LUKE

BIBLE STUDY

A Verse-by-Verse Study



The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which has been lost:
an orderly account of Jesus Christ

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A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Study

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this study direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

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Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to work through this verse-by-verse study of the Gospel of Luke. My purpose in writing this study guide is the same as it was for my study of Revelation: to bring you closer to our Creator and to give you a way to grow in your Christian walk.

Luke is the longest of the four Gospels, and it may be the most carefully written. Luke was a doctor, a careful man, and he tells us at the very start that he checked everything from the beginning so that his reader could be sure of what he had been taught. In his pages we meet shepherds and widows, tax collectors and lepers, a Roman officer and a Samaritan, a lost son and a thief on a cross. Over and over we see that Jesus came for people the world looked past. I do not claim to be an authority on the Bible or on Luke. I am simply someone like you who wants to grow closer to God and understand what He has given us in His Son. Before you read any part of this book, or any part of Scripture, I ask that you pray, asking God:

- For the Holy Spirit to be present, to help open your eyes and your heart (Psalm 119:18, 119:105)
- For discernment and knowledge (Psalm 119:66, James 1:5)

2 Timothy 2:15 (SLB)

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker not needing to be ashamed, cutting straight the word of truth."

The Bible is God's Word to us (2 Timothy 3:16), given for training in righteousness. If we cannot understand what it says, we cannot apply it to our lives or help build God's kingdom.

So how do we go about understanding God's Word?

The first rule is context. You may have heard the saying "Context is King," but what does that mean? Every word, sentence, and passage helps explain the ones around it. Before we read any passage, we should ask a few simple questions: Who wrote it? Who was it written to? What came right before it? Knowing the answers gives us a clearer picture of what God is saying, both in general and to each of us personally.

Context matters a great deal in Luke. Luke wrote two books, not one. His Gospel tells what Jesus did and taught until He was taken up to heaven, and the book of Acts picks up the story from there. Both are written to the same man, Theophilus. Luke also sets his story in real history. He names emperors, governors, kings and high priests, and he dates events by them. When we read a story in Luke, we should ask where it sits in his account. Much of the middle of the book, from 9:51 to 19:27, takes place while Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem, and Luke keeps reminding us that the cross is ahead. Many of the best-known parables, like the good Samaritan and the lost son, are told on that road. If we pull them out of that setting, we can miss who Jesus was speaking to and why.

Exegesis, Eisegesis, and Hermeneutics

People typically interpret the Bible using one of two methods, Exegesis or Eisegesis. Both are explained below, along with a third word, Hermeneutics. Sometimes people use both methods to "make their case" for the interpretation they want. These definitions are based on www.merriam-webster.com, with my own notes added.

Exegesis means explaining a text, especially a passage of Scripture. Exegesis is reading and interpreting the full text of a passage, and drawing out what it is actually saying.

Eisegesis means reading your own ideas into a text. This happens when we try to find something in the text that really isn't there. It can lead to many errors, especially when we bring assumptions to a passage that aren't actually in it. This method can be used to justify a behavior, position, or belief that goes against what the text originally meant.

Hermeneutics is the study of the principles used to interpret a text, such as the Bible. "Hermeneutics" and "Exegesis" are sometimes used to mean the same thing. The difference is that Exegesis is the work of explaining a passage, while Hermeneutics is the set of principles that guides that work. In Biblical Hermeneutics, the Bible should be read literally unless the text itself gives us a different meaning.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (SLB)

"16 Every Scripture ***is*** God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which ***is*** in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work."

This passage tells us plainly that the writers of Scripture were inspired by God. Every passage in the Bible came from God and was written down by man. These are not fairy tales or made-up stories. They are God's own breath, given to us so we can be equipped and ready to do good work.

Because every word was inspired and breathed by God, I believe we must let God's Word interpret itself. We must study the Bible using Exegesis, drawing out what the text says, guided by sound Biblical Hermeneutics.

We should study God's Word using the Golden Rule of Interpretation, as Dr. David L. Cooper stated it:

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."

(http://www.biblicalresearch.info/page55.html)

I read the Bible as it is written. Luke tells us he wrote an account of things that really happened, checked against the word of eyewitnesses, and this study takes him at his word. An angel really

did speak to Zechariah and to Mary. Jesus really was born of a virgin in Bethlehem, really healed the sick and raised the dead, really died on a Roman cross, and really rose bodily from the grave and ate fish in front of His disciples. When Jesus tells a parable, Luke usually tells us it is a parable, and we read it that way. When Luke tells us what happened, we read it as history. And when God promises Mary that her Son will sit on the throne of David and reign over the house of Jacob, I believe He means it and will keep it.

This study uses the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB) unless I note otherwise. To better understand the original Greek, I also used The Interlinear Bible (Jay P. Green Sr., ISBN 1-56563-977-4).

How This Study Is Laid Out

Each chapter of this study follows the same pattern as my study of Revelation:

- Scripture: the full text of the chapter, broken into sections, so you can read it straight through first.
- Preview: a short look at what the chapter covers.
- Study: the chapter again, verse by verse, with my notes on what each verse says and what it means for us.
- Summary: the main points of the chapter in a few lines.
- Study Questions: questions for personal study or a small group, from simple fact questions to questions about how we live. Some of them are personal. In a group, no one should ever have to answer one aloud, and what is shared in the group stays there.
- Old and New Testament links: after many verses you will find a short line in small type that lists the places where the other Testament quotes, fulfills, pictures, or echoes that passage. "Quoted" means the New Testament quotes the Old Testament words. "Fulfilled" means the New Testament tells us a prophecy or promise came true. "Pictured" means the New Testament itself points to an Old Testament person, event, or object as a picture of Christ. "Alluded to" means a clear echo in shared words or pictures. Every link is listed again in a table at the back of the book.

Using This Study With a Group

This study works for one person or for a group. Luke has 24 chapters, so here are two ways a group can pace it:

- One chapter a week: twenty-four weeks, or about six months. If you like, add a first meeting to read the Introduction and the Background together. Chapters 1, 6, 8 and 22 are long, and a group may want to give those two weeks each.
- Three shorter terms: chapters 1 to 8 (the births of John and Jesus and the start of His work in Galilee), chapters 9 to 16 (who Jesus is, and His teaching on the road to Jerusalem), and chapters 17 to 24 (Jesus in Jerusalem, His death and His resurrection). A break between terms gives the group time to rest and invite others.

For each meeting, I suggest reading the Scripture out loud together first, straight through, before anyone comments. Then walk through the Study section, stopping where the group has

questions, and finish with the Study Questions and prayer. The first questions in each list can be answered from the text. The later ones are more personal, and no one should feel pressed to answer them aloud.

Some parts of Luke touch painful subjects: a couple who could not have children (1:7, 25), the death of a widow's only son (7:11-17), a woman known in her town as a sinner (7:36-50), a man tormented by demons and a dying child (8:26-56), a family torn apart and a son who comes home (15:11-32), the warning about hell in the story of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31), and the suffering and death of Jesus (chapters 22 and 23). If you lead a group, read those sections ahead of time and be ready to listen. Someone in your group may have lost a child, struggled to have children, or carried shame for years. If someone shares something that puts them or another person in danger, help them get help right away.

I look forward to walking with you through the Gospel of Luke. If you'd like to share feedback, please email me at andrew@trinfinityenterprises.com.

May God bless you and your time studying and getting to know Him better.

Overview of Luke

Luke is the third book of the New Testament and the third of the four Gospels. The word gospel means good news. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John each tell the good news of Jesus Christ from a different angle. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are often called the Synoptic Gospels, from a word that means seen together, because they tell many of the same events in much the same order. John writes in a different way. Matthew shows us Jesus as the King promised to Israel. Mark shows us the Servant who came to serve and to give His life. Luke shows us the Son of Man, fully God and fully human, who came as Savior for every kind of person.

About half of Luke is found only in Luke. Without him we would not have the birth of John the Baptist, the songs of Mary and Zechariah, the shepherds in the field, the boy Jesus in the temple, the widow of Nain, the good Samaritan, Mary and Martha, the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son, the rich man and Lazarus, the ten lepers, Zacchaeus, the thief on the cross, or the walk to Emmaus. Many of those stories have the same thread running through them. God goes looking for people who are lost, and heaven rejoices when one of them is found.

Luke gives us the heart of his message in Jesus' own words at the house of Zacchaeus, a hated tax collector:

Luke 19:10 (SLB)

"for the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which has been lost."

Luke also loves to show Jesus praying. He prays at His baptism (3:21), before He chooses the twelve (6:12), before Peter's confession (9:18), on the mountain where He is transfigured (9:28-29), in the garden (22:41-44), and on the cross (23:34, 46). And Luke keeps pointing us to the Holy Spirit, who fills John, Elizabeth and Zechariah, comes upon Mary, descends on Jesus at the Jordan, and leads Him into the wilderness and back to Galilee in power. Acts, Luke's second book, carries both of these themes straight on into the life of the church.

Luke has 24 chapters and 1,151 verses. Here is its structure:

Part One: The Births of John and Jesus (chapters 1 and 2)

- Chapter 1: Two Promised Births
- Chapter 2: The Savior Is Born

Part Two: Ready for His Work (chapters 3 and 4)

- Chapter 3: John the Baptist and the Son of God
- Chapter 4: Tested and Rejected at Nazareth

Part Three: The Ministry in Galilee (chapters 5 to 9)

- Chapter 5: Fishers of Men and a Friend of Sinners
- Chapter 6: Lord of the Sabbath and the Sermon on the Plain

- Chapter 7: Great Faith and Great Love
- Chapter 8: Seeds, Storms, and a Daughter Raised
- Chapter 9: Who Is This Jesus?

Part Four: On the Road to Jerusalem (chapters 10 to 18)

- Chapter 10: The Seventy Sent and the Good Samaritan
- Chapter 11: Teach Us to Pray
- Chapter 12: Treasure in Heaven and Ready Servants
- Chapter 13: Repent, the Narrow Door, and Jerusalem
- Chapter 14: The Great Banquet and the Cost of Following
- Chapter 15: Lost and Found
- Chapter 16: Faithful With Money: The Rich Man and Lazarus
- Chapter 17: Faith, Thanks, and the Coming Kingdom
- Chapter 18: Persistent Prayer and a Humble Heart

Part Five: The Son of Man in Jerusalem (chapters 19 to 21)

- Chapter 19: Zacchaeus and the King Who Wept
- Chapter 20: Questions in the Temple
- Chapter 21: The Widow's Gift and the Signs of the End

Part Six: The Cross and the Empty Tomb (chapters 22 to 24)

- Chapter 22: The Last Supper and the Arrest
- Chapter 23: The Crucifixion
- Chapter 24: He Is Risen

The journey to Jerusalem begins in the middle of chapter 9, when Jesus "set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem" (9:51), and Jesus enters the city in the middle of chapter 19 (19:28-44). The parts above follow the chapters, so those turning points fall inside chapters 9 and 19.

Background of the Book

Author: The book itself does not name its author, but the early church agreed from the start that Luke wrote it, and he also wrote Acts. Both books are written to Theophilus (1:3; Acts 1:1), and Acts calls the Gospel "The first account" (Acts 1:1). Luke was a doctor and a close friend of Paul. Paul calls him "the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14) and one of his fellow workers (Philemon 24). Near the end of Paul's life, when others had left, Paul wrote, "Luke alone is with me" (2 Timothy 4:11). In parts of Acts, Luke slips from they to we (Acts 16:10; 20:5 to 21:18; 27:1 to 28:16), which tells us he was traveling with Paul at those times. In Colossians 4:10-14, Paul names his Jewish co-workers first and then names Luke with others, so most Bible teachers believe Luke was a Gentile. If so, he is the only Gentile writer of a book of the Bible. Some modern scholars doubt that Luke the companion of Paul wrote these books. I take the early church's witness at its word. Nothing in the book argues against it, and the we passages fit it well.

Who it was written to: Luke writes to "most excellent Theophilus" (1:3). The name means loved by God, or friend of God. "Most excellent" was a title used for people of high rank, and Luke uses the same title for the Roman governors Felix and Festus (Acts 23:26; 26:25). So Theophilus may have been a Roman official or a man of means. Some have suggested the name stands for any reader who loves God, but the title makes it more likely he was a real man. Luke says he had already been "instructed" in the faith (1:4). Behind Theophilus, Luke clearly has a wider Gentile audience in mind. He explains Jewish places and customs, traces Jesus' family line all the way back to Adam rather than only to Abraham (3:38), and shows again and again that the good news is for the whole world (2:32; 24:47).

How Luke wrote: Luke was not one of the twelve, and he does not claim to have seen these things himself. He tells us that many had already written accounts, that eyewitnesses had passed the facts down, and that he had "followed all things carefully from the first" (1:1-3). He likely spoke with people like Mary, James the brother of Jesus, and others in Jerusalem and Judea. He was with Paul in Caesarea and Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-18; 27:1), which gave him time and the chance to talk with them. His Greek is some of the finest in the New Testament, and his account is ordered with care. Many scholars believe Luke used Mark's Gospel as one of his sources. Inspiration does not mean God dictated words to a writer in a trance. In Luke's case it meant the Holy Spirit guided a careful man's careful work so that what he wrote is exactly what God wanted written.

The setting: Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea while Herod the Great was king under Rome, and He grew up in Nazareth in Galilee, in the north. Luke follows His ministry in Galilee, then His long journey south to Jerusalem, and then His last week, His death and His resurrection in and around the city. The land was under Rome. Augustus and then Tiberius were emperors. After Herod the Great died, his sons ruled parts of the land, and Herod Antipas, who put John the Baptist to death, ruled Galilee. Judea was governed by a Roman governor, Pontius Pilate in Jesus' day. We will meet the religious groups of the day often: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes, and the priests. I will explain each one the first time they appear.

When and where it was written: Luke does not tell us when he wrote. Acts ends with Paul still under house arrest in Rome, waiting for his trial, about A.D. 62 (Acts 28:30-31). Since the Gospel was written before Acts, many who hold that Luke wrote it date it about A.D. 60 to 62. Luke may have gathered much of his material during Paul's two years in prison at Caesarea (Acts 24:27). Many other scholars date it later, after A.D. 70, because Jesus speaks of Jerusalem surrounded by armies (21:20). I believe Jesus foretold that fall, so the prophecy does not require a later date. Scripture does not tell us where Luke wrote.

