - g. They were to expect persecution. *"Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves"* (Lk. 10:3).
  - h. They were promised the anointing of the Father (implied in Lk. 10:21).
  - i. The results of their preaching trip are recorded. *"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."* (Lk. 10:17-20)

# THE PROMISE OF JESUS TO BUILD THE CHURCH

## THE PROMISE OF JESUS TO BUILD HIS CHURCH

### The Probing By Jesus

*"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?" (Mt. 16:13-15)*

- How are we to account for the various rumors concerning Jesus' identity? Some, influenced by Herod Antipas, confused Jesus with John the Baptist, whom they felt had been raised from the dead (Mt. 14:2). Others identified Jesus with the prophet Elijah, whose coming had been predicted by Malachi (4:5-6). The apocryphal book 2 Esdras predicted the return of Isaiah and Jeremiah (2:18). It was commonly believed among the Jews that at the Messiah's coming the prophets would rise again. "The nearer still the 'kingdom of heaven' came, by so much the more did they dream of the resurrection of the prophets."
- Note the phrase, "But whom say ye?" Jesus both was, and is now, far more interested in what his people think about him than what the world might say about him.

### The Person of Jesus

*"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bargona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Mt. 16:16-17)*

- Luke provides for us the reason for this timely revelation, namely, the request of Christ to his Father. *"And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?" (Lk. 9:18)*

### The Promise of Jesus

*"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Mt. 16:18-19)*

- Was Jesus building his church upon Peter and planning to make him its first Pope? It may be clearly stated that he was not, for the following reasons:
  1. Christ later gave the same responsibilities to the other apostles which he here gives to Peter. (Compare Mt. 16:19 with Jn. 20:22-23.)
  2. The New Testament clearly presents Christ and Christ only as the foundation of his Church (see Acts 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 3:11; 1 Pet. 2:4-8).
  3. The New Testament clearly presents Christ and Christ only as the Head of his Church (see Eph. 1:20-23; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:18-19).
  4. In the Greek language, there is a play upon words in this verse. Jesus said, *"Thou art Peter [petros, a little stone,] and upon this rock [petra, massive cliff or rock] I will build my church."*
  5. Peter's testimony denies it (see 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
  6. James and not Peter later officiated at the Jerusalem church (see Acts 15:13, 19).
- What then, was Christ doing? The answer is given in Ephesians. *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner*

*stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. 2:19-22)*

- What did he mean by "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"? J. Vernon McGee wrote: "The gates of hell refer to the 'gates of death'." The word used here is the hades and sheol of the Old Testament, which refers to the unseen world and means death. The gates of death shall not prevail against Christ's church (Matthew, Vol. II, p. 23). This glorious event is called the rapture (see 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-57).
- What were the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" that Jesus gave Peter? A key, of course, unlocks doors and makes available something which was previously closed. Jesus here predicts that Peter would be given the privilege of opening the door of salvation to various peoples. This he later did.
  1. He opened the door of Christian opportunity to Israel at Pentecost (Acts 2:38-42)
  2. He did the same thing for the Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17)
  3. He performed this ministry to the Gentiles at Cornelius' house at Caesarea (Acts 10)
- What did Christ mean by the binding and loosing of Matthew 16:19? This authority was given to all the apostles as well as to other believers (see Mt. 18:18; Jn. 20:22-23). W. A. Criswell writes: "In Greek the future perfect tense is used to express the double notion of an action terminated in the past but whose effects are still existing in the present. 'Having been bound and still bound,' and 'having been loosed and still loosed.' The meaning is: if the disciples act in their proper capacity as stewards, they will be acting in accordance with the principles and elective purposes ordained beforehand in heaven." (Expository Notes on Matthew, p. 101)

In other words, all the actions of the Spirit-filled believer, whether positive or negative in nature, will carry with them the awesome authority of heaven itself.

#### The Prohibition By Jesus

*"Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ," (Mt. 16:20)*

#### The Passion of Jesus

*"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Mt. 16:21)*

- This shocking and sobering truth would be hammered home repeatedly by the Savior. Examples: *"And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry" (Mt. 17:22-23). "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." (Mt. 20:18-19)*

#### The Plot Against Jesus

*"Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Mt. 16:22-23)*

- Here Satan employs a familiar tactic, using a secondary source through which to spew forth his poison. The first successful attempt occurred in the Garden of Eden. *"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen. 3:1)*

# THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

## THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

### The Prophecy Involved

*"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."* (Mt. 16:28)

### The Place Involved

"a high mountain" (Mt. 17:1) This was probably Mt. Hermon.

### The Purpose Involved

"He ... *went up ... to pray*" (Lk. 9:28) The Personalities Involved

- There were seven:
  1. Peter, James, and John
  2. The Savior
  3. The Father
  4. Moses and Elijah

### The Particulars Involved

*"And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only."* (Mt. 17:2-8)

- The Scriptures suggest that this may have been a night scene, for the three disciples had just awakened from a deep sleep (see Lk. 9:32).
- Note that the, light was from within, and not from some giant cosmic spotlight suddenly focusing down upon Jesus. His countenance was affected first, then his garments. This was the same glory that shone in both the Old Testament tabernacle (Exod. 40) and the temple (1 Kings 8). It would later be withdrawn because of Israel's sin in the days of Ezekiel (Ezek. 10-11). Later it was revealed to the shepherds (Lk. 2:9), to the disciples (Acts 1:9), to Stephen (Acts 7:55), to Saul (Acts 9:3), and to John the apostle (Rev. 1:16). Finally, at Christ's second coming this glory will be revealed to the whole world. *"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."* (Mt. 24:30)

Christ's eternal glory was not surrendered at the time of the incarnation, but rather was covered and contained by his fleshly body. The body of Christ was to the disciples what the veil of the tabernacle was to Old Testament Israel.

1. Both "veils" housed and protected the glory of God from within.
2. Both "veils" were broken at Calvary. *"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me"* (Lk. 22:19). *"And, behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;*

*and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent"* (Mt. 27:51). Satan tried, unsuccessfully, to imitate this inward splendor of Christ (2 Cor. 11:14).

- The word "transfigured" is *metamorphoo* in the Greek language. We get our word "metamorphosis" from it. It brings to mind a caterpillar in the cocoon coming forth as a butterfly. The transfiguration of Christ does not set forth his deity, but rather his humanity. Transformation is the goal of humanity. We shall experience this at the rapture. Adam and Eve may well have been clothed by a light of innocence proceeding from within. But all this was lost through sin.
- Note the previous description of Jesus as offered by John the Apostle:  
*"And the Word was made 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,"* (Jn. 1:14)  
A case could be made here that, in all the universe, the strongest object ever created by God was the earthly body of Jesus! Ponder this amazing thought: for 34 years this vessel of clay actually contained and confined the resplendent glory of Almighty God Himself, only allowing for one brief moment a tiny ray to escape, which temporarily blinded Peter, James, and John!
- Why the appearance of both Moses and Elijah?
  1. Because of what they represented--The main reason for the writing of the Old Testament was to prepare us for Christ. Jesus himself testified of this: -- *"Search the scriptures ... they... testify of me"* (Jn. 5:39). *"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself "* (Lk. 24:27). While he was on earth, Jesus had a very simple way of summarizing the entire Old Testament: *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil"* (Mt. 5:17). Why then the appearance of these two men?
    - a. Moses was there because he represented the Law.
    - b. Elijah was there because he represented the prophets.
  2. Because of who they represented--Why were Moses and Elijah, of all Old Testament people, present on this occasion? Perhaps these two men and the disciples suggest all the categories of people who will be in Jesus' coming kingdom. The disciples represent individuals who will be present in physical bodies. Moses represents saved individuals who have died or will die. Elijah represents saved individuals who will not experience death, but will be caught up to heaven alive (1 Thess. 4:17). These three groups will be present when Christ institutes his kingdom on earth. Furthermore, the Lord will be in his glory as he was at the transfiguration, and the kingdom will take place on earth, as this event obviously did. The disciples were thus enjoying a foretaste of the promised kingdom of the Lord (Mt. 16:28). (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, Wheaton, Ill., 1983, p. 59)
  3. Because of their future ministry during the great tribulation--Many believe that Moses and Elijah will be the two witnesses referred to in Rev. 11:3-12 (see also Mal. 4:4-5). If this is true, the transfiguration event would thus serve as a "trial run." In fact, Jesus had suggested this very thing on the way down from the mountain. *"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things"* (Mt. 17:11).
- If the two witnesses in Rev. 11 are indeed Moses and Elijah, then consider:
  1. During the transfiguration they speak of Christ's death in the city of Jerusalem. *"Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."* (Lk. 9:31)
  2. During the tribulation they themselves will die in the city of Jerusalem. *"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."* (Rev. 11:7-8)
- Both Moses and Elijah had previously experienced a special revelation from God (see Exod. 33:17-23 and 1 Kings 19:9-13), and at the same place (Mount Sinai/Horeb). The transfiguration answered Moses' twofold request:
  1. To see the glory of God (Exod. 33:18)
  2. To enter the promised land (Deut. 3:23-25)
- Peter here thoughtlessly suggests the building of three booths. It may be that at this time the Feast of Tabernacles (booths) was being celebrated in Jerusalem. This was to be a type of the coming Millennium as well as a reminder of Israel's redemption from Egypt (see Lev. 23:34-44). But before this (the Millennium) could happen, another feast would take place--the Passover (see

- Lev. 23:4-8 and Mt. 26-27). *"For even Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us"* (1 Cor. 5:7).
- Peter would never forget this great event. He later wrote about it (see 2 Pet. 1:16-18).
  - Jesus spoke to Moses and Elijah concerning his "decease" (Lk. 9:31). The word here is actually "exodus," and is used by Peter at a later date in describing his approaching death (see 2 Pet. 1:13-14).
  - Mark concluded the transfiguration event with the following words: *"And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean."* (Mk. 9:9-10). The Jews were familiar with the doctrine of the resurrection (see Job 19:25-26; Isa. 25:8; 26:19; Hosea 13:14), but the resurrection of the Son of man astonished them, for their theology had no place for a suffering and dying Messiah. This is seen especially in John 12:32-39.

# THE FINAL WEEK OF JESUS

## THE FINAL EIGHT DAYS OF JESUS' MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION: There are a total of 89 chapters in the four Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Of these, only four record the first 30 years of Jesus' earthly life (Mt. 1, 2; Lk. 1, 2). However, of the remaining 85, no less than 24 describe the final eight days of His life (Mt. 21-27; Mk. 11-15; Lk. 20-23; Jn. 12-19). In other words, as measured by the scriptural space given it, the last week or so of our Lord's ministry was some eight times more important than the first 30 years. These eight "dreadful days of divine destiny" began with a conspiracy by sinners. They would end with a crucifixion for sinners. This all important time span will be overviewed in a two-fold manner.

**ONE: A basic outline summary of each day.**

**TWO: An extended analytical summary of each day.**

In both accounts we will use the Roman system of reckoning time as employed by the Apostle John (see Jn. 19:14) which begins at both midnight and noon. This, of course, is our system today. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, however, use the Hebrew system which begins the new day at 6:00 P.M. (sunset).

### ONE: A Basic Outline Summary of Each Day

#### SATURDAY

- His anointing by Mary in Bethany ,

#### SUNDAY

- The triumphal entry

#### MONDAY

- The cursing of the fig tree
- The second temple cleansing
- The request by some Greeks to see Jesus

#### TUESDAY

- The confrontation with the Pharisees
- The condemnation of the Pharisees
- Jesus commends a poor widow
- Jesus weeps over Jerusalem
- Jesus delivers the Mt. Olivet Discourse

#### WEDNESDAY

- The final predictions by Jesus
- The final plots against Jesus

## THURSDAY

- Events in the Upper Room FRIDAY
- Jesus delivers His Vine and Branch Discourse
- He prays His Great High Priestly Prayer
- His prayers in Gethsemane
- His unfair trials
  1. Before Annas
  2. Before Caiaphas
  3. Before the entire Sanhedrin
  4. Before Pilate (first time)
  5. Before Herod Antipas
  6. Before Pilate (second time)
  7. Before the Roman soldiers
- The denial by Peter
- The death of Judas
- The crucifixion of Jesus
- The burial of Jesus

## SATURDAY

- The sealing of the tomb

### **TWO: An Extended Analytical Summary of Each Day**

## SATURDAY

- His anointing by Mary in Bethany

*"Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always ... Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." (Jn. 12:1-8; Mk. 14:9)*

1. This was the only anointing His body would receive. In spite of the many times Christ had warned of His suffering and death (see Mt. 16:21; 20:18-19), apparently the only person to take him seriously was Mary (see also Jn. 10:11, 17-18).
2. The 300 pence (denarii) was roughly a year's wages. In present-day finances this would have represented some 20 to 25 thousand dollars. There is a possibility that Mary inherited this, or that it represented her life's savings.
3. Even prior to his betrayal of Jesus we are told the following facts regarding Judas Iscariot:
  - a. He belonged to Satan from the very beginning (Jn. 6:70)
  - b. He was a shameless hypocrite
  - c. He was a thief

## SUNDAY

- His triumphal entry

*"And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." (Mt. 21:1-11)*

1. This marks the only "ticker tape parade" our Lord would receive during His earthly ministry, and it was, to say the least, short-lived. The disciples were no doubt excited over all this attention, but Jesus was not, for He knew what the future held, realizing the Jewish cries of celebration would soon turn into those of condemnation. Note the contrast:
  - a. The cries on Palm Sunday -- *"Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord"* (Lk. 19:38). *"Blessed is the King of Israel"* (Jn. 12:13).
  - b. The cries on Good Friday -- *"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar."* (Jn. 19:13-15)  
*"And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon 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!"* (Mt. 27:29)
2. On this occasion Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem on the foal of an ass. He did this for two reasons:
  - a. To fulfill prophecy – *"All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass"* (Mt. 21:4-5). This act of Christ was thus a direct fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy written by Zechariah: *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."* (Zech. 9:9)
  - b. To demonstrate the value of little things -- Jesus often used the insignificant things to accomplish His divine will.
    - (1) Here he used a small animal.
    - (2) He had once used a little boy's lunch (Jn. 6:9-11), some empty pots (Jn. 2:6-9), and some clay (Jn. 9:6-7). With these he provided food for the multitudes, wine for a wedding, and healing for the sightless. Paul later expounds upon this: *"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."* (1 Cor. 1:27-29)
3. Note the word hosanna as used by the crowd (Mt. 21:9). This word is only found five times in the Bible and all but one occur during the triumphal entry event.