Luke's special themes: Luke shows that Jesus is the Savior of all kinds of people. He gives special attention to the poor (1:52-53; 4:18; 6:20), to women, who appear in his Gospel more often than in any other (8:1-3; 10:38-42), to outcasts like lepers, tax collectors and sinners (5:27-32; 15:1-2; 19:1-10), and to Samaritans and Gentiles (10:30-37; 17:11-19). He shows Jesus praying, and he points to the work of the Holy Spirit. There is also a great deal of joy in Luke. The angels announce "great joy" (2:10), heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents (15:7, 10), and the book ends with the disciples in the temple praising God (24:52-53).

Purpose: Luke tells us his purpose in his first four verses. He wrote an orderly account so that Theophilus would "come to know the certainty concerning the words in which you were instructed" (1:4). Luke wants his readers to be sure. The faith we have been taught is not built on myths, but on real events in real places, seen by real witnesses. He also wants us to see who Jesus is: the Son of God, born of a virgin, the promised Son of David, and the Son of Man who came "to seek and to save that which has been lost" (19:10). And he wants us to see that this good news must go out "to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (24:47).

Chapter 1: Two Promised Births

Scripture

1:1-17 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative concerning the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from ***the*** beginning became eyewitnesses and servants of the word delivered ***them*** to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things carefully from the first, to write to you in order, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may come to know the certainty concerning the words in which you were instructed. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of ***the*** division of Abijah; and his wife ***was*** of the daughters of Aaron, and her name ***was*** Elizabeth. Now they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And there was no child to them, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in their days. Now it came to pass, while he was serving as priest in the order of his division before God, according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to burn incense, having entered into the temple of the Lord. And all the multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of the incense. Then an angel of ***the*** Lord appeared to him, standing on ***the*** right of the altar of the incense. And Zechariah was troubled, having seen ***him***, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not fear, Zechariah, because your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear a son to you, and you will call his name John. And he will be joy to you and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great before the Lord, and he shall certainly not drink wine and strong drink, and he will be filled with ***the*** Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to ***the*** Lord their God. And he himself will go before Him in ***the*** spirit and power of Elijah, to turn ***the*** hearts of fathers to children, and ***the*** disobedient to ***the*** understanding of ***the*** righteous, to make ready for ***the*** Lord a people prepared."

1:18-25 And Zechariah said to the angel, "By what will I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife ***is*** advanced in her days." And answering, the angel said to him, "I am Gabriel, the one standing before God, and I was sent to speak to you and to announce these ***things*** to you as good news. And look, you will be silent and not able to speak until the day that these ***things*** happen, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their season." And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were marveling at his delaying in the temple. And having come out, he was not able to speak to them; and they recognized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he himself was making signs to them and was remaining mute. And it came to pass, when the days of his service were fulfilled, he departed to his house. Now after these days Elizabeth his wife conceived, and she was hiding herself five months, saying, "Thus the Lord has done to me in ***the*** days in which He looked upon ***me*** to take away my disgrace among men."

1:26-38 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee whose name ***was*** Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name ***was*** Joseph, of ***the*** house of David; and the name of the virgin ***was*** Mary. And having come in to her, the angel said, "Greetings, you who have been favored! The Lord ***is*** with you; blessed ***are*** you among women." And she, having seen ***him***, was greatly troubled at his word, and she was pondering what kind ***of*** greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not fear, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And look, you will conceive in ***the*** womb and will bear a son, and you will call His name Jesus. He will be great

and will be called Son of ***the*** Most High; and ***the*** Lord God will give Him the throne of David His father, and He will reign over the house of Jacob to the ages, and of His kingdom there will be no end." Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I do not know a man?" And answering, the angel said to her, "***The*** Holy Spirit will come upon you, and ***the*** power of ***the*** Most High will overshadow you; therefore also the holy ***One*** being born of you will be called Son of God. And look, Elizabeth your relative, she also has conceived a son in her old age; and this is ***the*** sixth month for her who is called barren. For with God no declaration will be impossible." Then Mary said, "Look, the slave of ***the*** Lord; may it happen to me according to your declaration." And the angel departed from her.

1:39-56 Then Mary, having risen up in these days, went into the hill country with haste to a city of Judah, and she entered into the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, as Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with ***the*** Holy Spirit, and she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed ***are*** you among women, and blessed ***is*** the fruit of your womb! And from where ***is*** this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For look, as the voice of your greeting came into my ears, the baby leaped in exultation in my womb. And blessed ***is*** she who believed, that there will be a fulfillment for the things spoken to her from ***the*** Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior, because He has looked upon the lowliness of His slave; for look, from now on all the generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy ***is*** His name. And His mercy ***is*** to generations of generations, to those who fear Him. He has worked strength with His arm; He has scattered ***the*** proud in ***the*** thought of their heart. He has brought down rulers from thrones and has exalted ***the*** lowly. ***Those*** who hunger He has filled with good ***things***, and ***those*** who are rich He has sent away empty. He has helped Israel His servant, to remember mercy, just as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed to the age." And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

1:57-66 Now for Elizabeth the time was fulfilled for her to give birth, and she bore a son. And the neighbors and her relatives heard that ***the*** Lord had magnified His mercy with her, and they were rejoicing with her. And it came to pass on the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child, and they were calling him by the name of his father, Zechariah. And answering, his mother said, "No, but he will be called John." And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." And they were making signs to his father, what he would want him to be called. And having asked for a writing tablet, he wrote, saying, "John is his name." And they all marveled. Then his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue, and he was speaking, blessing God. And fear came upon all those dwelling around them; and in all the hill country of Judea all these declarations were being talked about. And all who heard laid ***them*** up in their heart, saying, "What then will this child be?" And ***the*** hand of ***the*** Lord was with him.

1:67-80 And Zechariah his father was filled with ***the*** Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, "Blessed ***be the*** Lord, the God of Israel, because He has visited and has worked redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant, just as He spoke through ***the*** mouth of His holy prophets, those from ***the*** age: salvation from our enemies and from ***the*** hand of all those who hate us, to work mercy with our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, ***the*** oath which He swore to Abraham our father, to grant to us, without fear, having

been delivered from ***the*** hand of our enemies, to serve Him in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. And you, child, will be called a prophet of ***the*** Most High; for you will go before ***the*** face of ***the*** Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people in ***the*** forgiveness of their sins, because of ***the*** tender mercy of our God, in which ***the*** Sunrise from on high has visited us, to shine upon those sitting in darkness and ***the*** shadow of death, to direct our feet into ***the*** way of peace." And the child was growing and was being strengthened in spirit, and he was in the deserts until ***the*** day of his public appearance to Israel.

Chapter 1 Preview

Luke opens his Gospel the way a careful historian would. He tells Theophilus why he is writing and how he did his research. Then he takes us into the temple in Jerusalem, where an old priest named Zechariah is burning incense. An angel tells him that his wife Elizabeth, who has never been able to have children, will have a son, and that this son will prepare the way for the Lord. Zechariah doubts, and he cannot speak until the promise comes true.

Six months later the same angel, Gabriel, comes to a young woman in Nazareth named Mary. She is a virgin, engaged to Joseph, and Gabriel tells her that she will conceive by the Holy Spirit and bear the Son of God, who will reign on David's throne forever. Mary believes and gives herself to God's will. She visits Elizabeth, the baby in Elizabeth's womb leaps for joy, and Mary sings a song of praise. The chapter ends with the birth of John, the return of Zechariah's voice, and his own song about the God who keeps His promises.

Chapter 1 Study

1:1-2 *Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative concerning the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from* ***the*** *beginning became eyewitnesses and servants of the word delivered* ***them*** *to us,*

Luke begins with a long, careful sentence, the kind a learned Greek writer would use. He tells us "many have undertaken to compile a narrative" about Jesus. Luke was not the first to write. Many believe Mark's Gospel was one of those accounts, and there may have been others that God did not choose to preserve.

These accounts came from "those who from the beginning became eyewitnesses and servants of the word." That is where the facts came from: people who saw Jesus with their own eyes and then spent their lives serving His message. The Christian faith does not rest on visions or private feelings. It rests on events that happened in front of witnesses. Notice too that Luke calls these events "the things that have been fulfilled among us." He sees the life of Jesus as God keeping His promises.

1:3-4 *it seemed good to me also, having followed all things carefully from the first, to write to you in order, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may come to know the certainty concerning the words in which you were instructed.*

"It seemed good to me also, having followed all things carefully from the first, to write to you in order." Luke did his homework. He traced things back to the start, and he wrote them in order. That does not always mean exact time order. It means an organized account that makes sense from beginning to end.

He writes to "most excellent Theophilus." The name means loved by God, and the title "most excellent" was used for men of high rank. Luke wants him to "come to know the certainty concerning the words in which you were instructed." Theophilus had been taught about Jesus. Now Luke wants him to be sure.

That is a good word for us. God does not ask us to believe with our eyes closed. He has given us a record we can trust. If you have ever had doubts, Luke wrote this book with you in mind.

1:5 *There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of **the** division of Abijah; and his wife **was** of the daughters of Aaron, and her name **was** Elizabeth.*

"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea." This is Herod the Great, who ruled under Rome from about 37 B.C. until his death in about 4 B.C. He was a great builder and a cruel man, and he is the same Herod who later killed the little boys of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16).

Zechariah was "a certain priest." In that day there were thousands of priests, all descended from Aaron, the brother of Moses. King David had divided them into twenty-four groups called divisions, and each division served in the temple for a week at a time, about twice a year (1 Chronicles 24:1-19). Zechariah was "of the division of Abijah," the eighth group. His wife Elizabeth was also from a priestly family, "of the daughters of Aaron." A priest marrying a priest's daughter was considered a special blessing.

Old Testament links: 1 Chronicles 24:10 (alluded to)

1:6-7 *Now they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And there was no child to them, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in their days.*

"They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." This does not mean they never sinned. It means they lived lives of real faith and obedience. They took God's Word seriously, they offered the sacrifices the Law required, and no one could point to a pattern of open sin in their lives.

"And there was no child to them, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in their days." In that culture, not having children was a deep sorrow and often a public shame. Many people assumed it was a sign of God's displeasure. Luke wants us to know that was not true here. They were righteous, and still they had no child. Sometimes faithful people carry long sorrows, and it is not because of their sin. If that is you, God sees you, just as He saw Elizabeth.

Notice also that God has done this before. Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah, and Samson's mother were all barren before God gave them a child. When God does this, the child is always part of His plan.

Old Testament links: Genesis 18:11 (alluded to)

1:8-10 *Now it came to pass, while he was serving as priest in the order of his division before God, according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to burn incense, having entered into the temple of the Lord. And all the multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of the incense.*

Zechariah's division was on duty, and "it fell to him by lot to burn incense." The priests cast lots to decide who would go into the Holy Place of the temple to burn incense on the golden altar before the morning or evening sacrifice. With so many priests, a man might do this once in his whole life, and many never did. This was the high point of Zechariah's life as a priest.

"All the multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of the incense." The rising smoke of incense was a picture of prayer going up to God (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 8:3-4). While the priest stood inside, the people prayed outside. Luke's Gospel begins with people praying in the temple, and it ends the same way (24:53).

1:11-12 *Then an angel of **the** Lord appeared to him, standing on **the** right of the altar of the incense. And Zechariah was troubled, having seen **him**, and fear fell upon him.*

"Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right of the altar of the incense." For about four hundred years, since the prophet Malachi, there had been no new word from God to Israel. Now, in the middle of an ordinary day of service, heaven breaks the silence.

"Zechariah was troubled, having seen him, and fear fell upon him." That is the normal response when people meet an angel in the Bible. Angels are not chubby babies or soft figures on greeting cards. They are mighty servants of God, and people who see them are afraid.

1:13 *But the angel said to him, "Do not fear, Zechariah, because your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear a son to you, and you will call his name John.*

"Do not fear, Zechariah, because your petition has been heard." What petition? Most likely the prayer he and Elizabeth had prayed for years for a son, a prayer they may have given up on by now. It may also have included his prayer as a priest for the redemption of Israel. God was about to answer both at once.

"You will call his name John." The name John means the Lord is gracious, or God has shown favor. God Himself named this child, and the name told everyone what God was doing.

1:14-15 *And he will be joy to you and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great before the Lord, and he shall certainly not drink wine and strong drink, and he will be filled with **the** Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb.*

"He will be joy to you and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth." Joy is one of Luke's favorite themes, and it starts right here.

"He will be great before the Lord." John would never be rich or powerful by the world's standards. He would wear camel's hair and live in the wilderness. But he was great in God's eyes. That is the only greatness that lasts.

"He shall certainly not drink wine and strong drink." This was like the vow of a Nazirite, a person set apart to God in a special way (Numbers 6:1-4). And "he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb." Before John was born, God's Spirit was already at work in him. We will see that happen in verse 41.

Old Testament links: Numbers 6:3 (alluded to); Judges 13:4 (alluded to)

1:16-17 *And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to **the** Lord their God. And he himself will go before Him in **the** spirit and power of Elijah, to turn **the** hearts of fathers to children, and **the** disobedient to **the** understanding of **the** righteous, to make ready for **the** Lord a people prepared."*

"He will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God." That was John's job: to call God's people back to Him.

"He himself will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah." Here the angel points to the last words of the Old Testament. Malachi promised that God would send Elijah the prophet before the great day of the Lord, and that he would turn the hearts of fathers to their children (Malachi 4:5-6). John was not Elijah come back from heaven (John 1:21), but he came with the same spirit and power. Jesus later said John fulfilled this role for those willing to receive it (Matthew 11:14; 17:11-13).

Notice who John goes before. He goes before God Himself, and the One he prepares a people for is "the Lord." John would prepare the way for the Lord God of Israel. And the One who came after John was Jesus. Luke is quietly telling us who Jesus is.

Bible teachers read Malachi's promise of Elijah in two ways. Some believe John was its whole fulfillment. I believe, as many pre-tribulation teachers do, that John fulfilled it in part, and that Elijah's work will be finished before the great day of the Lord, since Jesus said, "Elijah indeed comes first, and will restore all things" (Matthew 17:11).

Old Testament links: Malachi 4:5-6 (alluded to)

1:18 *And Zechariah said to the angel, "By what will I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife **is** advanced in her days."*

"By what will I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in her days." Zechariah asks for a sign. He is looking at the facts of nature, and they say this cannot happen. He was standing in the temple of God, talking with an angel, and still he doubted.

Before we are too hard on him, we should be honest. How often do we pray for something and then doubt when God says yes? Zechariah was a righteous man, but he had a moment of unbelief. Many of us have had the same.

1:19-20 *And answering, the angel said to him, "I am Gabriel, the one standing before God, and I was sent to speak to you and to announce these **things** to you as good news. And look, you will be silent and not able to speak until the day that these **things** happen, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their season."*

"I am Gabriel, the one standing before God." Gabriel is one of only two holy angels named in the Bible (the other is Michael). Gabriel appeared to Daniel about five hundred years earlier and told him about the coming of the Messiah (Daniel 8:16; 9:21-27). Now he comes to announce that the time has arrived. He came "to announce these things to you as good news." That is the first time the idea of good news, the gospel, appears in Luke.

Zechariah asked for a sign, and he got one: "you will be silent and not able to speak until the day that these things happen, because you did not believe my words." It was both a discipline and a mercy. It would remind him every day for months that God's word was true. "Which will be fulfilled in their season." God's word does not fail just because we doubt it. It will come to pass at the time He has set.

1:21-23 *And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were marveling at his delaying in the temple. And having come out, he was not able to speak to them; and they recognized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he himself was making signs to them and was remaining mute. And it came to pass, when the days of his service were fulfilled, he departed to his house.*

"The people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were marveling at his delaying in the temple." Burning the incense did not take long. The people outside began to wonder if something had gone wrong. When he finally came out, he was supposed to give the priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24-26), but "he was not able to speak to them." They understood that "he had seen a vision in the temple."

Zechariah finished his week of service and went home to the hill country of Judea. God's plan does not always unfold in a flash. Zechariah went back to ordinary life, unable to speak, and waited.

1:24-25 *Now after these days Elizabeth his wife conceived, and she was hiding herself five months, saying, "Thus the Lord has done to me in **the** days in which He looked upon **me** to take away my disgrace among men."*

"Elizabeth his wife conceived, and she was hiding herself five months." Scripture doesn't tell us exactly why she stayed out of sight. Perhaps she wanted to be sure before telling anyone. Perhaps she wanted time alone with God to give thanks.

Her words are beautiful: "Thus the Lord has done to me in the days in which He looked upon me to take away my disgrace among men." For years she had carried the shame of being childless. Now God had "looked upon" her. She saw this child as a personal gift from a God who saw her pain. He sees ours too.

1:26-27 *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee whose name **was** Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name **was** Joseph, of **the** house of David; and the name of the virgin **was** Mary.*

"Now in the sixth month," the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, "the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee whose name was Nazareth." Nazareth was a small, ordinary village in the north, far from Jerusalem. People looked down on it (John 1:46). The first announcement came in the temple to an old priest. The second came in a little town to a young woman. God chose the humble place.

She was "a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David." Betrothal was much more binding than our engagement. It usually lasted about a year, and it was a legal contract. The couple were called husband and wife, and only a divorce could end it, but they did not yet live together or have relations. Mary was probably young, likely in her teens, as girls usually were when betrothed in that day. Joseph was "of the house of David," which matters a great deal for what Gabriel is about to say.

Luke calls Mary a virgin twice in this one verse. That is the word Isaiah used for the mother of the promised Son (Isaiah 7:14), and we will come back to it at verse 31.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 7:14 (fulfilled)

1:28-29 *And having come in to her, the angel said, "Greetings, you who have been favored! The Lord **is** with you; blessed **are** you among women." And she, having seen **him**, was greatly troubled at his word, and she was pondering what kind **of** greeting this might be.*

"Greetings, you who have been favored! The Lord is with you; blessed are you among women." The word "favored" in Greek is kecharitomene. It means one on whom grace has been poured out, one who has been shown favor. It points to what God has given her, not to something she earned. Mary was chosen by grace, as every believer is.

Mary "was greatly troubled at his word, and she was pondering what kind of greeting this might be." Notice that she was troubled more by the greeting than by the angel. She did not think of

herself as anyone special. She was a humble young woman who could not understand why God would speak to her this way.

1:30-31 *And the angel said to her, "Do not fear, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And look, you will conceive in **the** womb and will bear a son, and you will call His name Jesus.*

"Do not fear, Mary, for you have found favor with God." She did not need to be afraid. God was not angry with her. He had chosen her for the greatest privilege any woman has ever had.

"You will conceive in the womb and will bear a son, and you will call His name Jesus." Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Yeshua, or Joshua, which means the Lord saves. Matthew tells us the angel told Joseph the reason for the name: He would save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

About seven hundred years earlier Isaiah had written, "Look, the virgin is pregnant and bearing a son" (Isaiah 7:14). Matthew tells us that Mary's Son is the fulfillment of that sign (Matthew 1:22-23).

Old Testament links: Isaiah 7:14 (fulfilled)

1:32-33 *He will be great and will be called Son of **the** Most High; and **the** Lord God will give Him the throne of David His father, and He will reign over the house of Jacob to the ages, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*

Now Gabriel tells Mary who this Son will be. "He will be great." John was to be great "before the Lord" (1:15). Of Jesus the angel simply says, "He will be great," with no limit. He "will be called Son of the Most High." The Most High is God. Jesus is the Son of God.

"The Lord God will give Him the throne of David His father." God had promised David that one of his descendants would sit on his throne forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 9:6-7). Through Mary, Jesus was a true descendant of David. Through Joseph, He would be David's legal heir as well.

"And He will reign over the house of Jacob to the ages, and of His kingdom there will be no end." I take these words at face value. The house of Jacob is Israel. Jesus will reign over Israel, from David's throne, forever. He was rejected at His first coming, but God's promise has not been canceled. When Jesus returns in glory, He will set up His kingdom on the earth and reign for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-6), and His kingdom will go on into eternity. God has not replaced Israel. He has a future for that nation (Romans 11:25-29), and Gabriel's words to Mary will be fulfilled to the letter.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 9:7 (alluded to); 2 Samuel 7:13-16 (alluded to)

1:34 *Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I do not know a man?"*

"How will this be, since I do not know a man?" To "know" a man is a Bible way of speaking about sexual relations (Genesis 4:1). Mary was a virgin, and she said so plainly.

Compare her question to Zechariah's. He asked, "By what will I know this?" He wanted proof. Mary asked "How will this be." She did not doubt that it would happen. She only asked how, since she had never been with a man. That is why Gabriel rebuked Zechariah and simply answered Mary.

1:35 *And answering, the angel said to her, "**The** Holy Spirit will come upon you, and **the** power of **the** Most High will overshadow you; therefore also the holy **One** being born of you will be called Son of God.*

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." This is how Jesus would be conceived. There would be no human father. God Himself, by His Holy Spirit, would create life in Mary's womb. The word "overshadow" is used of the cloud of God's glory that came over the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35) and of the cloud at the transfiguration (9:34).

"Therefore also the holy One being born of you will be called Son of God." This is the virgin birth, or more exactly the virgin conception. It is not a small detail. It means Jesus is truly human, born of a human mother, and truly God, the Son of God with no human father. It also means He was born without the sin nature passed down from Adam. Isaiah foretold that a virgin would bear a son (Isaiah 7:14), and Matthew tells us this is its fulfillment (Matthew 1:22-23). Some people say a virgin birth is impossible. Gabriel answers that in verse 37.

1:36-37 *And look, Elizabeth your relative, she also has conceived a son in her old age; and this is **the** sixth month for her who is called barren. For with God no declaration will be impossible."*

Gabriel gives Mary a sign she did not ask for: "Elizabeth your relative, she also has conceived a son in her old age." The Bible does not tell us exactly how they were related. If God could give a son to an old woman who had always been barren, He could do what He promised Mary.

"For with God no declaration will be impossible." The word "declaration" is the Greek rhema, a spoken word. Nothing God says will fail. When God speaks, it happens. That is as true for us today as it was for Mary.

Old Testament links: Genesis 18:14 (alluded to)

1:38 *Then Mary said, "Look, the slave of **the** Lord; may it happen to me according to your declaration." And the angel departed from her.*

"Look, the slave of the Lord; may it happen to me according to your declaration." This is one of the great statements of faith in the Bible. Mary called herself the Lord's slave, a servant who belongs to her master. She did not argue or bargain.

Think about what this would cost her. An unmarried, betrothed girl who was pregnant would face shame and gossip. Joseph might divorce her (Matthew 1:19). Under the Law she could even have faced death. Mary knew all of that, and she said yes to God anyway. She is a model of faith for every believer. When God shows us His will, the right answer is the same: may it happen to me according to Your word.

1:39-40 *Then Mary, having risen up in these days, went into the hill country with haste to a city of Judah, and she entered into the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.*

"Mary, having risen up in these days, went into the hill country with haste to a city of Judah." Luke does not name the town. It would have been a trip of several days from Nazareth, around eighty miles or more. Mary went "with haste." She wanted to see the sign Gabriel had told her about, and she wanted to be with the one woman in the world who might understand what was happening to her.

1:41 *And it came to pass, as Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with **the** Holy Spirit,*

"As Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." Mothers know that babies move. But this was not just a normal kick. Elizabeth tells us in verse 44 that the baby leaped "in exultation," for joy. Gabriel had said John would be filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb (1:15), and here it happens. Before John was born, he was already pointing to Jesus.

This verse also tells us something about unborn children. Luke calls John a "baby" in the womb, the same word he uses for Jesus lying in the manger (2:12, 16). God sees the unborn child as a person.

1:42-43 *and she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed **are** you among women, and blessed **is** the fruit of your womb! And from where **is** this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*

Elizabeth "cried out with a loud voice" and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" Mary had not told her anything yet. The Holy Spirit showed Elizabeth what had happened.

"And from where is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Elizabeth, an older woman and a priest's wife, humbles herself before a young girl from Nazareth. She calls Mary's unborn child "my Lord." Mary may have been pregnant only a few days or weeks, but Elizabeth already knew that the child in her womb was her Lord.

Old Testament links: Judges 5:24 (alluded to)

1:44-45 *For look, as the voice of your greeting came into my ears, the baby leaped in exultation in my womb. And blessed **is** she who believed, that there will be a fulfillment for the things spoken to her from **the** Lord."*

"The baby leaped in exultation in my womb." John's first act was to rejoice in the presence of Jesus.

"And blessed is she who believed, that there will be a fulfillment for the things spoken to her from the Lord." This is why Mary is blessed. She believed God. Elizabeth's husband did not believe, and he was struck silent. Mary believed, and she was blessed. Later, when a woman in the crowd

called out a blessing on the womb that bore Jesus, Jesus said those who hear the word of God and keep it are blessed (11:27-28). Mary is honored because she heard God's word and trusted it.

1:46-48 *And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior, because He has looked upon the lowliness of His slave; for look, from now on all the generations will call me blessed.*

Mary answers with a song of praise. It is often called the Magnificat, from the first word of the song in Latin, which means magnifies. "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." To magnify the Lord means to make Him great in our eyes and in the eyes of others. Mary's song is full of the Old Testament. It sounds a great deal like the song of Hannah, another woman God gave a son (1 Samuel 2:1-10). Mary knew her Bible.

Notice that Mary calls God "my Savior." Only sinners need a Savior. Mary was a godly young woman, but she knew she needed saving just like the rest of us.

"He has looked upon the lowliness of His slave; for look, from now on all the generations will call me blessed." Mary was right. Every generation since has called her blessed. As Bible-believing Christians we should not be shy about that. She was chosen by God, she believed, and she is a beautiful example of faith and humility. We honor her the way Scripture does. At the same time, Scripture never tells us to pray to Mary or to ask her to go to God for us. She pointed to God as her Savior, and later she pointed the servants at Cana to her Son: "Whatever He says to you, do it" (John 2:5). The best way to honor Mary is to do what she did and trust her Son.

Old Testament links: 1 Samuel 2:1 (alluded to)

1:49-50 *For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy **is** His name. And His mercy **is** to generations of generations, to those who fear Him.*

"For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name." Mary does not boast in herself. She praises the God who did great things for her. "His mercy is to generations of generations, to those who fear Him." To fear God is to stand in awe of Him, to take Him seriously, and to trust and obey Him. His mercy did not start with Mary and will not end with her. It reaches every generation that fears Him, including ours.

Old Testament links: Psalm 103:17 (alluded to); Psalm 111:9 (alluded to)

1:51-53 *He has worked strength with His arm; He has scattered **the** proud in **the** thought of their heart. He has brought down rulers from thrones and has exalted **the** lowly. **Those** who hunger He has filled with good **things**, and **those** who are rich He has sent away empty.*

Mary's song now turns to what God does in the world. "He has scattered the proud in the thought of their heart. He has brought down rulers from thrones and has exalted the lowly." God turns the world's order upside down. Mary speaks as if it has already happened, because when God sets out to do something, it is as good as done.

"Those who hunger He has filled with good things, and those who are rich He has sent away empty." This is a theme that runs all through Luke. Jesus will say, "Blessed are the poor," and "woe to you who are rich" (6:20, 24). God is not against people because they have money. He is against pride and self-sufficiency, the attitude that says I do not need God. The person who comes to God hungry will be filled. The person who thinks he has everything will go away with nothing.

Old Testament links: Psalm 107:9 (alluded to); Psalm 89:10 (alluded to)

1:54-55 *He has helped Israel His servant, to remember mercy, just as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed to the age."*

"He has helped Israel His servant, to remember mercy." Mary ends her song with God's faithfulness to Israel. God made promises "to Abraham and to his seed to the age." God promised Abraham that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; 22:18). The birth of Jesus was God remembering that promise. And because the promise was made "to the age," forever, it still stands for Abraham's descendants today.

Old Testament links: Psalm 98:3 (alluded to)

1:56 *And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.*

"Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house." That would bring Elizabeth to about the time of her delivery. Luke does not say whether Mary stayed for John's birth. Then Mary went home to Nazareth, where she would have to face Joseph and the town. Matthew 1:18-25 tells us how God spoke to Joseph in a dream so that he would take Mary as his wife.

1:57-58 *Now for Elizabeth the time was fulfilled for her to give birth, and she bore a son. And the neighbors and her relatives heard that **the** Lord had magnified His mercy with her, and they were rejoicing with her.*

"She bore a son." God kept His word to the day. "The neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had magnified His mercy with her, and they were rejoicing with her." Gabriel had said "many will rejoice at his birth" (1:14), and they did. When God answers a long, painful prayer, it is right for the people around us to rejoice with us (Romans 12:15).