W. E. Vine comments: "Hosanna in the Hebrew means, 'save, we pray.' The word seems to have become an utterance of praise rather than of prayer, though originally, probably a cry for

help. The people's cry at the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mt. 21:9, 15; Mk. 11:9-10; Jn. 12:13) was taken from Ps. 118, which was recited at the Feast of Tabernacles in the great Halle Psalms 113-118) in responses with the priest, accompanied by the waving of palms and willow branches. The last day of the feast was called 'the great Hosanna, and the boughs called hosannas'." (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 564).

## MONDAY

- The cursing of the fig tree for a detailed account of this event, see the section over-viewing the 35 miracles of Jesus.
- The second temple cleansing  
*"And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine."* (Mk. 11:15-18)  
 As observed, this marks the final of two temple cleansings. These two may be favorably compared.
  1. Both occurred at Passover time. The first introduced Jesus' public ministry, while the second concluded it.
  2. His death and resurrection is predicted on both occasions.
    - a. First occasion – *"Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body."* (Jn. 2:18-21)
    - b. Second occasion -- *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit... Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour... And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."* (Jn. 12:24, 27, 32-33)
  3. His glory was revealed just prior to the first cleansing. *"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."* (Jn. 2:11)
  4. His glory was revealed just after the second cleansing. *"Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."* (Jn. 12:28)
  5. The Father is associated with both events.
    - a. First cleansing – *"And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."* (Jn. 2:16-17)
    - b. Second cleansing – *"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."* (Mt. 21:12-13)
  6. Several factors no doubt invoked His wrath against the money changers on each occasion:
    - a. They were selling cattle, sheep, and doves in the court of the Gentiles, the only place where non-Jews could come and pray.
    - b. They may have been selling blemished animals.
    - c. They could have been overcharging.
    - d. They were obviously filled with greed.
  7. John Grassmick observes: "When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, he went into the temple area, the large outer court of the Gentiles surrounding the inner sacred courts of the temple itself. No Gentile was allowed beyond this outer court. In it the high priest Caiaphas had authorized a market (probably a recent economic innovation) for the sale of ritually pure items necessary for temple sacrifice: wine, oil, salt, approved sacrificial animals and birds. Money from three

sources circulated in Palestine in New Testament times: imperial money (Roman), provincial money (Greek), and local money (Jewish). Money changers provided the required Tyrian (Jewish) coinage for the annual half-shekel temple tax (Exod. 30:12-16) required of all male Jews twenty years of age and up. This was in exchange for their Greek and Roman currency, which featured human portraits considered idolatrous. Though a small surcharge was permitted in these transactions, dealings were not free from extortion and fraud. In addition (according to Mark 11:16) people loaded with merchandise were taking shortcuts through this area, making it a thoroughfare from one part of the city to another." (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, Wheaton, Ill., 1983, p. 157)

8. Observe Jesus' words concerning His Father's house. *"And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."* (Mk. 11:17)

Here Jesus quotes from Jeremiah's sermon delivered some six centuries earlier in the same temple area, condemning Israel for the same thing. *"Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD."* (Jer. 7:11) Our Lord also refers to a prophecy of Isaiah concerning Gentile people and the temple during the Millennium. *"Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."* (Isa. 56:7)

- The request by some Greeks to see Jesus. *"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."* (Jn. 12:20-32)
  1. Note two phrases at this point, one referred to here and the second in (Jn. 20):
    - a. *"Sir, we would see Jesus"* (Jn. 12:21).
    - b. *"Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord"* (Jn. 20:20).
  2. The wise pastor or Sunday School teacher will seek to make the first statement a reality in their presentation of God's Word, thus assuring that all those who hear them will experience the second statement!
  3. It is interesting to observe the Greeks wanted Philip to show them the Son, and that, he, Philip, would later ask Jesus to show him the Father (Jn. 14:8). Jesus' response would indicate Philip still had much to learn about the Son of God! *"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."* (Jn. 14:9-10)
- Jesus' statement, *"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified"* (12:23) is revealing indeed, especially the words *"hour"* and *"glorified."* Both terms refer directly to His death. Note:
  1. Regarding the word *"hour"* -
    - a. *"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come."* (Jn. 2:4)
    - b. *"Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come."* (Jn. 7:30)
    - c. *"These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come."* (Jn. 8:20)

- d. *"Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."* (Jn. 13:1)
  - e. *"Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."* (Mt. 26:45)
  - f. *"And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him."* (Mk. 14:35)
2. Regarding the word "glorified" -
- a. *"(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"* (Jn. 7:39)
  - b. *"These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him."* (Jn. 12:16)
  - c. *"Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly... He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him."* (Jn. 13:26-27, 30-31)
  - d. *"The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go."* (Acts 3:13)

## TUESDAY

- Jesus' Confrontations with the Pharisees. All throughout His ministry, Jesus had tangled with the Pharisees who had constantly attempted to either accuse or ensnare Him.
  - 1. Prior Confrontations
    - They said:
      - a. He violated the Sabbath
        - "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them."* (Jn. 9:16)
      - b. He had transgressed the traditions of the Father (Mk. 7:5-9, 13)
      - c. He did not insist upon His disciples observing the many feasts (Mk. 2:18-20)
      - d. He ate and associated with sinners (Mk. 2:15-17)
      - e. He was a blasphemer
        - (1) Because He claimed to forgive sin (Mt. 9:1-3)
        - (2) Because He claimed to be God (Jn. 10:31-33)
      - f. He was actually energized by Satan himself (Mt. 12:22, 24)
  - 2. Passion Tuesday Confrontations
    - a. Concerning the source of His authority
      - "And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."* (Mk. 11:27-33)
    - b. Concerning paying tribute to Caesar
      - "And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: Is it lawful for*

*us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no? But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's. And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace." (Lk. 20:21-26)*

R. C. Foster observes: "Two general types of tribute were paid to Rome: taxes and customs. For the collection of taxes, levied with the assistance of the Sanhedrin throughout the eleven districts of Judaea, the Roman procurator was responsible. Herod Antipas and Philip were responsible for the taxes in their respective tetrarchies. Much of these taxes was spent upon the upkeep of roads, harbors, public buildings, and the governments. The remainder was sent on to Rome. The right to collect customs having been purchased by senatorial corporations in Rome, these taxes were collected by them through the commissioners and the horde of publicans they employed. Customs included export and import duties, bridge and harbor tolls, market taxes, tax on salt and many similar duties. While the system of collection was full of corruption and the publicans notorious for extortion, the Romans in general had a genius for government and maintained their dominions most efficiently. They preserved law and order, permitted remarkable freedom of local rule and worship, and built such highways and buildings as have resisted the march of time in an astonishing way." (*Studies in the Life of Christ*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1979, p. 1137)

c. Concerning the resurrection

*"The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine." (Mt. 22:23-33)*

This ignorance of God's Word had always been Israel's problem. The Old Testament prophets often testified of this: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isa. 1:3) *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hos. 4:6). "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it." (Amos 8:11-12)*

d. Concerning the greatest commandment

*"And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.*

*And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question." (Mk. 12:28-34)*

The "Hear, O Israel" phrase (12:29) is known as the "shema," named after the first word of Deuteronomy 6:4 in Hebrew which means "hear." The Shema became the Jewish confession of faith, which was recited by pious Jews every morning and evening. To this day it begins every synagogue service.

As Jesus stated, the Ten Commandments are aptly summarized by these two statements:

(1) The first statement is vertical in nature, and covers commands 1-4 (Exod. 20:3-11).

(2) The second statement is horizontal in nature, and covers commands 5-10 (Exod. 20:12-17).

e. Concerning the deity of the Messiah

*"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? if David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions. " (Mt. 22:41-46)*

Warren Wiersbe observes: "Jesus did not phrase this question as He had when He asked His disciples, 'Whom say you that I am?' (Mt. 16:15). These men who had been arguing with Him were not sympathetic with His cause, nor were they honest in their assessment of His credentials. Jesus had to take an indirect approach with His enemies. He made this sound like another theological question, when in reality it was the most important personal question they would ever face.

'Whose Son is the Messiah?' He asked them. As trained experts in the Law, they knew the answer: 'He is the Son of David.' Had they been asked, they could have referred to numbers of Old Testament Scriptures, including 2 Sam. 7:12-13; Psa. 78:68-72, and Micah 5:2. Once they had given this answer, Jesus asked a second question, this time quoting from

Psa. 110:1 – *'The LORD [Jehovah] said unto my Lord [Hebrew 'Adonai] ', 'Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.'*

Every orthodox Jewish scholar interpreted this to refer to the Messiah. Only the Messiah could sit: at the right hand of Jehovah God. Jesus believed in the inspiration; and accuracy of the Old Testament Scriptures, for He said that David spoke these words 'in the Spirit'(v. 43, NASB). Nobody dared to question the accuracy or the authority of the text.

'If Messiah is David's Son,' Jesus asked, 'then how could Messiah also be David's Lord?' There is only one answer to this question. As God, Messiah is David's Lord; as man, He is David's Son. He is both 'the root and the offspring of David' (Rev. 22:16). Psalm 110:1 teaches the deity and the humanity of Messiah. He is David's Lord and He is David's Son.

When He was ministering on earth, Jesus often accepted the messianic title 'Son of David' (see Mt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15). The rulers had heard the multitudes proclaim Him as 'Son of David' when He rode into Jerusalem. The fact that He accepted this title is evidence that Jesus knew Himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God. As God, He was David's Lord; but as man, He was David's Son, for He was born into the family of David (Mt. 1:1, 20).

The scholars in that day were confused about the Messiah. They saw two pictures of Messiah in the Old Testament and could not reconcile them. One picture showed a suffering servant, the other a conquering and reigning monarch. Were there two Messiahs? How could God's servant suffer and die? (see 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

Had they listened to what Jesus said, they would have learned that there was only one Messiah, but that He would be both human and divine. He would suffer and die as a sacrifice for sins. He would then rise from the dead in triumph, and one day return to defeat His enemies. However, these religious leaders had their own ideas, and they did not want to change. If they had accepted His teaching, then they would also have to accept Him as the Messiah, and this they were unwilling to do.

The result of this day of dialogue was silence on the part of His enemies. They dared not ask Jesus any more questions, not because they had believed the truth, but because they were afraid to face the truth. *'For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything'* (Lk. 20:40, NASB). But neither did they have courage to face the truth and act upon it." (*Meet Your King*, Victor Books, pp. 162-163, 1980)

- Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees

1. Their words and their works were totally unrelated – *"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."* (Mt. 23:1-3)
2. They placed grievous weights of their own vain traditions upon the shoulders of men (23:4).
3. They dressed and performed only for the praise of men.
  - a. Wearing fancy prayer boxes (23:5)
  - b. Displaying lavish garments (23:5)
  - c. Occupying prominent places at feasts and in synagogues (23:6)
  - d. Demanding to be addressed by their full titles (23:7)
4. They not only refused to enter into the kingdom of heaven, but stood in the doorway to prevent others from entering (23:13).
5. They cheated poor widows out of their homes (23:14).
6. They repeated long and insincere prayers (23:14).
7. They made converts and taught them their evil ways -- *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."* (Mt. 23:15)
8. They uttered their oaths of promise with forked tongues (23:16-22).
9. They had, in their legalistic bondage, perverted the very Law of Moses.

- a. In their tithing -- *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."* (Mt. 23:23-24)

In their deceitful tithing practices, they had actually done violence to their own parents.

Mark records Jesus' word on this: *"For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free."* (Mk. 7:10-11)

John Grassmick writes: *"Corban is the Greek (and English) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to a gift devoted to God. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes. If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were Corban, then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they no longer let him do anything for his parents."* (*The Bible Commentary*, Victor Books, Wheaton, Ill, 1983, p. 133)

Thus, by this despicable method, the wicked Jewish leaders were deliberately violating the Fifth Commandment. Centuries before, Isaiah had written concerning this sad and sordid thing: *"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men"* (Isa. 29:13).

Note the phrase, "swallow a camel." The strict Pharisee would carefully strain his drinking water through a cloth to make sure he did not unknowingly swallow a gnat, the smallest of unclean creatures. But, in a figurative sense, by his double standard of life, he would knowingly swallow a camel, one of the largest of unclean creatures.

- b. In their ritual washings -- *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also"* (Mt. 23:25-26).