1:59-61 *And it came to pass on the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child, and they were calling him by the name of his father, Zechariah. And answering, his mother said, "No, but he will be called John." And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name."*

"On the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child." God had commanded Abraham that every Jewish boy be circumcised on the eighth day as a sign of the covenant (Genesis 17:12). It was also a common time to name a child.

The relatives "were calling him by the name of his father, Zechariah." It was common to name a son after his father or grandfather. But Elizabeth spoke up: "No, but he will be called John." Zechariah could not speak, but he had surely written down for her what the angel said. The relatives objected: "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." This child would not fit anyone's expectations. He belonged to God.

Old Testament links: Genesis 17:12 (alluded to)

1:62-63 *And they were making signs to his father, what he would want him to be called. And having asked for a writing tablet, he wrote, saying, "John is his name." And they all marveled.*

"They were making signs to his father." This suggests that Zechariah could not hear as well as not speak. The Greek word for "mute" in verse 22 can mean deaf, unable to speak, or both.

Zechariah, "having asked for a writing tablet," wrote, "John is his name." Notice he did not write that the name would be John. He wrote that it already was. It had already been settled by God. Zechariah's months of silence had taught him to believe. "And they all marveled."

1:64-66 *Then his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue, and he was speaking, blessing God. And fear came upon all those dwelling around them; and in all the hill country of Judea all these declarations were being talked about. And all who heard laid **them** up in their heart, saying, "What then will this child be?" And **the** hand of **the** Lord was with him.*

"Then his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue, and he was speaking, blessing God." The first words out of his mouth after nine months of silence were praise. He had doubted, God had disciplined him, and now he worshiped.

"Fear came upon all those dwelling around them." People knew something unusual was happening. The news spread through "all the hill country of Judea," and people asked, "What then will this child be?" They would find out about thirty years later, when John began to preach in the wilderness. "And the hand of the Lord was with him." God's hand on a life is the greatest blessing any child can have. Parents, that is the best thing we can pray for our children.

1:67-69 *And Zechariah his father was filled with **the** Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, "Blessed **be the** Lord, the God of Israel, because He has visited and has worked redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant,*

"Zechariah his father was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied." His song is often called the Benedictus, from the Latin word for "Blessed," its first word. It is a prophecy, given by the Holy Spirit.

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has visited and has worked redemption for His people." Jesus had not been born yet, but Zechariah speaks as if God's redemption had already come. Redemption means setting someone free by paying a price. God had come to set His people free.

"And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant." In the Bible a horn is a picture of strength, like the horns of a strong animal. A horn of salvation is a mighty Savior. Notice where Zechariah says this Savior comes from: "the house of David." Zechariah was from the tribe of Levi. His own son John was not the horn of salvation. Zechariah is speaking of Mary's Son, the Son of David.

Old Testament links: Psalm 18:2 (alluded to); Psalm 132:17 (alluded to); Psalm 111:9 (alluded to)

1:70-75 *just as He spoke through **the** mouth of His holy prophets, those from **the** age: salvation from our enemies and from **the** hand of all those who hate us, to work mercy with our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, **the** oath which He swore to Abraham our father, to grant to us, without fear, having been delivered from **the** hand of our enemies, to serve Him in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.*

This salvation is what God "spoke through the mouth of His holy prophets." It is "salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all those who hate us." God would "remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father."

What was the purpose of this deliverance? "To grant to us, without fear, having been delivered from the hand of our enemies, to serve Him in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life." God saves us so that we can serve Him. We are set free from our enemies, including sin, death and the devil, to live holy lives before Him without fear.

Many Jews in that day expected a Messiah who would only free them from Rome. Zechariah's words do speak of real enemies, and I believe God will one day fully deliver Israel from all its enemies when Jesus returns to reign. But the heart of the deliverance is spiritual. The next verses make that clear.

Old Testament links: Psalm 106:10 (alluded to); Micah 7:20 (alluded to); Genesis 26:3 (alluded to)

1:76-77 *And you, child, will be called a prophet of **the** Most High; for you will go before **the** face of **the** Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people in **the** forgiveness of their sins,*

Now Zechariah turns to his own baby son. "And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High." John would be the first prophet in Israel in four hundred years. "For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways." Again, the One John goes before is "the Lord." Jesus is the Lord.

John's job was "to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins." Here is the heart of it. The greatest enemy we have is not Rome or any other earthly power. It is our own sin. Real salvation starts with forgiveness. John would preach repentance and point people to the One who could take their sins away (John 1:29).

Old Testament links: Isaiah 40:3 (alluded to); Malachi 3:1 (alluded to)

1:78-79 *because of **the** tender mercy of our God, in which **the** Sunrise from on high has visited us, to shine upon those sitting in darkness and **the** shadow of death, to direct our feet into **the** way of peace."*

"Because of the tender mercy of our God." Salvation comes because God is merciful, not because we deserve it. "The Sunrise from on high has visited us." The word for "Sunrise" means the dawn, the rising of light. Malachi spoke of the sun of righteousness rising with healing (Malachi 4:2). Jesus is the dawn after a long night.

He comes "to shine upon those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, to direct our feet into the way of peace." Isaiah spoke of the people who walked in darkness seeing a great light (Isaiah 9:2). Without Christ, people sit in darkness, under the shadow of death. Jesus comes to bring light and to guide us into peace with God.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 9:2 (alluded to); Malachi 4:2 (alluded to); Psalm 107:10 (alluded to)

1:80 *And the child was growing and was being strengthened in spirit, and he was in the deserts until **the** day of his public appearance to Israel.*

"The child was growing and was being strengthened in spirit, and he was in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel." Luke skips about thirty years in one verse. John grew up and lived in the wilderness, the dry, empty country of Judea near the Dead Sea. Some have suggested he had contact with the Jewish group at Qumran, near the Dead Sea, but Scripture doesn't tell us, and it is only a guess. What we know is that God was preparing him in quiet, out of sight, for the day he would step out and call Israel to repent. God often prepares His servants in hidden places before He uses them in public.

Chapter 1 Summary

Luke wrote an orderly account, built on eyewitness testimony, so that Theophilus, and we, could be sure of what we have been taught. In the days of Herod, the angel Gabriel told the old priest Zechariah in the temple that his barren wife Elizabeth would bear a son, John, who would go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah. Zechariah doubted and was struck silent. Six months later Gabriel told Mary, a virgin in Nazareth betrothed to Joseph, that by the Holy Spirit she would conceive the Son of God, named Jesus, who would reign on David's throne over the house of Jacob forever. Mary believed and gave herself to God as His servant. When she visited Elizabeth, the baby John leaped for joy, and Mary sang her song of praise to God her Savior. When John was born, Zechariah wrote "John is his name," his voice came back, and he prophesied of the Savior from David's house and of his own son, who would prepare the way and give knowledge of salvation in the forgiveness of sins.

Chapter 1 Study Questions

1. Why did Luke write his Gospel, and how did he go about it? (1:1-4)

2. How does Luke describe Zechariah and Elizabeth, and what sorrow did they carry? (1:6-7)

3. What did the angel say John would do? (1:15-17)

4. What is the difference between Zechariah's question and Mary's question to the angel? (1:18, 34)

5. What did Gabriel say about who Jesus is and about His kingdom? (1:31-33)

6. How did Mary respond to God's plan, and what might it have cost her? (1:38)

7. Why does Elizabeth say Mary is blessed? (1:45)

8. According to Zechariah, what is the heart of the salvation John would point to? (1:77)

9. Is there a long-standing prayer you have stopped expecting God to answer? What does this chapter teach you about that? (1:13, 37)

10. Mary said, "may it happen to me according to your declaration." Is there an area of your life where God is asking you to say the same?

Chapter 2: The Savior Is Born

Scripture

2:1-20 Now it came to pass in those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus for all the world to be registered. This registration first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. And all were going to be registered, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of ***the*** city of Nazareth, to Judea, to ***the*** city of David which is called Bethlehem, because of his being of ***the*** house and family of David, to register with Mary, who was betrothed to him, ***his*** wife, being pregnant. And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her son, the firstborn, and she wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in the manger, because there was no place for them in the lodging place. And ***there*** were shepherds in the same region living out in the fields and keeping watches of the night over their flock. And look, an angel of ***the*** Lord stood by them, and ***the*** glory of ***the*** Lord shone around them, and they feared a great fear. And the angel said to them, "Do not fear; for look, I announce to you great joy as good news, which will be to all the people. For there has been born to you today a Savior, who is Christ ***the*** Lord, in ***the*** city of David. And this ***is*** the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in the manger." And suddenly ***there*** was with the angel a multitude of ***the*** heavenly army, praising God and saying, "Glory in ***the*** highest to God, and on earth peace, among men good will!" And it came to pass, as the angels departed from them into heaven, and the men, the shepherds, said to one another, "Let us go over now to Bethlehem and see this declaration that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they came, having hurried, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. And having seen ***Him***, they made known widely the declaration which had been spoken to them concerning this child. And all those who heard marveled concerning the things spoken by the shepherds to them. But Mary was treasuring up all these declarations, pondering ***them*** in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all ***the things*** which they had heard and seen, just as it was spoken to them.

2:21-40 And when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising the child, then His name was called Jesus, the ***name*** called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification were fulfilled according to the law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present ***Him*** to the Lord, just as it has been written in ***the*** law of ***the*** Lord, "Every male opening a womb shall be called holy to the Lord," and to give a sacrifice according to what has been said in ***the*** law of ***the*** Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." And look, ***there*** was a man in Jerusalem whose name ***was*** Simeon, and this man ***was*** righteous and devout, waiting for ***the*** consolation of Israel; and ***the*** Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit ***that he would*** not see death before he should see the Christ of ***the*** Lord. And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, for them to do according to the custom of the law concerning Him, and he himself received Him into his arms and blessed God and said, "Now You are releasing Your slave, Master, according to Your declaration, in peace, because my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before ***the*** face of all the peoples, a light for revelation of ***the*** Gentiles, and glory of Your people Israel." And Joseph and His mother were marveling at the things being spoken concerning Him. And

Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Look, this ***One*** is appointed for ***the*** falling and rising up of many in Israel, and for a sign spoken against (and a sword will go through your own soul also), so that ***the*** thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." And there was Anna, a prophetess, a daughter of Phanuel, of ***the*** tribe of Asher. She ***was*** advanced in many days, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she ***was*** a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, serving with fastings and petitions night and day. And she, having come up at that very hour, was giving praise in response to the Lord, and she was speaking concerning Him to all those waiting for redemption in Jerusalem. And when they had performed all the things according to the law of ***the*** Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child was growing and was being strengthened in spirit, being filled with wisdom; and ***the*** grace of God was upon Him.

2:41-52 And His parents were going every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years ***old***, they having gone up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and having completed the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother did not know ***it***. But having supposed Him to be in the caravan, they went a day's journey, and they were seeking Him among the relatives and among the acquaintances. And not having found Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in ***the*** midst of the teachers, both hearing them and questioning them. And all those hearing Him were amazed at His understanding and answers. And having seen Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Child, why did You do thus to us? Look, Your father and I, being in anguish, were seeking You." And He said to them, "Why ***is it*** that you were seeking Me? Did you not know that I must be in the ***things*** of My Father?" And they themselves did not understand the declaration which He spoke to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He was being subject to them. And His mother was keeping all these declarations in her heart. And Jesus was advancing in wisdom and stature and favor with God and men.

Chapter 2 Preview

Chapter 2 gives us the best-known birth story in the world. Caesar Augustus, the most powerful man on earth, orders a registration, and without knowing it he moves a young couple from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the town where the prophet Micah said the Ruler of Israel would be born. There Mary gives birth to her firstborn Son and lays Him in a manger, because there is no room for them. That night an angel announces the news, not to kings or priests, but to shepherds in the fields, and the sky fills with angels praising God.

Forty days later Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple, keeping the Law of Moses. An old man named Simeon takes the baby in his arms and thanks God that he has seen His salvation, a light for the Gentiles and the glory of Israel. He also warns Mary that a sword will pierce her soul. An old widow named Anna gives thanks and speaks about Him to everyone waiting for redemption. The chapter ends with the only story we have of Jesus as a boy: at twelve years old He stays behind in the temple, listening to the teachers and asking them questions, because He must be about His Father's things.

Chapter 2 Study

2:1 *Now it came to pass in those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus for all the world to be registered.*

"A decree went out from Caesar Augustus for all the world to be registered." Augustus was the first Roman emperor. He ruled from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14, and he liked to be called the bringer of peace and even a savior. Luke is about to tell us where the true Savior was born.

A registration, or census, was a count of the people so that Rome could collect taxes. "All the world" means the Roman world, the lands under Rome's rule. Augustus thought he was running the world. In fact God was using him to bring His Son to the right town at the right time. God is in charge even of the decisions of rulers who do not know Him (Proverbs 21:1).

2:2 *This registration first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.*

"This registration first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria." This verse has puzzled Bible readers for a long time. The Jewish historian Josephus, who wrote near the end of the first century, tells of a census when Quirinius was governor of Syria in about A.D. 6, about ten years after Herod the Great died. But Luke has already told us Jesus was born in the days of Herod (1:5; Matthew 2:1). How do we put that together?

Bible teachers have given several answers. Some point out that the Greek word for first can also mean before, so the verse could mean this registration took place before the one when Quirinius was governor. Others point to evidence that Quirinius held an official post in Syria earlier, in the years before Herod died, perhaps as a military leader alongside the governor, so he could be said to be governing Syria then too. Still others suggest that the registration was ordered and begun under Herod but finished later under Quirinius, and Luke names it by the man who completed it. Luke was a careful historian who names real rulers all through his books, and Luke himself knew about the later census (Acts 5:37). He calls this one the first, which suggests he knew there were two. I believe Luke got it right, even if we cannot be sure today which of these answers is the correct one.

2:3-5 *And all were going to be registered, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of* ***the*** *city of Nazareth, to Judea, to* ***the*** *city of David which is called Bethlehem, because of his being of* ***the*** *house and family of David, to register with Mary, who was betrothed to him,* ***his*** *wife, being pregnant.*

"All were going to be registered, each to his own city." Rome usually counted people where they lived, but in this case people went to the town of their family line. That fits the Jewish way of keeping family records by tribe and clan.

So "Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem." It was a trip of about ninety miles, and it would have taken several days on foot. Bethlehem was a small town about six miles south of Jerusalem. It was called the city of David because David was born and grew up there (1 Samuel 16:1). Seven hundred years earlier Micah had said that out of Bethlehem would come the One who would rule Israel, whose goings

out are "from the days of antiquity" (Micah 5:2). Mary lived in Nazareth. Without Caesar's decree, she would have given birth there. God moved an empire to keep His word.

Mary went with Joseph, "who was betrothed to him, his wife, being pregnant." They were legally married, but as Matthew tells us, Joseph did not have relations with her until after Jesus was born (Matthew 1:24-25).

Old Testament links: Micah 5:2 (fulfilled)

2:6-7 *And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her son, the firstborn, and she wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in the manger, because there was no place for them in the lodging place.*

"The days were fulfilled for her to give birth." Luke does not tell us they arrived that night, as many Christmas plays show. They may have been in Bethlehem for some days.

"She gave birth to her son, the firstborn." Firstborn means He was her first child. It does not mean He was her only child. The Gospels later speak of His brothers and sisters (8:19-21; Mark 6:3).

"She wrapped Him in swaddling cloths." Swaddling cloths were long strips of cloth wrapped snugly around a newborn. Every mother in Israel did this. The Son of God was cared for like any other baby.

"And laid Him in the manger." A manger is a feeding trough for animals. That tells us the birth took place where animals were kept. It may have been a stable, a cave used for animals, which was common around Bethlehem, or the lower room of a house where the family's animals were brought in at night.

"Because there was no place for them in the lodging place." The word Luke uses here can mean an inn, but it can also mean a guest room in a house. Luke uses the same word for the upper room where Jesus ate the last supper (22:11). Either way, there was no room for them. The Creator of the world was born in a place meant for animals. Paul tells us He "emptied Himself, having taken the form of a slave" (Philippians 2:7). From the very beginning, Jesus came low.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 7:14 (fulfilled)

2:8 *And **there** were shepherds in the same region living out in the fields and keeping watches of the night over their flock.*

"There were shepherds in the same region living out in the fields and keeping watches of the night over their flock." Shepherds were not respected people in that day. They were poor, they were often away from home, and their work kept them from keeping all the religious rules about washing and the Sabbath. Some people did not trust them.

Yet God sent His angels to them first. David had been a shepherd in these same fields. And the baby they would see would grow up to call Himself the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). Luke's Gospel is about a Savior for the lowly, and it starts right here.

We do not know the exact date Jesus was born. Shepherds were often in the fields in spring, but some flocks were kept out all year. December 25 was set by the church centuries later. What matters is not the date, but that He came.

2:9 *And look, an angel of **the** Lord stood by them, and **the** glory of **the** Lord shone around them, and they feared a great fear.*

"An angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they feared a great fear." The glory of the Lord is the bright, visible presence of God. Israel had seen it in the cloud over the tabernacle and the temple. Now it shone on a hillside over a group of shepherds. No wonder they were terrified.

2:10-11 *And the angel said to them, "Do not fear; for look, I announce to you great joy as good news, which will be to all the people. For there has been born to you today a Savior, who is Christ **the** Lord, in **the** city of David.*

"Do not fear; for look, I announce to you great joy as good news, which will be to all the people." That is the gospel in one sentence. The news is good, it brings great joy, and it is for everyone.

"For there has been born to you today a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." Look at the three titles. He is a Savior. He came to rescue us from sin and death. He is Christ, the Greek word for Messiah, which means the Anointed One. He is the King God promised to send. And He is the Lord, the same title used in the Greek Old Testament for the name of God. Augustus was called a savior and a lord by the people of his empire. The angel says the real Savior and Lord was just born in a manger in Bethlehem.

Notice also that He was born to you. He came for shepherds, for the poor, for sinners. He came for you.

2:12 *And this **is** the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in the manger."*

"This is the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in the manger." The swaddling cloths were normal. The manger was not. No one laid a newborn in a feeding trough. That is how the shepherds would know which baby it was. The sign of the Savior's coming was humility.

2:13-14 *And suddenly **there** was with the angel a multitude of **the** heavenly army, praising God and saying, "Glory in **the** highest to God, and on earth peace, among men good will!"*

"Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God." Picture the sky filling with angels, an army of heaven, not coming to fight, but to worship.

"Glory in the highest to God, and on earth peace, among men good will!" The birth of Jesus brings glory to God in heaven and peace to men on earth. The peace the angels speak of is first peace with God. Paul writes that having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord

Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). Without Jesus we are at war with God because of our sin. Jesus came to make that peace.

The last phrase is worded a little differently in different Bibles. The SLB follows the Greek text that reads "among men good will," meaning God's good will toward people. Other Greek copies read in a way that many Bibles translate as peace among men with whom He is pleased. Both point to the same truth. The peace comes from God's favor, not from our goodness.

2:15-16 *And it came to pass, as the angels departed from them into heaven, and the men, the shepherds, said to one another, "Let us go over now to Bethlehem and see this declaration that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they came, having hurried, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.*

"Let us go over now to Bethlehem and see this declaration that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." The shepherds did not argue or wait. They believed what God had told them, and they went to see it.

"They came, having hurried, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger." Everything was just as the angel said. When God tells us something, we will always find it to be true.

2:17-18 *And having seen **Him**, they made known widely the declaration which had been spoken to them concerning this child. And all those who heard marveled concerning the things spoken by the shepherds to them.*

"Having seen Him, they made known widely the declaration which had been spoken to them concerning this child." The first people to tell others about Jesus were shepherds. They had no training and no standing in society, but they had seen Him, and they could not keep quiet. That is what a witness is: someone who tells what he has seen and heard.

"All those who heard marveled." Luke does not say they all believed. Many people marvel at Jesus and then go on with their lives.

2:19 *But Mary was treasuring up all these declarations, pondering **them** in her heart.*

"But Mary was treasuring up all these declarations, pondering them in her heart." Mary did not understand everything at once. She stored these things up and thought about them over the years. It may well be that Luke heard these memories from Mary herself, years later. They had been kept in her heart all that time.

That is a good habit for us. When God does something in our lives, we should not rush past it. We should treasure it and think about it.

2:20 *And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all **the things** which they had heard and seen, just as it was spoken to them.*

"The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen, just as it was spoken to them." They went back to their sheep. Their jobs did not change, but they did. Meeting Jesus does not always change our work, but it changes how we do it, and it fills us with praise.

2:21 *And when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising the child, then His name was called Jesus, the **name** called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.*

"When eight days were fulfilled for circumcising the child, then His name was called Jesus," Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day, just like John (1:59), in obedience to the Law (Genesis 17:12; Leviticus 12:3). Paul tells us He was "born under law" (Galatians 4:4). He kept the Law perfectly from His first week of life, so He could redeem those who could not.

He was given the name "called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb." Mary and Joseph obeyed God in naming Him.

Old Testament links: Leviticus 12:3 (alluded to)

2:22-24 *And when the days of her purification were fulfilled according to the law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present **Him** to the Lord, just as it has been written in **the** law of **the** Lord, "Every male opening a womb shall be called holy to the Lord," and to give a sacrifice according to what has been said in **the** law of **the** Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."*

"When the days of her purification were fulfilled according to the law of Moses." The Law said that after a woman gave birth to a son, she was to wait forty days, and then she would offer a sacrifice to be ceremonially clean again (Leviticus 12:1-8). This was not about sin in having a baby. It was part of the ceremonial law that taught Israel about holiness.

"They brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord." God had said every firstborn son belonged to Him (Exodus 13:2, 12-15). This reminded Israel that God had spared their firstborn sons at the first Passover in Egypt. The firstborn son was presented to the Lord and then bought back with a payment of five shekels (Numbers 18:15-16).

They offered "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." The Law asked for a lamb and a bird. But if a family was too poor to afford a lamb, they could bring two birds instead (Leviticus 12:8). That tells us Mary and Joseph were poor. The Lamb of God Himself was being presented in the temple, and His parents could not afford a lamb.

Old Testament links: Exodus 13:2 (quoted); Exodus 13:12 (quoted); Leviticus 12:8 (quoted); Leviticus 12:4-6 (alluded to)

2:25-26 *And look, **there** was a man in Jerusalem whose name **was** Simeon, and this man **was** righteous and devout, waiting for **the** consolation of Israel; and **the** Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit **that he would** not see death before he should see the Christ of **the** Lord.*

"There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel." The consolation of Israel means the comfort God promised His people when the Messiah would come (Isaiah 40:1-2). Simeon was one of a faithful few who were still watching and waiting.

"The Holy Spirit was upon him." Notice how much the Holy Spirit is at work in these first chapters of Luke: John, Elizabeth, Zechariah, Mary, and now Simeon. The Spirit "revealed to him" that he would not die "before he should see the Christ of the Lord." The Bible does not say how old Simeon was, but these words suggest he was old.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 40:1 (alluded to)

2:27-28 *And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, for them to do according to the custom of the law concerning Him, and he himself received Him into his arms and blessed God and said,*

"He came in the Spirit into the temple." On just the right day, at just the right time, the Spirit led Simeon to the temple courts. God's timing is perfect. Thousands of people passed through the temple, and many babies were presented there. The Spirit showed Simeon which one was the Christ.

"He himself received Him into his arms and blessed God." Imagine this old man holding the baby he had waited his whole life to see. He did not see a king's robes or an army. He saw a poor couple and a little baby, and he knew he was holding God's salvation.

2:29-32 *"Now You are releasing Your slave, Master, according to Your declaration, in peace, because my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before **the** face of all the peoples, a light for revelation of **the** Gentiles, and glory of Your people Israel."*

"Now You are releasing Your slave, Master, according to Your declaration, in peace." This song is often called the Nunc Dimittis, from its first words in Latin, which mean now You release. Simeon calls himself a slave and God his Master. He is like a watchman who has finished his watch and is now allowed to go home. He was ready to die, because he had seen what God promised.

"My eyes have seen Your salvation." Salvation is not just a plan or an idea. Salvation is a Person. To see Jesus is to see God's salvation.

"Which You have prepared before the face of all the peoples, a light for revelation of the Gentiles, and glory of Your people Israel." Simeon had read his Isaiah. God had said His Servant would be a light to the nations, His salvation to the end of the earth (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6). The Gentiles are all the people who are not Jews. Simeon saw that this baby was for the whole world. And He would be the glory of Israel. Jesus is not a Savior for the Gentiles in place of Israel. He is Israel's own Messiah and the light of the nations too.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 49:6 (alluded to); Isaiah 42:6 (alluded to); Isaiah 52:10 (alluded to)

2:33 *And Joseph and His mother were marveling at the things being spoken concerning Him.*

"Joseph and His mother were marveling at the things being spoken concerning Him." They knew about the angel's words, but each new word from God still amazed them. Luke is careful here. He calls Joseph by name and Mary His mother. Joseph was Jesus' legal father and raised Him, but Jesus had no human father.

2:34-35 *And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Look, this **One** is appointed for **the** falling and rising up of many in Israel, and for a sign spoken against (and a sword will go through your own soul also), so that **the** thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."*

Then Simeon said something hard. "Look, this One is appointed for the falling and rising up of many in Israel." Jesus would divide people. Some would fall because they rejected Him. Others would rise because they believed in Him. Isaiah spoke of a stone that some would stumble over and others would build on (Isaiah 8:14; 28:16).

He would be "a sign spoken against." Jesus would be opposed, argued with, and finally crucified. "So that the thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." How a person responds to Jesus shows what is in his heart.

"And a sword will go through your own soul also." This was a word for Mary alone. Being the mother of the Messiah would bring her great sorrow. About thirty-three years later she would stand at the foot of the cross and watch her Son die (John 19:25). What mother could bear that? Mary did, and she stayed.

2:36-37 *And there was Anna, a prophetess, a daughter of Phanuel, of **the** tribe of Asher. She **was** advanced in many days, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she **was** a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, serving with fastings and petitions night and day.*

"There was Anna, a prophetess, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher." A prophetess is a woman who speaks God's message. Asher was one of the northern tribes of Israel. Most of those tribes had been scattered by Assyria about seven hundred years earlier, but some families had kept their records.

She had been married seven years, and then her husband died. "She was a widow of about eighty-four years." The Greek can mean she was eighty-four years old, or that she had been a widow for

eighty-four years, which would make her over a hundred. Either way, she had lived most of her life alone.

But she did not waste those years. She "did not depart from the temple, serving with fastings and petitions night and day." She gave her life to prayer. Widows were among the poorest and most overlooked people in that society. Luke shows us that God saw her, and He let her see His Son.

2:38 *And she, having come up at that very hour, was giving praise in response to the Lord, and she was speaking concerning Him to all those waiting for redemption in Jerusalem.*

"Having come up at that very hour, was giving praise in response to the Lord." Like Simeon, she came at just the right moment. And "she was speaking concerning Him to all those waiting for redemption in Jerusalem." Anna became one of the first to tell others about Jesus. There was a group of faithful people in Jerusalem waiting for God to redeem His people, and Anna made sure they knew He had come.

Luke loves to pair a man and a woman: Zechariah and Mary, Simeon and Anna. Both men and women were witnesses of God's salvation from the very beginning.

2:39-40 *And when they had performed all the things according to the law of **the** Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child was growing and was being strengthened in spirit, being filled with wisdom; and **the** grace of God was upon Him.*

"When they had performed all the things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth." Luke moves quickly here. Matthew tells us about the wise men, the flight to Egypt, and Herod's killing of the children of Bethlehem (Matthew 2), which took place before the family settled in Nazareth. Luke skips those events. Each Gospel writer chose what to include for his own purpose.

"The child was growing and was being strengthened in spirit, being filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." Jesus grew up like a real boy. He was fully God, but He was also fully human, and He grew in body and in wisdom. Scripture doesn't give us stories of miracles in His childhood. The so-called lost gospels that tell such stories were written much later and are not Scripture.

2:41-42 *And His parents were going every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years **old**, they having gone up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast,*

"His parents were going every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover." The Law told every Jewish man to appear before the Lord three times a year (Deuteronomy 16:16), but many who lived far away went only once a year, at Passover. Passover remembered the night God brought Israel out of Egypt, when the blood of a lamb on the doorposts saved the firstborn. Joseph and Mary were faithful in worship, and they brought their family.

"When He was twelve years old." In later Jewish custom, a boy took on the duties of the Law as an adult at about thirteen. At twelve, Jesus was close to that age.

2:43-45 *and having completed the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother did not know* ***it****. But having supposed Him to be in the caravan, they went a day's journey, and they were seeking Him among the relatives and among the acquaintances. And not having found Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.*

"As they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother did not know it." This was not careless parenting. Families traveled to the feasts in large caravans of relatives and neighbors from the same towns. Children ran among the families. A twelve-year-old boy would be expected to be with cousins or friends. They "went a day's journey" before they discovered He was missing.