10. They had polished exteriors, but polluted interiors (23:27-28) -- *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."* (Mt. 23:27)
11. They revered the memories of their murderous fathers (23:29-32).
12. They were, in fact, descendants from a race of religious snakes (23:33)
13. They would later kill God's prophets -- *"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city."* (Mt. 23:34)
14. They had already killed God's prophets -- *"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."* (Mt. 23:35)

Here Jesus summarized the past cruel action of the unsaved Jewish leaders by referring to the first and last Old Testament martyrs. The killing of Abel is recorded in Genesis 4:8, in Scripture's first book; and the killing of Zechariah in 2 Chronicles 24:20-22, the final book of the Hebrew Bible.

- Jesus commends a poor widow.

*"And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."* (Lk. 21:1-4)

Her sacrificial gift here was in stark contrast to the hypocritical giving of many rich people. Our Lord warned of this during His Sermon on the Mount.

*"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."* (Mt. 6:1-4)

- Jesus weeps over the City of Jerusalem.

1. First occasion

*"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."* (Lk. 19:41-44)

The famous Bible student, Sir Robert Anderson, has attached great meaning to the three words, "this thy day." According to the prophecy in Dan. 9:24-27 (often called the 70-week prophecy) God told Daniel he would deal with Israel for yet another 70 "weeks," which is usually interpreted as 490 years. The prophecy continued that after 69 of these "weeks," or 483 years, the Messiah would be "cut off" (rejected and crucified.) The prophecy was to start on March 14, 445 B.C. Mr. Anderson suggests that if one begins counting forward from that day, he discovers that the 483 years (173,880 days) runs out on April 6, A.D. 32. It was on this exact day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the foal of an ass and, although welcomed by the masses, was officially rejected by Israel's leaders. According to Sir Robert, all this was in mind when our Lord uttered the words of this statement.

2. Second occasion

*"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."* (Mt. 23:37-39)

Note especially Jesus' reference to "your house" (the temple) here as contrasted to the "my house" statements of John 2:16 and Matthew 21:13. At this point Israel is set aside for the duration of the Church age (see Mt. 21:33-46). Jesus' statement in 23:39 will someday be gloriously fulfilled. *"Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you*

*out of the house of the Lord." (Psa. 118:26)*

- Jesus delivers the Mt. Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24, 25)

Note: for an expanded overview of this discourse, see the section entitled, "The Sermons of Jesus."

## WEDNESDAY

- Jesus is secretly betrayed by Judas

*"Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them." (Lk. 22:3-4)*

This is the first of two recorded occasions when Satan himself entered into Judas (see also Jn. 13:27). This can be said about no other person in the Bible.

*"And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him." (Mt. 26:15-16)*

"Why did Judas offer to betray Jesus? Various suggestions have been made, each of which may contain an element of truth:

1. Judas, the only non-Galilean member of the twelve, may have responded to the official notice (Jn. 11:57).
2. He was disillusioned by Jesus' failure to establish a political kingdom and his hopes for material gain seemed doomed.
3. His love for money moved him to salvage something for himself. Ultimately he came under satanic control (cf. Lk. 22:3; Jn. 13:2, 27). In Judas' life one finds an intriguing combination of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. According to God's plan Jesus must suffer and die (Rev. 13:8); yet Judas, though not compelled to be the traitor, was held responsible for submitting to Satan's directives (cf. Mk. 14:21; Jn. 13:27)." (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, Wheaton, Ill., 1983, p. 175)

Note: For an expanded overview of this betrayal, see the chart section under Wednesday.

## THURSDAY

- Jesus prepares for the Upper Room events

*"And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover." (Lk. 22:8-13)*

1. The purpose behind this somewhat strange instruction of Jesus was probably to keep the actual location of the final Passover from Judas as long as possible. Our Lord was, of course, aware of the wicked plot against him.
2. This is the first reference to the Upper Room, a place that would become very important in the life of the early church.
  - a. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in this room (Lk. 22:14-15).
  - b. He later appeared here to ten of his apostles on the first Easter Sunday night (Jn. 20:19).
  - c. He showed his nail-pierced hands to Thomas a week later (Jn. 20:24-26).
  - d. The apostles gathered for both a prayer meeting and a business meeting in this room (Acts 1:12-26).
  - e. The Holy Spirit came upon them here (Acts 2:1).

- Jesus presides over the Upper Room events

1. He partakes of the Passover

*"Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world,*

*he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him."* (Jn. 13:1-2)

This involved roasting the lamb, setting out the unleavened bread and wine, and preparing bitter herbs along with a sauce made of dried fruit moistened with vinegar and wine and combined with spices.

2. He washes their feet

*"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean."* (Jn. 13:3-11)

3. He speaks to them regarding servanthood (Jn. 13:12-19)

4. He announces His impending betrayal

*"When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."* (Jn. 13:21)

5. His disciples are dumb struck

*"And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?"* (Mt. 26:22)

*"Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?"* (Jn. 13:23-25)

To their credit, they did not say, "Lord, is it such and such?" or "Lord, I'm sure I know who it is."

*"Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said."* (Mt. 26:25)

Here Judas called Jesus "Rabbi" (Master), and not "Lord," as did the other apostles in the Upper Room.

6. Jesus hints in regards to the traitor's identification

*"Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night."* (Jn. 13:26-30)

Apparently Judas had played his deceitful role so well that the eleven still did not realize he was the traitor, in spite of Christ's obvious statement.

7. He predicts His disciples would soon all forsake Him (Mt. 26:31).

8. He promises to meet them in Galilee following His resurrection (Mt. 26:32).

9. He predicts Peter's denials

*"Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder."* (Mt. 26:33-36)

*"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."* (Lk. 22:31-32)

The devil once requested permission from God to test and torment another choice servant

of God, Job (see Job 1-2). Here Satan apparently asked for the same power over Simon Peter. The apostle may have had this very event in mind when he wrote concerning the devil and the believer in one of his epistles (see 1 Pet. 5:7-11). At any rate, it should be a great comfort for all believers to know that the resurrected Savior is, even today, at this very moment, praying for them in glory (see Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 7:25; 9:24).

10. He institutes the Lord's Supper from the remains of the Passover meal.

*"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."* (Mt. 26:26-29)

11. He speaks to them regarding discipleship, heaven, His relationship with the Father, and the coming ministry of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 13:31-14:31).

12. He concludes the meeting with a song and they depart for the Mt. of Olives. *"And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."* (Mt. 26:30)

Six Psalms are called the "Hallel" Psalms. These are: 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, and 118. All of these were to be sung on the eve of the Passover. This is what Jesus and the disciples sang. Note some of the verses in these Psalms: *"The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow" (116:3). "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord" (116:13), "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (118:22-24). "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord..." (118:26).*

## FRIDAY

- Jesus lectures His disciples on fruit bearing en route to the Mt. of Olives.

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."* (Jn. 15:1-5)

Note: For a detailed overview of John 15 and 16, see the section under Jesus' sermons.

- Jesus prays His Great High Priestly Prayer.

Question: Where in the New Testament is the Lord's Prayer recorded, and what does it say?

Answer: Many Christians would mistakenly turn to Matt. 6 and begin reading those familiar words: *"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name"* (Mt. 6:9). However, this is not the Lord's Prayer, but rather the Disciple's Prayer. In reality, the Lord's Prayer is found here in John 17. In this prayer, our great High Priest prays for Himself, for His apostles, and for His Church.

During His prayer, Jesus refers to God as "Father" on six occasions (17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, and 25). This awesome title is extremely rare in the Old Testament. Our Lord is the first to use it in the New Testament. In fact, He employs two titles found only in this prayer. They are:

(1) Holy Father (17:11)

(2) Righteous Father (17:25)

1. Jesus prays for Himself

*"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world*

was." (Jn. 17:1-5)

- a. The request of Jesus here to receive glory is absolute proof of his deity, when compared with Isaiah's statement: *"I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images"* (Isa. 42:8). Did the Father hear and answer this request? Note Jesus' previous testimony along this line: *"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."* (Jn. 11:41-42)
- b. Our Lord here tells the Father He had finished the divine assignment given Him (17:4). This marks the third of four occasions where Jesus had or would speak of this. Note: *"Then they went out of the city, and came unto him."* (Jn. 4:30)  
*"But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."* (Jn. 5:36)  
*"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."* (Jn. 19:30)

## 2. Jesus prays for His disciples

Our Lord prayed (and prays) constantly for His own.

- a. He prayed before He chose them. *"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles."* (Lk. 6:12-13)
- b. He prayed for them during His ministry. *"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea."* (Mt. 14:23, 25)
- c. He prayed for them at the end of His ministry (Jn. 17:9).
- d. He now prays for them (and all believers) in heaven. *"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"* (Rom. 8:34). *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."* (Heb. 7:25)

*"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."* (Jn. 17:6-19)

## 3. Jesus prays for all believers who would ever live

*"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that*

*they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."* (Jn. 17:20-26)

He thus asked the Father:

- a. That the Church might be spiritually united (17:21-22)
  - b. That the Church might be spiritually mature (17:23)
  - c. That the Church might behold His glory (17:24)
- Jesus' ordeal in Gethsemane.

Here is how Matthew, Mark, and Luke describe this terrible ordeal:

*"And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And he went forward a little, 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 unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mk. 14:32-36). "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Lk. 22:43-44)*

*"And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." (Mt. 26:40-46)*

1. This marks the second of two severe periods of mental strain, suffering, and satanic stress in the life of Jesus.
  - a. The first occurred in the wilderness of Judea (Mt. 4:1).
  - b. The second now occurs in the Garden of Gethsemane.
2. The book of Hebrews summarizes both periods.
  - a. The wilderness of Judea -- *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Heb. 4:15)
  - b. The Garden of Gethsemane -- *"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."* (Heb. 5:7)
3. A number of striking similarities can be seen at this point in the lives of David and Jesus.
  - a. Both crossed the brook Kedron in the hour of personal crisis (2 Sam. 15:23; Jn. 18:1).
  - b. Both would leave the city of Jerusalem rejected by its citizens (2 Sam. 15:13; Jn. 1:11).
  - c. Both would be betrayed by a close friend (2 Sam. 15:31; Mt. 26:14-16).
  - d. Both of their traitors would later hang themselves (2 Sam. 17:23; Mt. 27:3-5).
  - e. Both would weep over all of this (2 Sam. 15:23, 30; Lk. 19:41).
  - f. Both would climb the Mount of Olives and pray (2 Sam. 15:30-32; Mt. 26:30; Jn. 17:1-26).
  - g. Both would condemn the use of a sword by a follower to defend them (2 Sam. 16:9-12; Mt. 26:51-53; Jn. 18:10-11).
  - h. Both would forgive their tormentors (2 Sam. 16:5-13; 19:18-23; Lk. 23:34).
  - i. Both would be victorious over their enemies (2 Sam. 18:6-8; Rev. 19:11-21).
  - j. Both would return in triumph to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 19:8-9, 15, 25; Rev. 21:1-4).
4. Many artists and songwriters have depicted this prayer for us, and their descriptions usually show a hushed and tranquil scene, with the light from heaven falling upon a kneeling Savior,

his hands clasped devoutly in front, his eyes cast heavenward, and his lips moving faintly as he prays his "cup of suffering" prayer. All is silent, subdued, and serene. But this is not the biblical account at all. The careful student can almost hear the shrieks of demons and the crackling flames which filled the gentle Garden of Gethsemane that awful night. Notice our Lord's own description of his feelings during that hour. He says he was:

- a. "Sore amazed" -- that is, he was suddenly struck with surprised terror (Mk. 14:33).
  - b. "Very heavy" -- that is, he experienced the totally unfamiliar, which bore down upon his soul and filled it with uncertainty and acute distress (suggested exegesis here by the late Kenneth S. Wuest, a Greek professor at Moody Bible Institute).
  - c. "Exceeding sorrowful unto death" -- that is, he was so completely surrounded and encircled by grief that it threatened his very life. From all this it becomes evident that the devil made an all-out effort to murder the Savior in the garden in order to prevent his blood being shed a few hours later on the cross. Our Lord realized this and responded accordingly, as we are told in Heb. 5:7: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."
5. The Father heard his cry for aid and sent angels to strengthen him (see Lk. 22:43). We are told that he wrestled his way through three prayer sessions in the garden, and he referred to the "cup" during each prayer. What was this cup his soul so dreaded to drink from? Some say it was the cup of human suffering, but our Lord was no stranger to suffering and pain, for he had known these things throughout his ministry. Others claim it was the cup of physical death that our Lord abhorred here. But again, it must be realized that he was the Prince of Life, and therefore, death would hold no terror for him.
- What then was the nature of this cursed cup? We are not left groping in the dark here, for the Scriptures plainly inform us that the Gethsemane cup was filled with the sins of all humanity. Our Lord looked deeply into the cesspool of human sin that dark night and groaned as he smelled its foul odor and viewed the rising poisonous fumes. Was there no other way to redeem humanity than by drinking this corrupt cup? There was no other way. In a few short hours he would drain that container of its last bitter drop of human depravity. Heb. 2:9: *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."* (See also Isa. 53; Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21.)
6. The double title, "Abba, Father," used by Christ here occurs only two other times in the Bible. Abba was the common way young Jewish children addressed their fathers. It conveyed a sense of intimacy and familiarity. Because of the marvelous work of redemption our blessed Lord would accomplish on the cross, the most humble believer could actually refer to the infinite, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and eternal Creator of the universe as... 'Abba, Father'." The last stanza of Charles Wesley's great hymn, "Arise My Soul, Arise," summarizes this beautiful theological truth: 'To God, I'm reconciled./ His pardoning voice I hear;/ He owns me for his child--/ I can no longer fear;/ with confidence I now draw nigh, and 'Father, Abba, Father' cry!"
7. These are the three "Not my will, but thy will be done" prayers that Jesus would offer up in Gethsemane (see Mt. 26:39, 42, 44). Contrast this submissive will of Christ to that self-centered will of Lucifer. *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High"* (Isa. 14:12-14). Consider the awesome significance of those four words, *"Thy will be done."*
- a. If a repentant sinner says them to God, they result in heaven.
  - b. If God says them to an unrepentant sinner, they result in hell.
- Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane
    1. Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss

*"And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And*

*forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him." (Mt. 26:47-49)*  
*"But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Lk. 22:48)*  
This is the final of three biblical kisses of deceit.