They searched among the relatives and friends, and then "they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him." Any parent who has lost a child for even a few minutes knows the fear they felt.

2:46-47 *And it came to pass, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in* ***the*** *midst of the teachers, both hearing them and questioning them. And all those hearing Him were amazed at His understanding and answers.*

"After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and questioning them." The three days likely means one day out, one day back, and a day searching the city. The teachers were the rabbis, the experts in the Law, who often sat in the temple courts and taught anyone who wanted to listen.

Jesus was not lecturing them. He was "hearing them and questioning them," like a good student. But "all those hearing Him were amazed at His understanding and answers." Even at twelve, His grasp of God's Word went far beyond His years.

2:48 *And having seen Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Child, why did You do thus to us? Look, Your father and I, being in anguish, were seeking You."*

"Child, why did You do thus to us? Look, Your father and I, being in anguish, were seeking You." Mary speaks as any mother would. She calls Joseph His father, which was right. He was the man who raised Jesus and stood as His father in the eyes of the law and the town.

2:49-50 *And He said to them, "Why* ***is it*** *that you were seeking Me? Did you not know that I must be in the* ***things*** *of My Father?" And they themselves did not understand the declaration which He spoke to them.*

"Why is it that you were seeking Me? Did you not know that I must be in the things of My Father?" These are the first words of Jesus recorded in the Bible. The Greek is short and can mean in My Father's house or about My Father's business. Both are true. The point is the same. Mary had spoken of His father. Jesus gently answers that His Father is God. At twelve years old, Jesus knew who He was and why He had come. Notice the word must. All through Luke, Jesus will speak of what He must do, all the way to the cross (9:22; 24:7, 26).

"They themselves did not understand the declaration which He spoke to them." Even Mary and Joseph did not fully understand. God's ways often go beyond what we can grasp at the time.

2:51 *And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He was being subject to them. And His mother was keeping all these declarations in her heart.*

"He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He was being subject to them." This is just as remarkable as the scene in the temple. The Son of God, who knew His Father's work, went home and obeyed His earthly parents. He kept the fifth commandment, honor your father and mother, perfectly. For about eighteen more years He lived a quiet life in Nazareth. Mark tells us He worked as a carpenter (Mark 6:3).

"His mother was keeping all these declarations in her heart." Again, Mary treasured what she saw and heard. She did not understand it all, but she held on to it.

2:52 *And Jesus was advancing in wisdom and stature and favor with God and men.*

"Jesus was advancing in wisdom and stature and favor with God and men." He grew mentally in wisdom, physically in stature, spiritually in favor with God, and socially in favor with men. Jesus did not skip any part of being human. He was a baby, a boy, a teenager, and a young man. That is why Hebrews tells us He can sympathize with our weaknesses, since He was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Whatever stage of life you are in, Jesus has been there.

Chapter 2 Summary

Caesar Augustus ordered a registration, and God used it to bring Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, the city of David, where Jesus was born and laid in a manger. An angel announced to poor shepherds the good news of great joy for all people: a Savior, Christ the Lord, had been born, and a multitude of angels praised God. The shepherds found the baby, spread the news, and returned praising God, while Mary treasured these things in her heart. Jesus was circumcised and named, and at forty days He was presented in the temple with the offering of the poor. Simeon, led by the Spirit, held Him and praised God for His salvation, a light for the Gentiles and the glory of Israel, and warned Mary of the sword that would pierce her soul. The widow Anna gave thanks and spoke of Him to those waiting for redemption. At twelve, Jesus stayed behind in the temple, listening and asking questions, and told His worried parents that He must be in the things of His Father. Then He went home, obeyed them, and grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and men.

Chapter 2 Study Questions

1. How did God use Caesar Augustus to fulfill Micah 5:2? (2:1-4)

2. Why was Jesus laid in a manger? What does that tell you about how He came? (2:7)

3. Why do you think God announced the birth to shepherds first? (2:8-11)

4. What three titles does the angel give Jesus, and what does each one mean? (2:11)

5. What does the offering Mary and Joseph brought tell us about them? (2:24)

6. What did Simeon say Jesus would be for the Gentiles and for Israel? (2:30-32)

7. What hard word did Simeon speak to Mary? (2:34-35)

8. What did Jesus say to His parents in the temple, and what does it show about Him? (2:49)

9. The shepherds told others what they had seen. Who in your life needs to hear about Jesus from you?

10. Anna spent her years of loss in prayer and worship. How can God use a hard season in your life to draw you closer to Him? (2:36-38)

Chapter 3: John the Baptist and the Son of God

Scripture

3:1-20 Now in ***the*** fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, while Pontius Pilate was governing Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother was tetrarch of Iturea and ***the*** region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, in the time of ***the*** high priests Annas and Caiaphas, a declaration of God came upon John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. And he went into all the surrounding region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins, as it has been written in ***the*** book of ***the*** words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, "***The*** voice of ***one*** crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of ***the*** Lord; make His paths straight. Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be made low; and the crooked ***places*** will become straight, and the rough ***roads*** smooth ways; and all flesh will see the salvation of God.'" Therefore he was saying to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "Offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore produce fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham ***as*** father.' For I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And already also the ax is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into ***the*** fire." And the crowds were asking him, saying, "What then shall we do?" And answering, he says to them, "The one having two tunics, let him share with the one not having ***any***; and the one having food, let him do likewise." And tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect nothing more than what has been appointed to you." And those serving as soldiers were also asking him, saying, "And what shall we ourselves do?" And he said to them, "Extort from no one, nor accuse falsely, and be content with your wages." Now as the people were expecting, and all were reasoning in their hearts concerning John, whether he himself might be the Christ, John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but the ***One*** mightier than I is coming, of whom I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandals. He Himself will baptize you with ***the*** Holy Spirit and fire, whose winnowing fork ***is*** in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean His threshing floor and will gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire." So then, exhorting many other things also, he was preaching the gospel to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him concerning Herodias the wife of Philip his brother, and concerning all ***the*** evils which Herod had done, added this also to all, and he locked up John in the prison.

3:21-38 Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also having been baptized and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form as a dove upon Him, and a voice came out of heaven, saying, "You are My Son, the beloved; in You I was well pleased." And Jesus Himself, when beginning, was about thirty years ***old***, being, as was supposed, son of Joseph, the ***son*** of Heli, the ***son*** of Matthat, the ***son*** of Levi, the ***son*** of Melchi, the ***son*** of Janna, the ***son*** of Joseph, the ***son*** of Mattathias, the ***son*** of Amos, the ***son*** of Nahum, the ***son*** of Esli, the ***son*** of Naggai, the ***son*** of Maath, the ***son*** of Mattathias, the ***son*** of Semei, the ***son*** of Joseph, the ***son*** of Judah, the ***son*** of Joanna, the ***son*** of Rhesa, the ***son*** of Zerubbabel, the ***son*** of Salathiel, the ***son*** of Neri, the ***son*** of Melchi, the ***son*** of Addi, the ***son*** of Cosam, the ***son*** of

Elmodam, the ***son*** of Er, the ***son*** of Jose, the ***son*** of Eliezer, the ***son*** of Jorim, the ***son*** of Matthat, the ***son*** of Levi, the ***son*** of Simeon, the ***son*** of Judah, the ***son*** of Joseph, the ***son*** of Jonan, the ***son*** of Eliakim, the ***son*** of Melea, the ***son*** of Menam, the ***son*** of Mattatha, the ***son*** of Nathan, the ***son*** of David, the ***son*** of Jesse, the ***son*** of Obed, the ***son*** of Boaz, the ***son*** of Salmon, the ***son*** of Nahshon, the ***son*** of Amminadab, the ***son*** of Aram, the ***son*** of Hezron, the ***son*** of Perez, the ***son*** of Judah, the ***son*** of Jacob, the ***son*** of Isaac, the ***son*** of Abraham, the ***son*** of Terah, the ***son*** of Nahor, the ***son*** of Serug, the ***son*** of Reu, the ***son*** of Peleg, the ***son*** of Eber, the ***son*** of Sala, the ***son*** of Cainan, the ***son*** of Arphaxad, the ***son*** of Shem, the ***son*** of Noah, the ***son*** of Lamech, the ***son*** of Methuselah, the ***son*** of Enoch, the ***son*** of Jared, the ***son*** of Mahalalel, the ***son*** of Cainan, the ***son*** of Enosh, the ***son*** of Seth, the ***son*** of Adam, the ***son*** of God.

Chapter 3 Preview

About thirty years have passed since the end of chapter 1. Luke sets the scene like a historian, naming the emperor, the governor, three rulers and two high priests, and then he tells us that the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. John preaches a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, just as Isaiah foretold. He does not soften his message. He warns the crowds that being Abraham's children will not save them, and when they ask what they should do, he gives plain answers to ordinary people, tax collectors and soldiers. He tells them that One mightier than he is coming, who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. John's preaching costs him his freedom when he rebukes Herod.

Then Jesus is baptized. As He prays, heaven opens, the Holy Spirit comes down on Him in a bodily form like a dove, and the Father speaks from heaven: "You are My Son, the beloved." Luke closes the chapter with Jesus' family line, traced backward all the way from Joseph to Adam, and then to God. Jesus is not only the Son of Abraham and the Son of David. He is the Savior for the whole human race.

Chapter 3 Study

3:1-2 *Now in **the** fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, while Pontius Pilate was governing Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother was tetrarch of Iturea and **the** region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, in the time of **the** high priests Annas and Caiaphas, a declaration of God came upon John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.*

Luke gives us six names to date when John began. "The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." Tiberius followed Augustus as emperor in A.D. 14, and he had shared some power with Augustus for a few years before that. Depending on which year you count from, the fifteenth year falls somewhere around A.D. 26 to 29. "Pontius Pilate was governing Judea." Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from about A.D. 26 to 36. "Herod was tetrarch of Galilee." This is Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great. A tetrarch was a ruler over part of a kingdom. His brother Philip ruled the lands to the northeast, and Lysanias ruled Abilene, northwest of Damascus.

"In the time of the high priests Annas and Caiaphas." Under the Law there was only one high priest at a time. Annas had been high priest, but the Romans removed him in about A.D. 15.

Several of his sons and his son-in-law Caiaphas held the office after him. The Jews still saw Annas as the real high priest, so both names were used (John 18:13; Acts 4:6). Caiaphas held the office officially.

Why does Luke give us all these names? Because this is history. These were real men, and the gospel is rooted in real time and place. Then, after all those powerful names, Luke says "a declaration of God came upon John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness." The word of God did not come to the emperor in Rome or the high priest in the temple. It came to a man in the desert. That is how God often works.

3:3 *And he went into all the surrounding region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins,*

"He went into all the surrounding region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins." To repent means to change your mind about sin and about God, and to turn around. It is more than feeling sorry. It is a turning of the whole life. Baptism means to dip or immerse in water.

John's baptism was an outward sign that a person had repented and was ready for the coming Messiah. Jews already had washings for being made clean, and later Jewish writings speak of Gentiles being immersed when they became Jews, though we can't be sure how early that custom began. John was telling Jews that they needed to come as sinners who needed to be made clean. The water did not wash away sins. It was a picture of the cleansing God gives when a person truly repents. Christian baptism today is like that too. It does not save us, but it is the believer's obedient, public step after repentance and faith.

3:4-6 *as it has been written in **the** book of **the** words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, "**The** voice of **one** crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of **the** Lord; make His paths straight. Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be made low; and the crooked **places** will become straight, and the rough **roads** smooth ways; and all flesh will see the salvation of God.'"*

Luke quotes Isaiah 40:3-5. In ancient times, before a king visited a region, workers went ahead to fix the roads. They filled in the low places, cut down the high places, and straightened out the curves. John was that road crew, but for hearts. "Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight."

"Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be made low." The proud must be brought low, and the humble lifted up. Hearts that are crooked must be made straight. That is what repentance does.

Luke quotes one line further than Matthew and Mark: "and all flesh will see the salvation of God." That fits Luke's whole Gospel. Salvation is not for one nation only. It is for all flesh, every kind of person.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 40:3-5 (quoted)

3:7 *Therefore he was saying to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "Offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?*

"Offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?" That is a hard way to greet a crowd. Vipers are poisonous snakes. When a field was burned, snakes would flee the fire. John was saying that many in the crowd were coming to be baptized only to escape judgment, not because they had truly turned from their sin. Matthew tells us that many Pharisees and Sadducees were in the crowd (Matthew 3:7).

John spoke of "the coming wrath." God's anger against sin is real. Jesus spoke of it too, and so do the apostles. A preacher who never warns of God's judgment is not preaching the whole truth. But the purpose of the warning is mercy: to send people running to the One who saves.

3:8 *Therefore produce fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham **as** father.' For I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.*

"Produce fruits worthy of repentance." Real repentance shows itself in a changed life. You can tell a tree by its fruit.

"Do not begin to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham as father.'" Many Jews believed that being descended from Abraham guaranteed them a place in God's kingdom. John says no. "God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham." There may be a play on words here, since in Hebrew the words for children (banim) and stones (abanim) sound alike. God does not need anyone. Being born into a believing family is a great gift, but it does not make you a child of God. Each person must repent and believe.

3:9 *And already also the ax is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into **the** fire."*

"Already also the ax is laid at the root of the trees." The ax is not hanging on the wall. It is already set against the tree, ready to swing. Judgment was near. "Every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." John's message was urgent. There was no time to wait.

3:10-11 *And the crowds were asking him, saying, "What then shall we do?" And answering, he says to them, "The one having two tunics, let him share with the one not having **any**; and the one having food, let him do likewise."*

"What then shall we do?" That is the right question. When God's Word cuts to the heart, the right response is to ask what He wants us to do.

John's answer is practical. "The one having two tunics, let him share with the one not having any; and the one having food, let him do likewise." A tunic was the shirt-like garment worn next to the skin. Most people had only one or two. John did not tell them to go live in the desert like him. He told them to love their neighbor in plain, everyday ways. Repentance changes how we treat people in need.

3:12-13 *And tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect nothing more than what has been appointed to you."*

"Tax collectors also came to be baptized." Tax collectors were Jews who worked for Rome. They bid for the right to collect taxes in an area, and they could charge more than the tax and keep the difference. Many of them got rich by cheating their own people, and they were hated as traitors and thieves.

"Collect nothing more than what has been appointed to you." John did not tell them to quit their jobs. He told them to do their jobs honestly. Repentance does not always mean changing careers, but it does mean changing how we work.

3:14 *And those serving as soldiers were also asking him, saying, "And what shall we ourselves do?" And he said to them, "Extort from no one, nor accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."*

"Those serving as soldiers were also asking him." These may have been Jewish soldiers serving Herod Antipas, or soldiers who guarded the tax collectors. Soldiers in that day were poorly paid and often used their power to bully people for money.

"Extort from no one, nor accuse falsely, and be content with your wages." Again, John does not tell them to leave the army. He tells them not to use their power to take what is not theirs. "Be content with your wages" is a good word for every worker. Greed and complaining are not the fruit of a changed heart.

3:15-16 *Now as the people were expecting, and all were reasoning in their hearts concerning John, whether he himself might be the Christ, John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but the **One** mightier than I is coming, of whom I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandals. He Himself will baptize you with **the** Holy Spirit and fire,*

"All were reasoning in their hearts concerning John, whether he himself might be the Christ." The people were waiting for the Messiah, and John was so powerful a preacher that some thought he might be the One.

John points them away from himself. "I indeed baptize you with water; but the One mightier than I is coming, of whom I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandals." Untying a master's sandals was the job of the lowest slave. John, the greatest prophet, said he was not worthy even to do that for Jesus.

"He Himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." John's baptism was with water. Jesus would give the Holy Spirit. That began at Pentecost, when the Spirit came on the believers and there appeared tongues "as of fire" (Acts 2:3). Bible teachers read the fire in two main ways. Some see it as the fire of the Spirit, who purifies believers. Others see it as the fire of judgment on those who reject Christ, since John goes on in the next verse to speak of "unquenchable fire." Some see both: the Messiah brings the Spirit to those who repent and judgment to those who do not.

3:17 *whose winnowing fork **is** in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean His threshing floor and will gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire."*

"Whose winnowing fork is in His hand." At harvest, farmers threw the grain into the air with a wooden fork. The wind blew away the light chaff, the husks, and the heavy wheat fell back to the threshing floor. "He will thoroughly clean His threshing floor and will gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire."

This is a picture of final judgment. The Messiah will separate the true from the false. Those who belong to Him will be gathered safely. Those who do not will face fire that does not go out. John did not soften that truth, and neither should we. But the One who holds the fork is the same One who came to save.

3:18 *So then, exhorting many other things also, he was preaching the gospel to the people.*

"Exhorting many other things also, he was preaching the gospel to the people." Notice that Luke calls this hard preaching the gospel, good news. The warning of judgment is part of the good news, because it drives us to the Savior. You cannot see how good the good news is until you know how bad the bad news is.

3:19-20 *But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him concerning Herodias the wife of Philip his brother, and concerning all **the** evils which Herod had done, added this also to all, and he locked up John in the prison.*

"Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him concerning Herodias the wife of Philip his brother." Herod Antipas had divorced his own wife and married Herodias, who had been married to his half-brother. The Law forbade a man to marry his brother's wife while the brother was alive (Leviticus 18:16). John told Herod it was not lawful (Matthew 14:4). He did not care that Herod was powerful. Sin was sin.

"He locked up John in the prison." Herod added this sin to all the others. Later he would have John beheaded (9:9; Mark 6:17-29). Luke tells us about John's arrest here, before Jesus' baptism, to finish John's story. In time, John's arrest came a little later. Speaking the truth to people in power can cost a great deal. John paid the price.

3:21-22 *Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also having been baptized and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form as a dove upon Him, and a voice came out of heaven, saying, "You are My Son, the beloved; in You I was well pleased."*

"When all the people were baptized, Jesus also having been baptized and praying, the heaven was opened." Why would Jesus be baptized? He had no sin to repent of. Matthew tells us John tried to stop Him, and Jesus said it was fitting for them to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:14-15). Jesus stood with sinners from the very start. He identified with the people He came to save.

Only Luke tells us Jesus was praying. Luke shows Jesus praying at every turning point in His life, and this is the first.

"The Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form as a dove upon Him." Luke says it was "in a bodily form." This was something people could see. The Spirit came upon Jesus to anoint Him for His public ministry. Peter later preached that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power (Acts 10:38).

"A voice came out of heaven," saying, "You are My Son, the beloved; in You I was well pleased." The Father spoke from heaven. Here we see all three Persons of the Trinity at once: the Son being baptized, the Spirit coming down, and the Father speaking. There is one God, who exists as three Persons. The Father's words echo Psalm 2:7, where God calls the King His Son, and Isaiah 42:1, where God calls His Servant the one "in whom My soul is pleased." Before Jesus did a single miracle, the Father said He was well pleased with Him.

Old Testament links: Psalm 2:7 (alluded to); Isaiah 42:1 (alluded to)

3:23 *And Jesus Himself, when beginning, was about thirty years* ***old****, being, as was supposed, son of Joseph, the* ***son*** *of Heli,*

"Jesus Himself, when beginning, was about thirty years old." Thirty was the age when priests began their service (Numbers 4:3), the age of Joseph when he entered Pharaoh's service (Genesis 41:46), and the age of David when he became king (2 Samuel 5:4). Luke says about, so we should not press it to an exact number.

"Being, as was supposed, son of Joseph." Luke is careful. People thought Jesus was Joseph's son, but Luke has already told us He was born of a virgin. Joseph was His legal father, not His natural father.

"The son of Heli." Here is a puzzle. Matthew tells us Joseph's father was Jacob (Matthew 1:16). Luke says Heli. Bible teachers have given two main answers. Many believe Luke gives Mary's family line. On this view, Heli was Mary's father, and Joseph is called his son because he was Heli's son-in-law. The Jews did not usually list women in genealogies, so Luke would name Joseph in Mary's place. That fits Luke's focus on Mary in chapters 1 and 2. Others believe both lists are Joseph's. On this view, Matthew gives the line of legal heirs to David's throne, and Luke gives Joseph's natural family line, with the two joined by a levirate marriage, where a man married his dead brother's widow to raise up children in the brother's name (Deuteronomy 25:5-6). This explanation goes back to an early Christian writer named Julius Africanus. Both views are held by faithful teachers, and either one answers the question.

3:24-27 *the* ***son*** *of Matthat, the* ***son*** *of Levi, the* ***son*** *of Melchi, the* ***son*** *of Janna, the* ***son*** *of Joseph, the* ***son*** *of Mattathias, the* ***son*** *of Amos, the* ***son*** *of Nahum, the* ***son*** *of Esli, the* ***son*** *of Naggai, the* ***son*** *of Maath, the* ***son*** *of Mattathias, the* ***son*** *of Semei, the* ***son*** *of Joseph, the* ***son*** *of Judah, the* ***son*** *of Joanna, the* ***son*** *of Rhesa, the* ***son*** *of Zerubbabel, the* ***son*** *of Salathiel, the* ***son*** *of Neri,*

Luke lists the generations back from Heli. Most of these names are not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. They were ordinary people. Only God knows their stories. But each one was a link in the chain that led to Jesus.

In verse 27 we find Zerubbabel and Salathiel. These two names also appear in Matthew's list (Matthew 1:12). Zerubbabel led the Jews back from exile in Babylon and rebuilt the temple (Ezra 3:8). Some think these are the same men, and the two lines crossed at that point. Others think they are different men with the same names. Scripture doesn't tell us for sure.

3:28-31 *the **son** of Melchi, the **son** of Addi, the **son** of Cosam, the **son** of Elmodam, the **son** of Er, the **son** of Jose, the **son** of Eliezer, the **son** of Jorim, the **son** of Matthat, the **son** of Levi, the **son** of Simeon, the **son** of Judah, the **son** of Joseph, the **son** of Jonan, the **son** of Eliakim, the **son** of Melea, the **son** of Menam, the **son** of Mattatha, the **son** of Nathan, the **son** of David,*

The names continue back to "the son of Nathan, the son of David." This is a key point. Matthew traces Jesus' line through Solomon, the son of David who became king. Luke traces it through Nathan, another son of David by Bathsheba (1 Chronicles 3:5). Why does that matter? God placed a curse on King Jeconiah, a descendant of Solomon, saying no man from his offspring would sit on David's throne and rule Judah (Jeremiah 22:30). Joseph came from that line (Matthew 1:11-12). If Luke's line is Mary's, then Jesus is a true son of David by blood through Nathan, without coming under that curse, and He is the legal heir through Joseph, His adoptive father. God's plan covered every detail.

Old Testament links: 1 Chronicles 3:5 (alluded to)

3:32-34 *the **son** of Jesse, the **son** of Obed, the **son** of Boaz, the **son** of Salmon, the **son** of Nahshon, the **son** of Amminadab, the **son** of Aram, the **son** of Hezron, the **son** of Perez, the **son** of Judah, the **son** of Jacob, the **son** of Isaac, the **son** of Abraham, the **son** of Terah, the **son** of Nahor,*

Here are names we know: Jesse, Obed, Boaz. Boaz married Ruth, a Moabite woman, and their great-grandson was David. Perez and Judah take us back to the tribe of Judah, the royal tribe (Genesis 49:10). Then Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham. God promised Abraham that in his seed all nations would be blessed (Genesis 22:18). Matthew starts with Abraham. Luke goes further.

Old Testament links: Genesis 11:10-26 (alluded to); Ruth 4:18-22 (alluded to)

3:35-38 *the **son** of Serug, the **son** of Reu, the **son** of Peleg, the **son** of Eber, the **son** of Sala, the **son** of Cainan, the **son** of Arphaxad, the **son** of Shem, the **son** of Noah, the **son** of Lamech, the **son** of Methuselah, the **son** of Enoch, the **son** of Jared, the **son** of Mahalalel, the **son** of Cainan, the **son** of Enosh, the **son** of Seth, the **son** of Adam, the **son** of God.*

The line goes back before Abraham, through Shem and Noah, all the way to "the son of Adam, the son of God." Adam is called the son of God because God created him directly, with no human father. Jesus is the Son of God in a far greater sense. He is the eternal Son who became a man.

Verse 36 includes a name, Cainan, between Arphaxad and Sala. That name does not appear in the Hebrew text of Genesis 11:12, but it does appear in the Greek translation of the Old Testament that many people in Luke's day used. Bible teachers explain this in different ways, but it does not change the point of the list.

Why does Luke trace Jesus back to Adam? Because Luke is writing to show that Jesus is the Savior for all people. Matthew, writing mainly to Jews, shows that Jesus is the son of Abraham and the son of David. Luke shows that He is also the son of Adam. He is related to every human being. Paul calls Jesus "the last Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45). The first Adam brought sin and death into the world. The last Adam came to bring life. Notice too where this list is placed: between the Father's voice at the baptism, saying "You are My Son," and the devil's test in the wilderness, "If You are the Son of God." Adam, the son of God, failed when he was tempted. Jesus, the Son of God, will not.

Old Testament links: Genesis 11:10-26 (alluded to); Genesis 5:3-32 (alluded to)

Chapter 3 Summary

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius, the word of God came to John in the wilderness, and he preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, fulfilling Isaiah's words about the voice crying out to prepare the way of the Lord. He warned the crowds that being Abraham's children would not save them and that the ax was already at the root of the trees. He told ordinary people, tax collectors and soldiers how to show the fruit of repentance in daily life. He said he was not the Christ, but that One mightier than he was coming, who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire and would separate the wheat from the chaff. Herod locked John in prison for rebuking his sin. When Jesus was baptized and was praying, heaven opened, the Spirit came down on Him in bodily form like a dove, and the Father declared, "You are My Son, the beloved." Luke then traced Jesus' line from Joseph, as was supposed, back through David, Abraham and Noah to Adam and to God, showing that Jesus is the Savior for the whole human race.

Chapter 3 Study Questions

1. Why do you think Luke names so many rulers in verses 1 and 2? (3:1-2)

2. What does it mean to repent? (3:3, 8)

3. What did John say to people who trusted in being Abraham's children? (3:8)

4. What did John tell the crowds, the tax collectors and the soldiers to do? (3:10-14)

5. How did John describe the One coming after him? (3:16-17)

6. What happened at Jesus' baptism, and what does it show us about God? (3:21-22)

7. Why does Luke trace Jesus' line all the way back to Adam? (3:38)

8. What does John's arrest teach about speaking the truth to people in power? (3:19-20)

9. John told ordinary people to show their repentance in everyday ways. What would "fruits worthy of repentance" look like in your home or your work? (3:8-14)

10. The Father said "in You I was well pleased" before Jesus had done any public ministry. How does knowing God's love in Christ change the way you serve Him?

Chapter 4: Tested and Rejected at Nazareth

Scripture

4:1-13 Now Jesus, full of ***the*** Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and He was led in the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted forty days by the devil. And He ate nothing in those days; and when they had ended, afterward He was hungry. And the devil said to Him, "If You are ***the*** Son of God, speak to this stone that it may become bread." And Jesus answered him, saying, "It has been written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every declaration of God.'" And the devil, having led Him up into a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "To You I will give all this authority and their glory, because it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. You therefore, if You worship before me, all will be Yours." And answering, Jesus said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan; for it has been written, 'You shall worship ***the*** Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" And he led Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it has been written, 'He will command His angels concerning You, to guard You,' and, 'On ***their*** hands they will lift You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'" And answering, Jesus said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not test ***the*** Lord your God.'" And having finished every temptation, the devil departed from Him until an opportune time.

4:14-30 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and news went out through all the surrounding region concerning Him. And He Himself was teaching in their synagogues, being glorified by all. And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and according to His custom He entered on the day of the Sabbath into the synagogue, and He stood up to read. And ***the*** scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him. And having unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written, "***The*** Spirit of ***the*** Lord ***is*** upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to ***the*** poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken in heart, to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to ***the*** blind, to send away ***the*** oppressed in release, to proclaim ***the*** acceptable year of ***the*** Lord." And having rolled up the scroll, having given ***it*** back to the attendant, He sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. Then He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears." And all were bearing witness to Him and were marveling at the words of grace which were proceeding out of His mouth, and they were saying, "Is this not the son of Joseph?" And He said to them, "Surely you will say to Me this proverb, 'Physician, heal Yourself! As many ***things*** as we have heard having happened in Capernaum, do also here in Your hometown.'" And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth I say to you, many widows were in the days of Elijah in Israel, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when a great famine came upon all the land; and to none of them was Elijah sent, except to Zarephath of Sidon, to a woman, a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." And all in the synagogue were filled with rage, hearing these ***things***. And having risen up, they cast Him out of the city, and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, to throw Him down. But He Himself, having passed through ***the*** midst of them, was going away.