- a. Jacob kissed Isaac (Gen. 27:26-27).
- b. Joab kissed Amasa (2 Sam. 20:9).
- c. Judas kissed Jesus.

2. Jesus restores a severed ear

*"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus." (Jn. 18:4-10)*

*"And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him." (Lk. 22:51)*

3. Jesus rebukes Peter

*"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me." (Mt. 26:52-55)*

4. Jesus is arrested

*"Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him." (Jn. 18:12)*

5. Jesus is forsaken by all

*"And they all forsook him, and fled. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." (Mk. 14:50-52)*

Some Bible students believe that this young man was John Mark, who accompanied Paul during his first missionary journey and later wrote the Gospel of Mark.

• Jesus suffers His first unfair trial (before Annas, the ex-High Priest)

*"And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people... The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" (Jn. 18:13-14, 19-23)* Here we are told Jesus was struck in the face. This was just the beginning of the terrible ordeals suffered during His trials. He would thus be:

1. Misquoted (Mt. 26:60-61)
2. Spit upon (Mt. 26:67; 27:30)
3. Struck with fists (Mt. 26:67; 27:30)
4. Repeatedly slapped (Mt. 26:67)
5. Ridiculed (Mt. 26:68; Lk. 23:11)
6. Blindfolded (Mk. 14:65)
7. Falsely accused (Lk. 23:2, 10)
8. Insulted (Lk. 22:65)
9. Stripped of His clothes (Mt. 27:28)
10. Flogged (Mk. 15:13)

- Jesus suffers His second unfair trial (before Caiaphas, the current High Priest)  
*"And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end. Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace, And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands."*  
(Mt. 26:57-67)

1. Jesus both warned his foes and promised his friends that he would come again. Compare this passage with John 14:1-3.
2. We are told here that Caiaphas tore his clothes.  
The high priest was forbidden to do this under the Mosaic Law. *"And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes."* (Lev. 21:10)
3. This shameful session ends by the Jewish leaders spitting upon Jesus.  
To spit in one's face was considered by the Jews to be an act of total repudiation and gross personal insult.
  - a. A person was considered disgraced for seven days after having his face spit upon (Num. 12:14).
  - b. Job's enemies showed their utter contempt for the suffering patriarch by spitting in his face (Job 30:10).
  - c. The Savior himself had predicted all this through the prophet Isaiah some seven centuries before it actually happened. *"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting"* (Isa. 50:6).
4. After being blindfolded, they demanded that he tell them who struck him. This reflected a traditional test of Messianic status based on a rabbinic interpretation of Isa. 11:2-4. According to this view the true Messiah could know who was hitting him even though blindfolded.

- Simon Peter denies Jesus at this time. (Mt. 26:58, 69-75; Mk. 14:54, 66-72; Lk. 22:54b-62; Jn. 18:15-18, 25-27).

Note: An exact chronological arrangement of these denials is impossible. In fact, it has even been suggested that Peter denied his Lord not three times on one occasion, but six times on two occasions, and that Christ predicted both events.

1. The first warning
  - a. Place: The Upper Room
  - b. Prophecy: That Peter would deny Christ three times before the cock crowed at all (see Jn. 13:38; Lk. 22:34).
2. The second warning
  - a. Place: On the way to Gethsemane
  - b. Prophecy: That Peter would deny Christ three times before the cock crowed twice (see Mk. 14:30).

Whatever the chronology, note the characters, the charges, the concealment, and the contrition in this sordid account.

1. The characters
  - a. Peter and John  
John went inside – *"And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest."* (Jn. 18:15)  
Peter waited outside -- *"But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other*

*disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter." (Jn. 18:16)*

- b. Several servant maids
  - c. Some officers
  - d. A kinsman of Malchus
2. The charges
- a. *"Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" (Jn. 18:17)*
  - b. *"And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth." (Mk. 14:67b)*
  - c. *"Thou are one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto." (Mk. 14:70b)*
  - d. *"One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" (Jn. 18:26)*
3. The concealment
- a. *"I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest." (Mk. 14:68)*
  - b. *"Woman, I know him not." (Lk. 22:57)*
  - c. *"Man, I know not what thou sayest." (Lk. 22:60)*
  - d. *"But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak." (Mk. 14:71)*
4. The contrite
- a. The lie of Peter – *"And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew." (Lk. 22:60)*
  - b. The look of Jesus – *"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." (Lk. 22:61-62)*
5. The conclusion

The Shakespearean character Juliet once said, "What's in a name?" Here we could rephrase it to read, "What's in a look?" The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. Apparently he had also heard the awful cursing and denials. Peter was stricken in his thoughts and went out, weeping bitterly. It is not our sin that causes us to weep. It is rather seeing the Savior that we have sinned against that causes our tears.

Note the phrase, *"Peter... wept bitterly."* It is indeed a fact--you can't judge a book by its cover. Imagine yourself in the vicinity of the Garden of Gethsemane on a warm April night some two thousand years ago. As you watch, a man walks up to Jesus and begins kissing him. You would probably conclude, "How this man must love the Master!" Shortly after this you would be shocked to hear another man bitterly cursing Christ. Your conclusions about this would be, "How this man must hate the Master!" But both times you would be wrong. Judas, the man who kissed Christ, really hated him, and Peter, the one who cursed him, really loved him.

- Jesus suffers His third unfair trial (before the assembled Sanhedrin)  
*"And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth." (Lk. 22:66-71)*  
*"When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death." (Mt. 27:1)*
- Judas Iscariot hangs himself at this time  
*"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was*

*fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." (Mt. 27:3-10)*

Question: How are we to understand Judas' repentance in this passage? In essence, the word itself has a two-fold meaning:

1. To turn from something or someone
2. To turn to something or someone

Both meanings are seen in the following verses:

*"Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities... Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ... For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." (Acts 3:26; 20:21; 1 Thess. 1:9)*

With this in mind it is apparent by his subsequent suicide that Judas' repentance involved only the first but none of the second.

The same would be said about Esau:

*"For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." (Heb. 12:17)*

In fact it can be concluded both Esau and Judas experienced some kind of remorse, but no real repentance whatsoever!

- Jesus suffers His fourth unfair trial (before Pilate for the first time)  
(See Mt. 27:2, 11-14; Mk. 15:1b-5; Lk. 23:1-5; Jn. 18:28-38.)

1. Round one: Pilate and the Jews

*"Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die." (Jn. 18:28-32)*

The passage here in 18:28 records what is probably the most blatant example of raw hypocrisy in the entire Bible! The Pharisees, now involved in an all-out effort to murder their own Messiah, take great care lest they defile themselves by entering a Gentile room which might have contained leaven! These Jewish leaders had previously illustrated this twisted standard of morality:

*"For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day. And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other." (Mt. 12:8-13)*

2. Round two: Pilate and the Savior

*"Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all." (Jn. 18:33-38)*

Note Pilate's question to Jesus, *"What is truth?"*

This is undoubtedly the second most important and profound question in all the Bible -- indeed, in all of history.

- a. The first was asked by a frightened Philipian jailor, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* (Acts 16:30)
  - b. The second was asked by a frustrated Roman governor: *"What is truth?"* The tragedy here is that while the jailor awaited his answer and was saved (Acts 16:31), the governor impatiently walked out and was lost.
- Jesus suffers His fifth unfair trial (before Herod Antipas)

*"And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves."* (Lk. 23:5-12)

There is a tragic truth to be seen here in that the person and work of Jesus Christ serves to reconcile enemies through two totally different methods:

1. Unifying them in their love for Him

*"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."* (Eph. 1:10)

2. Unifying them in their hatred for Him

*"The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together."* (Acts 4:26-27)

- Jesus suffers His sixth unfair trial (before Pilate for the final time)

(See Mt. 27:15-26; Mk. 15:6-15; Lk. 23:13-25; Jn. 18:39-19:1, 4-16a.) It is very difficult to place all those events transpiring during the sixth trial in exact proper order. The following is a suggested chronological outline:

1. Pilate and the Jewish leaders (First encounter)

*"And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison). Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him ... And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required."* (Lk. 23:13-21, 24)

2. Pilate and his wife

There are two significant occasions in the scriptures when a non-Jewish wife offered counsel to her husband.

- a. Some bad advice which was tragically heeded -

*"Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made."* (Esther 5:12-14)

- b. Some good advice which was tragically not heeded -

*"When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." (Mt. 27:19)*

3. Pilate and Jesus (First encounter)

*"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him." (3 n. 19:1)*

This was obviously done in an attempt to appease and satisfy the demands of the blood thirsty leaders in hopes it would allow Jesus to be released.

4. Pilate and the Jewish leaders (Second encounter)

*"Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." (Jn. 19:4-7)*

John the Baptist had once introduced Jesus as, *"Behold the lamb"* (Jn. 1:29). Pilate now says, *"Behold the man"*. Perhaps the Apostle Paul would later have both statements in mind when he wrote:

*"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 2:5)*

5. Pilate and Jesus (Second encounter)

*"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." (Jn. 19:8-11)*

6. Pilate and the Jewish leaders (Third encounter)

*"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." (Mt. 27:24-25)*

*"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away." (Jn. 19:13-16)*

- The New Scofield Bible aptly summarizes these first six trials. "There were two legal systems that condemned Christ: the Jewish and the Roman, the very two which underlie modern jurisprudence. The arrest and proceedings under Annas, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin were under Jewish law; those under Pilate and Herod were under Roman law. The Jewish trial was illegal in several particulars:

1. The judge was not impartial and did not protect the accused. There is no evidence that the quorum of twenty-three judges was present; the judges took part in the arrest; and they were hostile (Mt. 26:62-63).
2. The arrest was unlawful because it was carried out under no formal accusation.
3. In criminal trials all sessions had to be started and carried on only during the day. Night sessions were illegal.
4. A verdict of guilty could not be rendered on the same day as the conclusion of the trial. It had to be given on the next day.
5. The search for hostile testimony was illegal (Mt. 26:59; Mk. 14:56; John 11:53).
6. No accused [person] could be convicted on his own evidence, yet the accusers sought replies and admissions from Christ to condemn him (Mt. 26:63-66; Jn. 18:9).
7. "No valid legal evidence was presented against him." (Oxford University Press, N.Y., 1967, p. 1042.)

- Jesus suffers His seventh unfair trial (before the Roman soldiers)
 

*"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon 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!"* (Mt. 27:27-29)

*"And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him."* (Mk. 15:19)

  1. According to John's Gospel, both the sixth and seventh trials of Jesus occurred *"in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha"* (Jn. 19:13b). In New Testament times there was a strong fortress situated on the north side of the temple area known as the Tower of Antonia. That area is now occupied by the Covenant of the Sisters of Zion. Recent excavations beneath this building have revealed a courtyard paved with flagstones called in the Greek *lithostrotos* ("paved"), and in the Aramaic *Gabbatha* ("raised"). This was the place of which John spoke.
  2. Here Pilate had Jesus scourged and condemned to be crucified. After a futile attempt to wash away his guilt, the governor turned Jesus over to the Roman soldiers. Carved in that flagstone pavement can be seen the letter B with a rough, prickly crown at the top and a sword at the bottom. The B represented the word *Basilicus*, which means "the Game of the King," a very popular game among the legion troops. It consisted chiefly in choosing a burlesque king, in loading him down with ludicrous honors, in giving him liberty to satisfy his vices, and then cruelly putting him to death. There is strong evidence in the Gospel accounts that Jesus was the victim of this game.
- Jesus is led to Calvary
  1. The man of Cyrene, lifting up the cross
 

*"And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross."* (Mk. 15:20-21)
  2. The maidens of Jerusalem, lamenting over the cross
 

*"And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us."* (Lk. 23:27-30)

# THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

## THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

Most Christians are aware of Isaiah chapter 53, where the prophet predicts the awful sufferings of Jesus some seven centuries before Bethlehem in graphic fashion, writing:

*"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken."* (Isa. 53:3-8)

In fact the prophet describes the Savior's terrible ordeal in even more brutal fashion at the end of chapter 52:

*"Many were amazed when they saw him -- beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know he was a person"* (52:14, taken from the New Living translation).

The following somewhat extended material concerning the overall agony, scourging, and crucifixion of Christ is taken from two magazine articles: *New Wine*, December 1972, Dr. C. Truman Davis; and *JAMA* (Journal of the American Medical Association), March 21, 1988, Dr. William D. Edwards:

- The physical passion of Christ began in Gethsemane. Of the many aspects of this initial suffering, I shall discuss only the one of psychological interest: the bloody sweat. It is interesting that the physician of the group, St. Luke, is the only one to mention this. He says, *"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."* (Lk. 22:44) Though very rare, the phenomenon of hematidrosis, bloody sweat, is well documented. Under great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat. This process alone could have marked weakness and possible shock. *"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him."* (Jn. 19:1)
- Flogging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution, and only women and Roman senators or soldiers (except in cases of desertion) were exempt. The usual instrument was a short whip (flagrum or flagellus) with several single or braided leather thongs of variable lengths, in which small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied at intervals. Occasionally, staves were also used.

For scourging, the man was stripped of his clothing and his hands were tied to an upright post. The back, buttocks and legs were flogged either by two soldiers (lictors) or by one who alternated positions. The severity of the scourging depended on the disposition of the lictors and was intended to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse or death.

After the scourging, the soldiers often taunted their victim. As the Roman soldiers repeatedly struck the victim's back with full force, the iron balls would cause deep contusions, and the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and subcutaneous tissues.

As the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh. Pain and blood loss generally set the stage for circulatory shock. The extent of blood loss may well have determined how long the victim would survive on the cross.

At the Praetorium, Jesus was severely whipped. (Although the severity of the scourging is not

discussed in the four gospel accounts, it is implied in one of the epistles [1 Pet. 2:24]. A detailed word study of the ancient Greek text for this verse indicates that the scourging of Jesus was particularly harsh.)

It is not known whether the number of lashes was limited to 39, in accordance with Jewish law. When it was determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner was near death, the beating was finally stopped. The half-fainting Jesus was then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood.

- The Roman soldiers saw a great joke in this provincial Jew claiming to be a king. They threw a robe across His shoulders and placed a stick in His hand for a scepter. They still needed a crown to make their travesty complete. A small bundle of flexible branches covered with long thorns (commonly used for firewood) was plaited into the shape of a crown and was pressed into His scalp. Again, there was 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 took the stick from His hand and struck Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp.

Finally, they tired of their sadistic sport and the robe was torn from His back. This had already become adherent to the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, and its removal, just as in the careless removal of a surgical bandage, caused excruciating pain ... almost as though He were again being whipped -- and the wounds again began to bleed. In deference to Jewish custom, the Romans returned His garments.

- The heavy horizontal beam of the cross was tied across His shoulders, and the procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves and the execution party walked 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, was too much. He stumbled and fell. The rough wood of the beam gouged into the lacerated skin and muscles of His shoulders. He tried to rise, but His muscles had been pushed beyond their endurance.

The centurion, anxious to get on with the crucifixion, selected a Stalwart North African onlooker, Simon of Cyrene, to carry the cross. Jesus followed, still bleeding and sweating the cold clammy sweat of shock. The 650-yard journey from the fortress

Antonia to Golgotha was finally completed. Jesus was once again stripped of His clothes -- except for a loincloth which was allowed.

- Jesus was offered wine mixed with myrrh, a mild analgesic mixture. He refused to drink. Simon was ordered to place the cross beam on the ground, and Jesus was quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire felt for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drove a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through His wrist and deep into the wood.

Quickly, He moved to the other side and repeated the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The beam was then lifted in place at the top of the vertical beam with the title reading, "*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*", and nailed in place. "*And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.*" (Lk. 23:33)

- Although the Romans did not invent crucifixion, they perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment that was designed to produce a slow death, with maximum pain and suffering. It was one of the most disgraceful and cruel methods of execution and usually was reserved for slaves, foreigners, revolutionaries, and the vilest of criminals. Roman law usually protected Roman citizens from crucifixion.

It was customary for the condemned man to carry his own cross from the logging post to the site of crucifixion outside the city walls. He was usually naked, unless this was prohibited by local customs. Since the weight of the entire cross was probably well over 300 lbs., only the cross bar was carried. The patibulum, weighing 75 to 125 pounds was placed across the nape of the victim's neck and balanced along both shoulders. Usually, the outstretched arms then were tied to the crossbar.

- The processional to the site of the crucifixion was led by a complete Roman military guard, headed by a centurion. One of the soldiers carried a sign (titulus) on which the condemned man's name and crime were displayed. Later, the titulus would be attached to the top of the cross. The Roman guard would not leave the victim until they were sure of his death. Outside the city walls was permanently located the heavy upright wooden stipes, on which the patibulum would be

secured.

- To prolong the crucifixion process, a horizontal wooden block or plank, serving as a crude seat (sedile or sedulum), often was attached midway down the stipes. At the site of execution, by law, the victim was given a bitter drink of wine mixed with myrrh (gall) as a mild analgesic.

The criminal was then thrown to the ground on his back, with his arms outstretched along the patibulum. The hands could be nailed or tied to the crossbar, but nailing apparently was preferred by the Romans.

- Furthermore, ossuary finds, and the Shroud of Turin have documented that the nails commonly were driven through the wrists rather than the palms. Although scriptural references are made to nails in the hands, these are not at odds with the archaeological evidence of wrist wounds, since the ancients customarily considered the wrist to be a part of the hand.
- After both arms were fixed to the crossbar, the patibulum and the victim, together, were lifted onto the stipes. Next, the feet were fixed to the cross, either by nails or ropes. Ossuary findings and the Shroud of Turin suggest that nailing was the preferred Roman practice. Although the feet could be fixed to the sides of the stipes or to a wooden footrest (supped-aneum), they were nailed directly to the front of the stipes. To accomplish this, flexion of the knees may have been quite prominent, and the bent legs may have been rotated laterally.
- When the nailing was completed, the titulus was attached to the cross, by nails or cords, just above the victim's head.

Jesus Christ was now crucified. As He slowly sagged down with more weight on the nails in the wrist, excruciating, fiery pain shot along His fingers and arms to explode in His brain. The nails in His wrists were putting pressure on the median nerves. As He pushed Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He placed His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again, there was the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of His feet. At this point, another phenomenon occurred. As His arms fatigued, great waves of cramps swept over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless throbbing pain. With these cramps came the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles were paralyzed and the intercostal muscles were unable to act. Air could be drawn into the lungs, but He could not exhale.

Jesus fought to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide built up in the lungs and in the bloodstream, and the cramps partially subsided. Spasmodically, He was 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 which were recorded in the Bible.

- He suffered hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue was torn from His lacerated back as He moved up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony began. A deep, crushing pain deep in the chest as His pericardium slowly filled with serum, and began to compress His heart.
- It was now almost over -- the loss of tissue fluids had reached a critical level -- the compressed heart was struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues -- the tortured lungs were making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues sent their flood of stimuli to His brain.

His mission of atonement had been completed. Finally, He could allow His body to die. With one last surge of strength, He once again pressed His torn feet against the nail, straightened His legs, took a deeper breath, and uttered His seventh and last cry, "*Father, into thy hands I commit My Spirit.*"

Having now reviewed the terrible suffering ordeal of Jesus we turn our attention to those 16 events associated with the cross and the seven statements spoken from the cross.

#### THE 16 EVENTS

- Jesus is placed on the cross at 9:00 a.m. (Mk. 15:25) between two thieves (Mt. 27:38; Lk. 23:32; Jn. 19:18).
- A sign is positioned above the cross which read, "*This is Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*" (Mt. 27:37; Mk. 15:26; Lk. 23:38; Jn. 19:19). It is ironic to note the following:
  1. At Jesus' birth some wise man asked, "*Where is he that is born King of the Jews?*" (Mt. 2:2)
  2. At Jesus' death, some wicked men announced, "*This is ... the King of the Jews.*"

- The Jewish leaders complain about the sign to Pilate but he refuses to change it. (Jn. 19:20-22)
- Jesus is ridiculed by many
  1. The sarcastic (who they were)
    - a. The people (Lk. 23:35)
    - b. The chief priests and scribes (Mt. 27:41)
    - c. The soldiers (Lk. 23:36)
    - d. The thieves (Mt. 27:44)
  2. The sarcasm (what they said)
    - a. *"And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross."* (Mk. 15:29-30)
 

To wag or shake one's head was a familiar gesture of derision. God had once warned through Jeremiah that he would cause the pagan Babylonians and other heathen nations to look upon the city of Jerusalem because of the sin of its people. *"To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head"* (Jer. 18:16). The weeping prophet would later with broken heart testify to the terrible accuracy of this prediction. *"All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?"* (Lam. 2:15) David had predicted this Calvary head-wagging on two occasions (see Psa. 22:7; 109:25).
    - b. *"Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him."* (Mk. 15:31-32)
 

This crude and cruel statement, *"He saved others; himself he cannot save,"* although uttered with ridicule and hatred, nevertheless voiced a precious and profound truth. Our Lord had already wrestled with this in Gethsemane. The divine decision was made. He could not and would not escape the cup. He must and would indeed die to save others.
    - c. *"He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God."* (Mk. 27:43)
    - d. *"And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself."* (Lk. 23:36-37)
    - e. *"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us."* (Lk. 23:39)
- The soldiers divide Jesus' clothes into four shares and cast lots for His seamless garment (Jn. 19:23-24).
 

This garment, doubtless stained with sweat and blood will someday be replaced by a glorious one! *"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."* (Rev. 1:13)
- Jesus is offered wine mixed with myrrh but refuses it (Mt. 27:34; Mk. 15:23). Here is the first of four cups offered to Christ at Calvary.
  1. This was the cup of charity. At the site of execution, by law, the victim was given a bitter drink of wine mixed with myrrh (gall) as a mild narcotic or opiate.
  2. The second was the cup of mockery. *"And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinega."* (Lk. 23:36)
  3. The third was the cup of sympathy. *"Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth"* (Jn. 19:29). Jesus had refused the first cup at the beginning of his suffering, but now accepted this one at the end of his agony.
  4. The fourth was the cup of iniquity. Our Lord himself had spoken of this while in the Garden of Gethsemane. *"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"* (Jn. 18:11)
 

A verse found in one of the Psalms sung by Christ and his disciples in the Upper Room (Mt. 26:30) in reality summarized all four cups: *"I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."* (Psa. 116:13)
- At noon a strange darkness settled over the area, lasting until His death at 3:00 p.m. (Mt. 27:45;

Mk. 15:33; Lk. 23:44). Isaac Watts' great hymn, *At The Cross*, speaks of this:

*"Well might the sun in darkness hide and shut his glories in, When Christ, the mighty Maker died for man, the creature's sin."*

Thus, the created sun refused to shine upon the crucifixion of the Creator Son!

- Just prior to His death Jesus receives some wine vinegar (Mt. 27:48; Mk. 15:36; Jn. 19:29).
- At the moment of Jesus' death the centurion (officiating Roman soldier) gives dramatic testimony regarding the person of the Savior.
  1. The Roman centurion at Calvary affirmed both the royalty and righteousness of Jesus.
    - a. His testimony as recorded by Matthew: "Truly, this was the Son of God."
    - b. His testimony as recorded by Luke: "Certainly, this was a righteous man." (Lk. 23:47)
  2. He thus became the final of five individuals who attested to the sinlessness of Jesus during those horrible hours before and at the time of the crucifixion. The first four were:
    - a. Pilate (Jn. 19:4)
    - b. Pilate's wife (Mt. 27:19)
    - c. Judas (Mt. 27:4)
    - d. The dying thief (Lk. 23:41)
- After His death the following supernatural phenomenon occurs:
  1. The temple veil is torn from top to bottom (Mt. 27:51a; Mk. 15:38; Lk. 23:45).

This veil divided the holy place from the holy of holies, into which only the High Priest might enter on the Day of Atonement (see Ex. 26:31). Thus, the tearing of that veil, which was a type of Christ's human body introduced something new and thrilling, as explained by the author of Hebrews:

*"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an 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."* (Heb. 10:19-22)
  2. The earth shook and the rocks split (Mt. 27:51b).
  3. Some well-known individuals were raised from the dead.

*"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."* (Mt. 27: 52-53)

There are two theories concerning the exact nature of this resurrection.

    - a. These "saints" (probably well-known citizens of Jerusalem) were raised from the dead, as was Lazarus (though he eventually died again).
    - b. These saints actually received glorified bodies, never again to die.

Question: Why all these miraculous events at this particular time?

Answer: It would appear through all this, including the 3-hour darkness that God the Father was attempting to capture the attention of sinful Israel. If so, His message would be:

"Look, Listen, Hear! Something great and glorious has just happened! Israel's promised Messiah, the Savior of Gentiles, and my beloved Son has just paid the full price for the sins of all men everywhere!"
- The confused and somewhat fearful crowd disperses.

*"And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things."* (Lk. 23:48-49)
- At the request of the Jewish leaders, Pilate sends soldiers to Golgotha with orders to kill the three men and remove their bodies (Jn. 19:31).
- The soldiers execute the two thieves by breaking their legs but discover Jesus already dead. Making sure of this, they pierce His side with a spear (Jn. 19:32-37).

*"For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."* (Jn. 19:36-37)
- Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus request and receive from Pilate the lifeless body of Jesus (Mt. 27:57-58; Mk. 15:42-45; Lk. 23:50-52; Jn. 19:38-39a).
- Both men quickly prepare His body for burial and placed it in Joseph's new tomb (Mt. 27:59-60;

Mk. 15:46-47; Lk. 23:53-54; Jn. 19:39b-56).

- Mary, Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and some other women sit near His tomb, viewing it in silent sorrow (Mt. 27:61; Mk. 15:47; Lk. 23:55-56).

These then are the 16 events. We now consider:

### THE SEVEN STATEMENTS

- **ONE:** *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."* (Lk. 23:34)

1. We note He did not pray, "forgive me," but *"forgive them."*

Our Lord would thus suffer not as a martyr (one who dies for his faith) but rather as a Savior (one who redeems sinners)!

2. This prayer has bothered some, as it seems to be a blanket pardon for all involved in Jesus' crucifixion. Of course, we know this is not the case. Forgiveness can come only through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). It has been pointed out by some that the word "forgive" here can also mean "to allow," and is actually translated thereby on at least thirteen other occasions in the New Testament. If this should be the case here, Christ then would pray, "Father, allow them to crucify me." Thus the prayer would be a plea to stay the wrath of a righteous Father as he viewed his beloved Son being murdered by sinful and wicked men (see Mt. 3:15; 19:14; Mk. 1:34). However, most Bible students would accept the word "forgive" at face value and interpret his prayer as a request for God not to add this horrible crime of regicide (the killing of one's own king) to the personal accounts of those individuals who killed him. Peter and Paul would amplify this point in later sermons (Acts 3:14-15, 17); *"But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses ..And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."*

See also 1 Cor. 2:8: *"Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."*

The sinlessness of our Savior is again proven here, for he did not pray, "Father, forgive me." He needed no forgiveness, for he knew no sin. In summary, the first cross utterance did not mean that men are excusable, but rather forgivable. (Contrast Rom. 2:1 with 1 Tim. 1:13.)

3. His prayer here would later serve as an example for Stephen in the hour of His death:

*"Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young mans feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."* (Acts 7:57-60)

4. The Greek here employs the imperfect verb indicating continuous action in past time. Thus the statement should read, "Father," Jesus kept on saying, "Forgive them..."

Russell Bradley Jones asks:

"Can you reconstruct the picture?"

*"Arriving at the place of the skull, Jesus looked about and prayed, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' As the centurion crushed Him to the ground and tied His arms to the crossbeam, He prayed, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' When the blunt spikes tore through each quivering palm, He prayed, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' When the soldiers parted His garments and gambled for the seamless robe, He prayed, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' How many times that prayer pierced Heaven's blue that day no one knows. It was not an ejaculatory petition shot into Heaven in a moment of mercy. Rather the Surety was storming the Throne of Grace with a barrage of burning appeal. Jesus kept saying, 'Father, forgive them...'"* (Gold from Golgotha. Moody Press, 1945, pages. 17, 18)

5. Jones continues:

"If the prayer had not been uttered, the clear inference is that immediate doom would have destroyed those who nailed Him to the cross. Like a flash of lightning, the thunderbolts of God's wrath would have cleared the earth of those perpetrators of sin. Then and there Satan

and his hosts would have been 'cast into the lake of fire' to suffer forever. The winds of God's wrath would have scorched the earth with the fires of justice. No man would have had a chance at salvation, because no man deserved a chance.

But, thank God, Jesus prayed, 'Hold the winds of wrath back until the elect are sealed. There are some among these at the cross who will turn when the significance of their crime dawns upon them. Father, postpone the day of judgment. Give them a chance.' And because of that prayer, the gospel has been proclaimed and many an unworthy sinner has been saved." (ibid, pages 24,25)

6. It can be seen through this first statement that Jesus was, among other things, simply putting in practice that which He had once preached:

*"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Mt. 5:43-44)*

7. One final question: Did the Father answer this request? An answer may be seen by the testimony of the officiating Roman military commander at the cross some six hours later:  
*"And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome." (Mk. 15:39-40)*

• **TWO:** *"Verily, I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Lk. 23:43)*

1. At first, both thieves were reviling Jesus, along with the crowd. (Mt. 27:44; Mk. 15:32)  
Note especially the language of the unrepentant thief:  
*"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." (Lk. 23:39)*
2. Particularly significant are the words, *"Come down from the cross."* Thus,
  - a. Satan had once worked through an apostle attempting to prevent Jesus from going to the cross:  
*"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Mt. 16:21-23)*
  - b. He now, working through this thing, attempts to prevent Jesus from dying on the cross!
3. The second statement emphasizes several facts concerning the subject of salvation:
  - a. That salvation is offered to anyone, anywhere. Are deathbed conversions valid? They are indeed, for there is one noted here. But we quickly note:
    - (1) There is one deathbed conversion in the Bible, so no dying man will despair.
    - (2) There is only one, so no living man will presume. D. L. Moody once said: "Did ever the new birth take place in so strange a cradle?" Observe the contrast here:
      - (a) In the morning the thief we nailed to a cross. In the evening he was a friend of God.
      - (b) In the morning he was an enemy of Caesar. In the evening he was a friend of God.
      - (c) In the morning he was spurned by men. In the evening he was fellowshiping with angels.
      - (d) In the morning he died as a criminal on earth. In the evening he lived as a citizen of heaven.
  - b. That salvation is by grace through faith alone. This conversion refutes:
    - (1) The doctrine of sacramentalism. He was saved apart from confirmation, sprinkling, Holy Communion, and church membership.
    - (2) The doctrine of baptismal regeneration.
    - (3) The doctrine of purgatory.
    - (4) The doctrine of universalism. Only one thief was saved.
  - c. That salvation will be rejected by some in spite of everything God can do. The other thief died, eternally lost. Here we see three men:

- (1) One was dying for sin (the Savior)
- (2) One was dying from sin (the repentant thief).
- (3) One was dying in sin (the lost thief).

All classes of humanity were represented at the cross. There were the indifferent ("*the people stood beholding*," Lk. 23:35); the religious ("*the rulers derided him*," Lk 23:35); the materialistic ("*the soldiers parted his raiment and cast lots*," Lk. 23:34); and the earnest seeker ("*Lord, remember me*," Lk. 23:42). The Cross is indeed the judgment of this world (see John 12:31).

4. Why, it may be asked, was this thief saved? Russell B. Jones suggests:

"For one thing, the thief was willing to be saved, not necessarily from his cross, but from his sin. That must have appealed tremendously to Jesus. So many who come to Him are like the other thief; they want to avoid crosses, but they are not concerned about their sin. Some who come down the aisles of our churches professing to confess His name have gone no further than the first thief; they want to escape any and all discomfort and pain; they are not particularly interested in Him for His own sake. To the advantage of the other bandit, let it be said that he was interested in Kingdom issues and privileges. And whether or not he understood the nature of Christ's Kingdom, he wanted the good will of the King and was willing to yield his allegiance. That pleased Jesus.

Further, this thief was persistent. We have another imperfect verb in the Greek original, 'He kept saying, Jesus, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' His appeal was not an arrow shot at random. It was a storm. It kept pounding on the ear of the Savior: 'Jesus, remember me . . . Jesus, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom ... Jesus, . . . Jesus, remember me ... Jesus.' Above the din of the mocking and the reviling, these words kept pounding at the heart of the Savior." (ibid, pages 35, 36)

5. Finally, it may be concluded that during his time of agony the dying thief observed Jesus in a four-fold light.
  - a. He saw Jesus the submissive. The man in the middle did not lash out against the hostility coming from the foot of the cross or the criticism coming from either side.
  - b. He saw Jesus the sinless. "*And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.*" (Lk. 23:39-41)
  - c. He saw Jesus the Savior. "*And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me*". (Lk. 23:42a)
  - d. He saw Jesus the Sovereign. "*When thou comest into thy kingdom*". (Lk. 23:42b)
6. But suppose the penitent thief had doubted or delayed? A minister was once faithfully warning the people of the danger of procrastination when a man shouted out from the audience, "What about the thief on the cross?" Quickly the preacher asked, "Which thief?" It is dangerous to delay.

*One saved -- the Lord makes room  
For contrite souls above;  
One lost -- let none presume  
On His exceeding love.  
-- Edith E. Trusted*

• **THREE:** "*Woman, behold thy son! ... Behold thy mother!*" (Jn. 19:26-27)

1. Regarding Mary:

As this heart-broken mother stood weeping at the cross, the strange words by an old prophet spoken some 33 years ago may well have suddenly flashed through her mind:

*"And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his*

*arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."* (Lk. 2:25-35)

Russell Jones' comments are helpful here:

"It is always hard for a mother to see her son die. She naturally expects him to lay her head in the grave. Especially is this the case with the firstborn, the son of her strength. Jesus was only thirty-three, and Mary must have reached the age when a mother most of all leans for support on a strong and loving son.

Far worse, however, was the death He was dying -- the death of a criminal. Many mothers have had to suffer from the kind of death their children have died, when it has been in great agony or in otherwise distressing circumstances. But what mother's sufferings were ever equal to Mary's? There He hung before her eyes; but she was helpless. His wounds bled, but she dared not stanch them; His mouth was parched, but she could not moisten it. These outstretched arms used to clasp her neck; she used to fondle these pierced hands and feet. Ah! The nails pierced her as well as Him; the thorns round His brow were a circle of flame about her heart; the taunts flung at Him wounded her likewise.

But there was worse still -- the sword cut deeper. Had not the angel told her before His birth, 'He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end'? This greatness, this throne, this crown, this kingdom -- where were they? Once she had believed that she really was what the angel had called her -- the most blessed of women -- when she saw Him lying in her lap in His beautiful infancy, when the shepherds and Magi came to adore Him, and when Simeon and Anna recognized Him as the Messiah. After that ensued the long period of His obscurity in Nazareth. He was only the village carpenter; but she did not weary, for He was with her in their home; and she was confident that the greatness, the throne, the crown, the kingdom would all come in good time. At last His hour struck; and, casting down His tools and bidding her farewell, He went forth out of the little valley into the great world. It is all coming now, she said. Soon the news arrived of the words of grace and power He was speaking, of the multitudes following Him, of the nation being roused, and of the blind, the lame, the diseased, the bereaved who blessed Him for giving joy back to their lives, and blessed her who had borne Him. It is all coming to pass, she said. But then followed other news -- of reaction, of opposition, of persecution. Her heart sank within her. She could not stay where she was. She left Nazareth and went away trembling to see what had happened. And now she stands at the foot of His cross. He is dying; and the greatness, the glory, and the kingdom have never come.

What could it mean? Had the angel been a deceiver, and God's Word a lie, and all the wonders of His childhood a dream? We know the explanation now: Jesus was about to climb a far loftier throne than Mary had ever imagined, and the cross was the only road to it. Before many weeks were over Mary was to understand this too; but meantime it must have been dark as Egypt to her, and her heart must have been sorrowful even unto death. The sword had pierced very deep." (ibid, pages 128, 129)

*"Beside the cross in tears  
The woeful mother stood,  
Bent 'neath the weight of years,  
And viewed His flowing blood;  
Her mind with grief was torn,  
Her strength was ebbing fast,  
And through her heart forlorn  
The sword of anguish passed. "*

2. Regarding John:

"And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (Jn. 19:27b). The following assumptions may be made from this statement –

- a. That Joseph had previously died. This is strongly indicated by two passages:

*"While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee."* (Mt. 12:46-47)

*"And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"* (Mt. 13:54-56)

- b. That Mary was living in Jerusalem

- c. That, for some reason, her unbelieving sons and daughters living in Nazareth were either unable or unwilling to care for her (see Jn. 7:1-5).

• **FOUR:** *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* (Mt. 27:46)

This prayer is deeper in its mystery and higher in its meaning than any other single prayer in the Bible. God forsaken by God! Who can understand that? The wisest and most profound believer feels utterly inadequate as he approaches it. It can never be mastered by the mortal mind, even though that mind has experienced new birth. Eternity alone will exegete this.

Elizabeth Clephane has so well phrased it:

*"But none of the ransomed ever knew,  
How deep were the waters crossed;  
Nor how dark was the night,  
That the Lord passed through,  
Ere he found his sheep that was lost. "*

Three words in this question deserve careful consideration:

1. "Why"?

- a. There are so many unexplained "whys" raised here.

(1) Why did the Father turn His back upon the Son?

(2) Why did not even the Son know the reason?

(3) Why did innocent blood have to be shed for forgiveness of sin?

- b. The first and third of these questions are partially answered in Heb. 9:22; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; and Isa. 53. But what of the second question? Did not Christ know? According to Phil. 2:5-8, Christ voluntarily abstained from employing some of His divine attributes while upon this earth. Thus:

(1) He abstained from using His omnipresence for a period (Jn. 11:15).

(2) He abstained from using His omnipotence for a period (Jn. 5:19).

(3) He abstained from using His omniscience for a period (Lk. 8:45; Mk. 13:32). (See also Lk. 2:40.)

- c. Why then did the Father forsake His son? The answer is two-fold:

(1) Jesus became our sin bearer!

*"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."* (Isa. 53:6)

*"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."* (1 Peter 2:24)

(2) God cannot look upon sin without judging it!

*"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."* (Rom. 1:18)

2. "Forsaken"?

Jesus had previously been forsaken by His friends (Mk. 14:50-52). He will now be forsaken by His Father. Forsaken is the saddest word in any language. In the Greek, it is made up of three words: to leave meaning to abandon; down, suggesting defeat and helplessness; and in, referring to place or circumstance. "The total meaning of the word is that of forsaking someone in a state of defeat or helplessness in the midst of hostile circumstances" (*Bypaths in the Greek New Testament*, by Kenneth S. Wuest, p. 87).

3. "Me"?

Why Jesus? Why could not the sin bearer be a mighty angel or a godly human? Paul quickly answers this -

*"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* (1 Tim. 2:5)

• **FIVE:** *"I thirst"* (Jn. 19:28)

Thus, He who began His ministry by suffering intense hunger (Mt. 4:2), will now end it by experiencing terrible thirst. And yet, the amazing truth remains:

1. The hungry one was and is the eternal Bread of life.
2. The thirsty one was and is the eternal Water of life.

• **SIX:** *"It is finished"* (Jn. 19:30)

1. The sixth statement of Jesus is actually one word in the original Greek. It is *tetelestai*, meaning: "It was finished, and as a result it is forever done." This phrase was a farmer's word. When into his herd there was born an animal so beautiful and shapely that it seemed absolutely destitute of faults and defects, the farmer gazed upon the creature with proud, delighted eyes. *"Tetelestai!"* he said.

It was also an artist's word. When the painter or the sculptor had put the last finishing touches to the vivid landscape or the marble bust, he would stand back a few feet to admire his masterpiece, and, seeing in it nothing that called for correction or improvement, would murmur fondly, *"Tetelestai! Tetelestai!"*

2. Our Lord cries out, *"It is finished!"* There are three important places where Scripture employs this word "finish."

It is used in Gen. 2:1, referring to the creation of God's works. It is used here in Jn. 19:30, referring to the salvation of His works (see also Jn. 4:34; 5:36; 17:4). It is used in Rev. 10:7 and 16:17, referring to the completion of His works.

3. With gladness we note that He did not say, *"I am finished,"* for He was just beginning. *"Lifted up was he to die, 'It is finished,' was his cry; Now in heaven exalted high; Hallelujah! What a Savior!"*

As the poet has written:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to thy cross I cling."

• **SEVEN:** *"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"* (Lk. 23:46)

1. This marks the final of many occasions where Jesus prays to His Father. He did this:

- a. Upon hearing the report of the returning 70

*"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."* (Lk. 10:21)

- b. Prior to raising Lazarus

*"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."* (Jn. 11:41-42)

- c. After some Greeks sought a meeting with Him

*"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this*

*cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*" (Jn. 12:27-28)

d. During His great High Priestly Prayer (Jn. 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25)

e. In Gethsemane

*"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."* (Mt. 26:39)

f. Immediately after being placed on the cross (Lk. 23:34)

2. It can be seen that not only was His birth and resurrection supernatural events (see Lk. 1:34-35; Rom. 1:4; Eph. 1:19-21), but also that of His death. In other words, Jesus died by the sheer act of His will -- He dismissed His spirit!
3. He thus (it has been observed) gave up His life because He willed it, when and where He willed it, and as He willed it.
4. All four Gospel accounts record the death of Christ. But one wonders how such a thing could happen? Was not Christ God incarnate? Indeed he was! How, then, could God have actually died on the cross? To explain this, we must return briefly to the book of Genesis. Here we are told of Adam's creation and of his tragic sin. God had warned him that disobedience would result in death, and so it did. In fact, it brought down upon the head of mankind two kinds of death: physical and spiritual.

Both kinds of death here can be defined by one word: *separation*. That is the biblical and theological meaning of the word *death*. Physical death is *separation, the parting of the soul from the body*. Spiritual death is likewise *separation, the parting of the unsaved person from God*. This is sometimes called the second death (see Rev. 20:6, 14; 21:8).

So then, these two hellish enemies, physical and spiritual death, let loose by Adam, continued to curse and terrorize the human race for over forty centuries. Then, in the fullness of time, God sent his beloved Son to our world. The Father referred to his Son as the last Adam (among other names) in 1 Cor. 15:45. Why this title? Because He had come to undo what the first Adam had previously done; that is, He came to rid mankind of those two evil enemies, physical and spiritual death. This He did, while on the cross, where He died spiritually, being separated from God; and He died physically as He accomplished both tasks.

Spiritual death was immediately given the death blow. Paul later assures us that nothing can now separate the believer from the love of God (Rom. 8:35-39). But what about physical death? Paul answers this question in 1 Cor. 15:51-55:

*"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"*

- Grand conclusion regarding the seven last statements:

*"Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself."* (Heb. 7:27)

Author Ray Stedman writes: "As a priest, Jesus Christ could find no unblemished sacrifice that He could offer except Himself, so He offered Himself as a sacrifice; there was found no other priest worthy of offering such a sacrifice, so Christ became both Priest and Victim" (*What More Can God Say?* p. 115).

This dual arrangement can be seen by listening to his seven final sentences while on the cross. The first three demonstrate his priestly ministry while the final four speak of his sacrificial role.

1. His priestly ministry:

- a. *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Lk. 23:34).
- b. *"fierily, I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise"* (Lk. 23:43).
- c. *"Woman, behold thy son!...Behold thy mother."* (Jn. 19:26-27)

2. His sacrificial ministry:

- a. *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* (Mt. 27:46)
- b. *"I thirst"* (Jn. 19:28).
- c. *"It is finished"* (Jn. 19:30).

d. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. 23:46).

#### SATURDAY

*"Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead, so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." (Mt. 27:62-66)*

How tragic to realize that the only group to remember the oft-repeated prophecies of Jesus concerning his resurrection consisted of his enemies and not his friends. They simply forgot (see Lk. 24:5-8; Jn. 20:9).

# THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF JESUS

## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

*"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how 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." (1 Cor. 15:3-4)*

Foster writes: "A French philosopher decided to create a new religion for France following the wild excesses of the French Revolution which severed most of the nation from Christianity. He approached the great French statesman Tallyrand for advice on how to proceed. Tallyrand replied sarcastically that it should be a very simple task for the philosopher to create a substitute for Christianity: all he needed to do would be to have himself crucified and then raised from the dead!" (*Studies in the Life of Christ*, R. C. Foster, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1979)

We will overview this all important historical fact and theological truth in four-fold fashion:

### **PART ONE: The CLASSIFICATION of the Resurrection (the Second Work)**

To explain, consider the following: Every work that God has ever done, is doing now, or ever will do, can be correctly arranged (classified) under one of two main categories, namely, His work in creation and His work in redemption! Furthermore, God has chosen two special days of the week to serve as a reminder concerning these all-important accomplishments.

- SATURDAY, celebrating His first great work, that of creation (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11).
- SUNDAY, celebrating His second great work, that of redemption. This is why the resurrection occurred on Sunday, and why the early Christians observed the first day of the week as their official day of worship (Mt. 28:1; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

### **PART TWO: The PROCLAMATION of the Resurrection (the Empty Tomb)**

- The trips to the tomb
  1. By the woman

*"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." (Mt. 28:1) "And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him." (Mk. 16:1)*
  2. By the disciples

*"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the LORD out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home". (Jn. 20:1-10)*
  - a. Note the arrangement of the neatly folded grave clothes suggesting Jesus' resurrection was an orderly event, carefully planned, and unhurried to say the least.
  - b. We are told that John "saw and believed." Just what though did he believe? Was it that

Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, or simply that something mysterious and supernatural had occurred? The immediate events following this would suggest the latter, for John seemed to be as shocked as the other disciples when the Savior later appeared to them in the Upper Room (Lk. 24:36-43).

- The terror at the tomb  
*"And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men... Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governors ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."* (Mt. 28:4, 11-15)
  1. The splendor and glory of angels is almost inconceivable. Note two other references to their brightness: *"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire."* (Rev. 10:1) *"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory."* (Rev. 18:1)
  2. There are at least two glaring flaws in this "official explanation concerning the empty tomb."
    - a. In the first place the soldiers were to say they had fallen asleep. But if so, how could they have known that *"his disciples came... and stole him away"*?
    - b. In the second place, if it were true, why were they not put to death for sleeping on duty? (See Acts 12:19.)
- The transaction in the tomb  
*"And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."* (Mk. 16:2-7)
- The testimony from the tomb  
*"And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word."* (Mt. 28:8)
- The talk about the tomb  
*"It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."* (Lk. 24:10-12)

### **PART THREE: The VALIDATIONS of the Resurrection (the Risen Lord)**

Following His resurrection, Jesus would appear on ten separate occasions. Five of these appearances transpired on the first Easter Sunday, and the final five during the remaining 39 days before His ascension. (Acts 1:3)

#### **FIRST RESURRECTION APPEARANCE**

Before Mary Magdalene:

*"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not."* (Mk. 16:9-11)

*"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my LORD, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my father but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the LORD, and that he had spoken these things unto her." (Jn. 20:11-18)*

- This was undoubtedly one of the two most dramatic "recognition meetings" in all the Bible. The first involved Joseph revealing himself to his brothers in Egypt (see Gen. 45:1-3). It was a Samaritan woman to whom Christ first revealed his messiahship (see Jn. 4:25-26). It is now to another woman, Mary Magdalene, that Christ first appears in his resurrection body. Both were formerly women of questionable moral background (see Mk. 16:9).
- Why did Mary fail to recognize Jesus? Probably for several reasons:
  1. Her eyes were blinded with tears.
  2. The early morning light was still too dim.
  3. She was not expecting to see him.

## SECOND RESURRECTION APPEARANCE

Before some women:

- Their encounter with the angels of God

*"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words." (Lk. 24:1-8)*

*"But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." (Mk. 16:7)*

- Their encounter with the Son of God

*"And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." (Mt. 28:9-10)*

  1. Note His phrase, "Go to my brethren." There is a progressive intimacy between Jesus and his disciples. He calls them servants (Jn. 13:13), friends (Jn. 15:15), and here, brethren. Note also the phrase, "I ascend unto my Father." Some hold that Christ ascended that very first Easter Sunday to sprinkle His blood as the ultimate sacrifice within the heavenly sanctuary.
  2. In fact, this occasion marks the third time women have been instructed to relate the glorious news of the resurrection to men (Jn. 20:17; Mk. 16:7; Mt. 28:10)! One reason for this is the fact that only one disciple (John) was present at the crucifixion, but many faithful women were there from start to finish!

### THIRD RESURRECTION APPEARANCE

Before Simon Peter:

*"Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."* (Lk. 24:34)

*"And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve."* (1 Cor. 15:5)

- What a meeting this must have been. The last time these two saw each other, the one was bitterly cursing and denying the other.

### FOURTH RESURRECTION APPEARANCE

Before two disciples en route to Emmaus:

*"After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them."* (Mk. 16:12-13)

*"And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which 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 have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."* (Lk. 24:13-35)

There are at least four phrases that are worthy of our attention in this passage:

- *"Today is the third day"* (Lk. 24:21)  
The phrase "today is the third day since these things were done" may have been a reference to the Jewish belief that after the third day the soul left the body for good. In other words, the situation was now hopeless.
- *"Beginning at Moses"* (Lk. 24:27)  
During the 8 mile walk between Jerusalem and Emmaus, our Lord, in essence, provides for these two saddened believers the ultimate "walk thru" summary of the Hebrews Old Testament scriptures!  
He no doubt spoke of the following Old Testament events, objects, feasts, etc.

1. The protoevangelium verse (Gen. 3:15), or "first gospel" verse, which promises the eventual victory of the Messiah over Satan (see also Gal. 4:4; Rom. 16:20; Isa. 53:5).
  2. His virgin birth in Bethlehem (Isa. 7:14; Micah 5:2).
  3. His work as a prophet and priest (Deut. 18:15; Gen. 14:18-20).
  4. His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Zech. 9:9).
  5. His rejection by Israel (Isa. 53:3).
  6. His betrayal for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12-13).
  7. His work as the Passover Lamb and smitten Rock (Ex. 12:12-13, 17:6-7).
  8. His suffering and death (Psa. 22).
  9. His resurrection (Psa. 16:10).
- "The day is far spent" (Lk. 24:29)  
The two disciples reminded their unrecognized friend that "The day is far spent". Spiritually speaking, however, it was just the opposite. The terrible night of Calvary was far spent. The glorious morning of the resurrection was now at hand. *"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."* (Rom. 13:12)
  - "Did not our heartburn within us...?" (Lk. 24:32)  
The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah could certainly have identified with this statement: *"Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak anymore in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."* (Jer. 20:9)

#### FIFTH RESURRECTION APPEARANCE

Before the ten apostles in the Upper Room:

*"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, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."* (Jn. 20:19)

*"And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them."* (Lk. 24:36-43)

*"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."* (Jn. 20:21-23)

- What kind of body did Jesus have after his resurrection? This is of great importance to the Christian, for he or she will someday have a similar body, as testified by both Paul and John (see Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:1-3).
  1. His new body had flesh and bone (Lk. 24:39-40).
  2. He ate food in the new body (Lk. 24:41-43; Jn. 21:12-13; Acts 10:41).
  3. His new body still bore the marks of his crucifixion (Jn. 20:25-27; Lk. 24:40; Rev. 5:6).
  4. His new body was not subjected to material laws (Jn. 20:19; Lk. 24:31, 36).
- The disciples thought they had seen a ghost (Lk. 24:37)! They had previously made the same mistake during a life-threatening storm:
 

*"And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."* (Mt. 14:25-27)
- The giving of the Holy Spirit here (Jn. 20:22) was apparently a temporary act, awaiting His full and

final appearance as recorded in Acts 2:1-4.

#### SIXTH RESURRECTION APPEARANCE

Before the eleven apostles in the Upper Room:

- The reluctance of Thomas

*"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the LORD. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (Jn. 20:24-25)*

- The revelation to Thomas

*"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My LORD and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (Jn. 20:26-29)*

During the 1990's a well known American religious leader claimed to have seen the risen Christ on at least 12 separate occasions! Most evangelical Christians would have difficulty with this claim, but even if true, according to Jesus' words here, all those Christians who have believed without seeing exotic visions are far more blessed than those who do! The following passages give strong testimony to this:

*"(For we walk by faith, not by sight)." (2 Cor. 5:7)*

*"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Pet. 1:8)*

*"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ... But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him... By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter... By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." (Heb. 11:1, 6, 24, 27)*

#### SEVENTH RESURRECTION APPEARANCE

Before seven apostles beside the Sea of Galilee:

*"After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. And They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It Is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, to vest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of*

*Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (Jn. 21:1-23)*

- These seven, remembering the thrice repeated divine command (Mt. 26:32; 28:7, 10) to meet the risen Savior in Galilee had all assembled here. Just who the missing four were, where they were, and why they were absent is not recorded.
- At the conclusion, this appearance, Jesus provides Peter's eventual martyrdom, hinting that it might be by crucifixion. Peter would later recall the Savior's words on this subject:  
*"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." (2 Pet. 1:12-14)*

#### **EIGHTH RESURRECTION APPEARANCE**

Before eleven apostles and 500 disciples:

*"After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." (1 Cor. 15:6)*

*"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Mt. 28:16-20)*

*"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mk. 16:16-18)*

- On this occasion Jesus lists five signs that will accompany them who believe. Of these five, four were fulfilled in the book of Acts.
  1. They shall cast out demons (Acts 5:16; 16:16-18; 19:12b)
  2. They shall speak with new tongues (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-46; 19:6)
  3. They shall take up serpents (Acts 18:3-6)
  4. No poison, if swallowed, would harm them (no record in the New Testament of this happening).
  5. They shall heal the sick (Acts 5:15; 19:12a)

#### **NINTH RESURRECTION APPEARANCE**

Before James, His half-brother:

*"After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles." (1 Cor. 15:7)*

Until this event James was apparently an unbeliever and highly critical of his older half brother Jesus, as indicated by the following passage:

*"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jew's feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him." (Jn. 7:1-5)*

#### TENTH RESURRECTION APPEARANCE

Before the eleven apostles on the Mount of Olives:

*"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Lk. 24:44-49)*

*"To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:3-8)*

- Jesus speaks regarding the fulfillment of scripture (Lk. 24:44). In essence He was referring to the 40-plus Old Testament messianic prophecies He had already personally fulfilled, beginning with His virgin birth in Bethlehem to His glorious resurrection!
- In Acts 1:8 Jesus gives the divine program schedule for the preaching of the gospel. This pattern was carefully followed in the book of Acts.
  1. Witnessing in Jerusalem (Acts 2-7).
  2. Witnessing in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12).
  3. Witnessing worldwide (Acts 13-28).

#### **PART FOUR: An indication of the Resurrection (the Shroud of Turin)**

The following extended passage comes from the pen of Dr. Gary Habermas, considered by many to be the world's foremost scholar on the resurrection of Christ. His work here refers to the Shroud of Turin:

*"The Shroud of Turin, Italy, is a linen cloth measuring 14'3" long by 3'7" wide. Historically proclaimed to be the actual burial garment of Jesus, the linen contains a double, head-to-head image of a crucified man reposed in death, that reveals both the obverse and reverse of the body.*

*With a known history stretching back to at least the fourteenth century, there are a number of important factors that indicate that the shroud is much more ancient, including a number of historical references that extend back several centuries. In the definitive work on the possible history of the shroud, Ian Wilson postulates that the cloth left Palestine about AD 30 and proceeded to the ancient kingdom of Edessa, to Constantinople, to France, to Switzerland, and finally to Italy.*

In addition to the historical data, there are also a number of scientific reasons indicating that the shroud could be dated very early. Samples of pollen discovered on the cloth point to an origin in Palestine possibly as far back as the first century, while analyses of the cloth and weave discovered that the shroud is compatible with first century cloth.

However, more important indicators of the age of the shroud have also emerged. Some researchers have asserted that sophisticated methods such as photographic enhancement and computer analysis are able to identify one of the coins placed over the eyes of the man in the shroud as a lepton of Pontius Pilate, minted between AD 29-32. Such an identification would be a crucial determination of age.

Biblical questions concerning the type of burial depicted on the shroud have failed to discover any discrepancies with the New Testament texts. Wrapping a body lengthwise and positioning it as shown on the shroud is corroborated by both recently discovered Qumran burial practices and by the *Code of Jewish Law* ("Laws of Mourning"). Further studies have revealed that the head napkin was first rolled up and then wrapped around the head, as reported by the Gospel of John (11:44; 20:5-7), the Jewish Mishnah (*Shabbath* 23:5) and the "Laws of Mourning".

While some believe that the body of the man wrapped in the shroud was not washed, the "Laws of Mourning" point out that there are conditions when washing is not appropriate, such as when a person suffered capital punishment or a violent death. The use of several strips of linen in John is also confirmed on the shroud, since pieces of linen were apparently used there, as well.

One additional point concerns Jesus' burial, as it is recorded in the Gospels. Since it is related that Jesus underwent a hasty burial with the women planning to return later to finish the process (Lk. 23:54-24:4; Mk. 15:42; 16:1-3), we have another explanation of possible "oddities" in his burial procedure.

One characteristic of the Shroud of Turin that separates it from other such religious remains is that it was the subject of an intense (and ongoing) scientific investigation. In October, 1978, a team of well-qualified scientists applied a large battery of non-destructive tests to the shroud. The three most important issues to be answered concerned the nature of the apparent bloodstains, the composition of the image, and its cause. In particular, it was determined that the bloodstains were real blood and that the shroud was probably not a fake. The image was not caused by paint, dye, powder, or any other foreign substance being added to the cloth. The image on the shroud is composed of oxidized, dehydrated, and conjugated fibrils of cloth, similar to the effects of a scorch, but an exact cause of the image was not proven. Additional characteristics of the image, such as its three-dimensional, superficial and non-directional nature, have become quite an enigma to the scientists.

The description of the man who was apparently buried in the shroud has also been enlightening. The scientific team pathologist and other medical doctors determined that the man was crucified and was dead, with his body in a state of rigor mortis. The man's injuries were the same as the Gospel reports of Jesus' crucifixion. The most interesting facet of this study is that many unnatural things were done to Jesus and these same types of things appeared on the shroud.

Both men suffered a series of punctures throughout the scalp from many sharp objects, a seriously bruised face, a horrible whipping (over 100 wounds from this beating have been counted on the shroud), abrasions on both shoulders from a rough, heavy object, and contusions on both knees. Both men had the more normal wounds associated with crucifixion; namely, punctured feet and wrists. Strangely, both men escaped having their ankles broken, as was normal, but both had post-mortem chest wounds instead, from which blood and watery fluid flowed. Both men were buried hastily in fine linen and were buried individually.

Indications that the man buried in the shroud could be Jesus come from the correspondence between the two. They agree even down to the small details in about one dozen areas that were not normal crucifixion procedures. The chances are seemingly minimal that two men would have so many agreements, especially in points of abnormal circumstances. Also, no areas of contradiction apparently exist. It should additionally be remembered that the shroud has been kept for hundreds of years as the actual burial garment of Jesus, long before such scientific testing could be done. While this last point by no means demonstrates the shroud's authenticity in any sense, it does show further a possible relationship between Jesus and the man buried in the shroud.

Naturalistic attempts to account for such phenomena as the three-dimensional, superficial and non-directional image, plus additional details such as its resolute and unsaturated nature, have failed to produce a viable alternative theory that explains all of the data. The scientists reported that they were unable to discover any known natural causes that could account for the shroud's image. In scientific terms, the image is a "mystery".

Perhaps even more amazing, the shroud contains no bodily decomposition, indicating that the body exited the cloth after a comparatively short interment. Furthermore, according to the scientific team pathologist, the body was probably not unwrapped, as indicated by the fact that many of the bloodstains were intact (including the blood clots), since such action would have disturbed the bloodstains. Even more interesting is the possibility that the image was caused by some sort of light or heat scorch that emanated from a dead body in the state of rigor mortis. In short, the converging scientific facts show that the body left the cloth by some as yet unknown means. Since the man buried in the shroud is possibly Jesus, we also have some possible empirical evidence for his resurrection.

But all of these conclusions were seriously challenged in the fall of 1988. Small portions taken from the shroud material were sent to three different laboratories in England, Switzerland and the United States. After the tests were concluded, it was claimed that the shroud had been carbon dated to the late Middle Ages.

Admittedly, this was a serious objection to the possibility that the shroud was the burial garment of Jesus. If the material did, in fact, originate in the Middle Ages, it could be some kind of fake or perhaps even an actual burial cloth that belonged to another crucifixion victim besides Jesus. In the latter case, it could still provide excellent information about death by crucifixion, but other claims that rely on this being Jesus' cloth would, obviously, be mistaken.

However, many scholars challenged the 1988 tests, strictly on scientific grounds, charging 'that serious problems occurred. For example, various cloth samples with known dates were pretested by a number of major laboratories, but achieved incorrect dates of up to many centuries! With regard to the shroud sampling itself, the material was not taken from three different locations, but came from the same portion of the material, known as "Raes Corner". Although this is the most contaminated section of the famous cloth, there was an absence of controlled recognition and removal of contaminants.

Further, the lack of peer review before the testing began bothered some researchers. Additionally, there was evidently no blind testing as reports indicated would be the case. For one thing, the non-shroud control specimens were reportedly marked with their dates, further distinguishing them from the shroud samples.

But perhaps most damaging of all to the carbon dating tests, a secret dating of shroud fibers in 1982 differed from the 1988 tests by centuries, and even suggested a date that could, with the plus-minus factor, date the cloth to the first century AD! Last, a few scientists have even remarked that if the shroud image was caused by Jesus' resurrection, the sort of molecular change that results from scorch could actually have made the cloth appear younger, due to neutron flux.

As a result, the 1988 carbon testing appears to be less authoritative than one might originally think. At least it is not a closed case. This is especially so when all three cloth samples were taken from a single area on the shroud, which may have been affected in any of several ways.

Even beyond all of this, it is also crucial to realize that virtually all of the other shroud data stand in opposition to the medieval dating. Contrary results come from studies such as the pollen research, the possibility of the Pontius Pilate coins over the eyes, textile evaluations, and the historical trail the shroud may have taken across Europe. So here we have one body of scientific results clashing with another. Which should be favored over the other? More than one opinion has been expressed, to be sure. Further testing and peer review will hopefully follow and may be helpful. We can only conclude that a medieval date has not, at present, been proven.

In spite of the questions we have lodged, it must be admitted that the 1988 carbon dating is still a serious objection to the shroud being the burial garment of Jesus. Yet, the testing problems, plus other considerations like those above, tend to offset the force of the results. Still, we must be clear that, even if the shroud did not belong to Jesus, nothing in Christianity is affected. Even though it reports the discovery of Jesus' grave clothes, the New Testament never claims that the shroud is genuine.

If the Shroud of Turin is Jesus' garment, we have highly evidential data for the death and probably even the resurrection of Jesus. Since there is strong evidence against the shroud being a fake, even if it wrapped the body of another victim of crucifixion, it can still provide important and reliable details concerning Jesus' demise. As such, several facts can be learned, most of which, it should be carefully noted, do not depend on the identification of the man buried in the shroud.

1. Once again we learn of the normal wounds associated with crucifixion such as the pre-cross beating, the pierced wrists and feet, as well as lesser details like the knee contusions (presumably from falling) and the shoulder abrasions (perhaps from carrying part of the cross).
2. We also learn of several abnormal points of crucifixion procedure that the man in the shroud

had in common with Jesus. Such include: the scalp wounds caused by sharp objects, the absence of broken ankles, the post-mortem chest wound, and the flow of blood plus watery fluid.

3. Afterward, an individual but hasty burial in fine linen for one convicted as a "criminal" is also rather odd.
4. There is strong evidence that the man in the shroud had to move up and down in order to breathe. The blood from each wrist proceeded down each arm and formed a V-shaped blood flow, which is one evidence that suggests that two major bodily positions were taken on the cross.
5. There is evidence that the man buried in the shroud was very possibly raised from the dead, such as the absence of decomposition, an apparent lack of unwrapping the body, and a probably scorch from a dead body. If the man in the shroud is Jesus, as indicated by the similarities in dissimilar areas pointed out in (2), then (4) becomes possible evidence for Jesus' resurrection." (*The Historical Jesus* College Press Publishing Co., Joplin, MO. 1996, pages 177-186.)

# THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

## THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

*"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen," (Mk. 16:19-20)*

*"And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen." (Lk. 24:50-53)*

*"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11)*

- Jesus had previously predicted His own ascension on several occasions (Jn. 6:22; 16:28; 20:17).
- We are told He ascended to the right hand of God (Mk. 16:19). The dying Stephen, Christianity's first martyr would later see Him there (Acts 7:55). (See also Heb. 8:1; 10:12; 1 Peter 3:22.)
- The heavenly messengers assured the apostles that Jesus would return in similar fashion as He departed. Thus:
  1. The going was personal, and so shall the return be (1 Thess. 4:16).
  2. The going was visible, and so shall the return be (Phil. 3:21).
  3. The going was from the Mount of Olives, and so shall the return be (Zech. 14:4).
- This event marks the seventh of at least nine appearances of God's shekinah glory cloud. Note that it appeared:
  1. To Israel en route to Palestine (Ex. 13:21; 14:19-20)
  2. Over the tabernacle holy of holies (Lev. 16:2)
  3. Over the temple holy of holies (2 Chron. 5:13-14)
  4. In Ezekiel's time (Ezek. 10)
  5. At the birth of Christ (Lk. 2:9-11)
  6. At His transfiguration (Mt. 17:5)
  7. Here at this ascension (Acts 1:9)
  8. It will appear next at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:17)
  9. It will appear again during His second coming (Mt. 24:30)