4:31-44 And He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbaths. And they were astonished at His teaching, because His word was with authority. And in the synagogue there was a man having a spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Ha! What ***is there*** to us and to You, Jesus ***the*** Nazarene? Did You come to destroy us? I know You, who You are: the Holy ***One*** of God." And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silenced, and come out of him!" And the demon, having thrown him into the midst, came out from him, having hurt him in nothing. And astonishment came upon all, and they were speaking to one another, saying, "What ***is*** this word, that with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out?" And a report concerning Him was going out into every place of the surrounding region. Then, having risen up from the synagogue, He entered into the house of Simon. And the mother-in-law of Simon was gripped with a great fever, and they asked Him concerning her. And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and immediately, having arisen, she was serving them. Now when the sun was setting, all who had ***any*** ailing with various diseases brought them to Him; and He, laying His hands on each one of them, healed them. And demons also were coming out from many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And rebuking ***them***, He was not allowing them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ. Now when day came, having gone out, He went into a deserted place; and the crowds were seeking Him, and they came up to Him and were holding Him back, so that He would not go away from them. But He said to them, "To the other cities also I must announce the kingdom of God as good news, because for this I have been sent." And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

Chapter 4 Preview

Full of the Holy Spirit after His baptism, Jesus is led into the wilderness, where He fasts forty days and the devil tempts Him. Three times the devil offers Him a shortcut: bread for His hunger, the kingdoms of the world without the cross, and a spectacular sign from the top of the temple. Three times Jesus answers with Scripture from the book of Deuteronomy, and the devil leaves Him until another time. Where Adam fell, Jesus stood.

Then Jesus returns to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. In the synagogue of Nazareth, His hometown, He reads from Isaiah 61 and says, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears." The people are amazed at first, but when Jesus reminds them that God sent Elijah and Elisha to Gentiles, they are filled with rage and try to throw Him off a cliff. He walks right through the crowd and goes on to Capernaum, where He teaches with authority, casts out a demon, heals Peter's mother-in-law and many others, and then goes on to preach in other towns, because that is why He was sent.

Chapter 4 Study

4:1-2 *Now Jesus, full of **the** Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and He was led in the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted forty days by the devil. And He ate nothing in those days; and when they had ended, afterward He was hungry.*

"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and He was led in the Spirit into the wilderness." Notice that the Spirit led Him there. The testing was not an accident. God the Father allowed it, and the Spirit led Him into it. Being full of the Spirit does not keep us from hard places. Sometimes the Spirit leads us right into them.

"Being tempted forty days by the devil." The devil is a real being, a fallen angel who leads the rebellion against God. His name Satan means adversary. The word devil means slanderer, one who accuses. He is not a myth or a symbol. Jesus spoke to him as a real person.

Forty days reminds us of Israel's forty years in the wilderness, where they were tested and often failed (Deuteronomy 8:2). All three of Jesus' answers in this chapter come from Deuteronomy 6 to 8, Moses' words to Israel about that time in the wilderness. Where Israel failed, Jesus succeeded.

"He ate nothing in those days; and when they had ended, afterward He was hungry." Of course He was. He was a real man, and His body was weak after forty days without food. The devil chose that moment to come at Him hardest. He often comes at us when we are tired, hungry or alone.

4:3-4 *And the devil said to Him, "If You are **the** Son of God, speak to this stone that it may become bread." And Jesus answered him, saying, "It has been written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every declaration of God.'"*

"If You are the Son of God, speak to this stone that it may become bread." The word if here does not mean the devil doubted it. It carries the sense of since. The Father had just called Him His beloved Son (3:22). The devil says, in effect, since You are the Son of God, use Your power for Yourself.

What was wrong with making bread? Nothing, in itself. Later Jesus would feed five thousand people. But this would mean using His power to serve Himself, on the devil's suggestion, instead of trusting His Father to provide. He came to live as a man under His Father's will.

"It has been written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every declaration of God.'" Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3. God fed Israel with manna in the wilderness to teach them that life comes from God's word, not just from food. Jesus would rather stay hungry and obey His Father than eat at Satan's word. Notice how He fought: not with an argument, not with a display of power, but with Scripture. Paul calls the word of God "the sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). If Jesus needed it, how much more do we?

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 8:3 (quoted)

4:5-7 *And the devil, having led Him up into a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "To You I will give all this authority and their glory, because it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. You therefore, if You worship before me, all will be Yours."*

"The devil, having led Him up into a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time." This was some kind of vision, since no mountain lets you see all the world's kingdoms. The devil showed Jesus the glory of every nation at once.

"To You I will give all this authority and their glory, because it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish." Was the devil telling the truth? Partly. Jesus later calls him "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31). When Adam sinned, mankind fell under Satan's power, and the world system is under his influence (1 John 5:19). But he is a liar (John 8:44). He does not have the final say over the kingdoms. God does (Daniel 4:17).

"If You worship before me, all will be Yours." Here was the offer: the crown without the cross. Jesus will one day rule all the kingdoms of the world (Revelation 11:15). The Father has promised it to Him. But the way there runs through the cross. The devil offered a shortcut. All Jesus had to do was bow once.

4:8 *And answering, Jesus said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan; for it has been written, 'You shall worship **the** Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

"Get behind Me, Satan; for it has been written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13. Worship belongs to God alone. Jesus would not bow to Satan to gain the world.

Many of us are tempted with smaller offers. Bend a little here. Compromise a little there. You will get what you want faster. But anything we put in God's place becomes something we worship. Jesus shows us how to answer: God alone.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 6:13 (quoted); Deuteronomy 10:20 (quoted)

4:9-11 *And he led Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it has been written, 'He will command His angels concerning You, to guard You,' and, 'On **their** hands they will lift You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'"*

"He led Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple." The pinnacle was a high corner of the temple, which stood high above the Kidron Valley. "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here."

This time the devil quotes Scripture himself. "He will command His angels concerning You, to guard You." He quotes Psalm 91:11-12, a promise of God's care for those who trust Him. But he twists it. He leaves out the words "in all your ways," the ways of obedience, and uses the promise to tempt Jesus to test God. The devil knows the Bible, and he will use it if it suits him. That is why we must know it well enough to see when it is being twisted.

Luke places this temptation last, while Matthew puts it second (Matthew 4:5-10). Luke may have ended with Jerusalem on purpose, since his whole Gospel moves toward Jerusalem, where Jesus will win the final victory.

Old Testament links: Psalm 91:11-12 (quoted)

4:12 *And answering, Jesus said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not test **the** Lord your God.'"*

"It has been said, 'You shall not test the Lord your God.'" Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16. To throw Himself down and demand that God catch Him would be putting God to the test, forcing God to prove Himself. That is not faith. It is presumption. Real faith trusts God and obeys Him. It does not try to make God perform on our terms.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 6:16 (quoted)

4:13 *And having finished every temptation, the devil departed from Him until an opportune time.*

"Having finished every temptation, the devil departed from Him until an opportune time." Jesus won, and the devil left. James tells us, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). But notice that the devil only left "until an opportune time." He came back again, through the opposition of the religious leaders, through Peter's words (Matthew 16:22-23), through Judas (22:3), and in the garden and on the cross. Victory over one temptation does not mean we will never be tempted again.

Look at what Jesus faced here. The first test was about the needs of the body. The second was about power and glory. The third was about pride and putting on a show. John speaks of "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boasting of life" (1 John 2:16). Hebrews tells us Jesus "has been tempted in all things according to likeness, without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). He knows what temptation is like. He can help us when we are tempted.

4:14-15 *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and news went out through all the surrounding region concerning Him. And He Himself was teaching in their synagogues, being glorified by all.*

"Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." He went into the wilderness full of the Spirit, and He came out in the power of the Spirit. Galilee was the northern region of Israel, where Jesus grew up and did much of His work.

"He Himself was teaching in their synagogues, being glorified by all." A synagogue was a local meeting place where Jews gathered on the Sabbath to read the Scriptures, pray and hear teaching. Any town with enough Jewish men could have one. Jesus began His ministry in Galilee with great popularity. Luke skips about a year of Jesus' early ministry, which John tells us about (John 1 to 4). Notice the word all. Everyone was praising Him. That is about to change.

4:16 *And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and according to His custom He entered on the day of the Sabbath into the synagogue, and He stood up to read.*

"He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and according to His custom He entered on the day of the Sabbath into the synagogue." Notice the words "according to His custom." Jesus went to the synagogue every Sabbath. The Son of God made a habit of gathering with God's people to hear His Word read, even though the teachers there knew far less than He did. If Jesus needed that habit, so do we.

"He stood up to read." In the synagogue service, someone would read from the Law and then from the Prophets. A visiting teacher was often invited to read and to speak. The reader stood to read and sat down to teach.

4:17 *And **the** scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him. And having unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written,*

"The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him." Books in that day were scrolls, long rolls of leather or papyrus. "Having unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written." Jesus chose the passage. He went to what we call Isaiah 61.

4:18-19 *"**The** Spirit of **the** Lord **is** upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to **the** poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken in heart, to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to **the** blind, to send away **the** oppressed in release, to proclaim **the** acceptable year of **the** Lord."*

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor." Jesus had just been anointed by the Spirit at the Jordan. The word Messiah, or Christ, means the Anointed One. Isaiah was speaking of the Messiah, and Jesus read it as being about Himself.

Look at what He was sent to do. "To preach the gospel to the poor." The poor are the materially poor, and also those who know they have nothing to offer God. "To heal the broken in heart." Jesus came for people whose hearts are shattered. "To proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to the blind." He frees people bound by sin and Satan, and He opens blind eyes, both physical and spiritual. "To send away the oppressed in release." He sets the crushed free. This verse in the SLB includes the words about the broken in heart, which are in the Received Greek Text that the SLB follows.

"To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." This points back to the Year of Jubilee in the Law of Moses. Every fiftieth year, debts were canceled, slaves were set free, and land went back to its families (Leviticus 25:8-13). Jesus came to bring the great Jubilee, God's time of favor and freedom.

Now notice where Jesus stopped reading. Isaiah 61:2 goes on: "and a day of vengeance of our God." Jesus stopped in the middle of the sentence. Why? Because His first coming was to bring God's favor and salvation. The day of vengeance, God's judgment on the world, will come with His Second Coming. Between the comma and the next phrase in Isaiah lies the whole age we are living in now, the time of God's grace. One day Jesus will return in power to judge and to reign (Revelation 19:11-16). Today, it is still the acceptable year of the Lord. Today is the day to come to Him.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 61:1-2 (quoted)

4:20-21 *And having rolled up the scroll, having given **it** back to the attendant, He sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. Then He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears."*

"Having rolled up the scroll, having given it back to the attendant, He sat down." Sitting down was the position for teaching. "The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him." The room went still. Everyone waited.

"Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears." That was the whole sermon, or at least the heart of it. Jesus was saying, I am the One Isaiah wrote about. The Messiah is not coming someday. He is standing in front of you.

4:22 *And all were bearing witness to Him and were marveling at the words of grace which were proceeding out of His mouth, and they were saying, "Is this not the son of Joseph?"*

"All were bearing witness to Him and were marveling at the words of grace which were proceeding out of His mouth." At first they liked what they heard. He spoke beautifully, and His words were full of grace.

"Is this not the son of Joseph?" This is where the trouble began. They knew Him as the carpenter's son who grew up down the street. How could He be the Messiah? They could not get past what they thought they already knew about Him. Many people today do the same. They think they already know who Jesus is, and they never really listen to what He says.

4:23-24 *And He said to them, "Surely you will say to Me this proverb, 'Physician, heal Yourself! As many **things** as we have heard having happened in Capernaum, do also here in Your hometown.'" And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.*

"Physician, heal Yourself!" Jesus knew what they were thinking. They had heard about the miracles He did in Capernaum, and they wanted Him to do the same in His hometown. They wanted a show, not a Savior.

"No prophet is acceptable in his hometown." That has been true again and again. People who watched someone grow up often have the hardest time seeing God at work in him. Jesus' own brothers did not believe in Him until after the resurrection (John 7:5; Acts 1:14).

4:25-26 *But in truth I say to you, many widows were in the days of Elijah in Israel, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when a great famine came upon all the land; and to none of them was Elijah sent, except to Zarephath of Sidon, to a woman, a widow.*

Now Jesus reminds them of two stories from their own Scriptures. In the days of Elijah, there was a famine for "three years and six months." There were "many widows" in Israel. But Elijah was sent to none of them, "except to Zarephath of Sidon, to a woman, a widow" (see 1 Kings 17:8-16). Sidon was Gentile country, the home region of wicked Queen Jezebel. God sent His prophet to feed a Gentile widow.

Old Testament links: 1 Kings 17:9 (alluded to); 1 Kings 17:1 (alluded to)

4:27 *And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."*

"Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." Naaman was a Gentile army commander from Syria, Israel's enemy, and God healed him when he obeyed Elisha's word (2 Kings 5:1-14).

What was Jesus' point? When Israel turned away from God, God showed His grace to Gentiles who believed. The people of Nazareth thought they had a right to Jesus' miracles because He was one of them. Jesus told them God's grace is not owed to anyone. It goes to those who receive it in faith, Jew or Gentile.

Old Testament links: 2 Kings 5:1 (alluded to); 2 Kings 5:14 (alluded to)

4:28-29 *And all in the synagogue were filled with rage, hearing these **things**. And having risen up, they cast Him out of the city, and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, to throw Him down.*

"All in the synagogue were filled with rage, hearing these things." Minutes before, they had been marveling at His words of grace. Now they were furious. Why? Because He told them that Gentiles, whom they looked down on, had received what they had refused. Pride hates grace when grace goes to the wrong people.

"They cast Him out of the city, and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, to throw Him down." Nazareth sits on a hill, with drops nearby. They wanted to kill Him, on the Sabbath, right after leaving the synagogue. This is a picture of what would happen at the end of Jesus' ministry. His own people would reject Him and lead Him out of the city to die.

4:30 *But He Himself, having passed through **the** midst of them, was going away.*

"But He Himself, having passed through the midst of them, was going away." Luke does not tell us how. He simply walked through the angry mob, and no one could touch Him. His time had not yet come (John 7:30). No one could take His life until He chose to lay it down (John 10:18). When the time came, He went to the cross willingly.

4:31-32 *And He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbaths. And they were astonished at His teaching, because His word was with authority.*

"He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee." Capernaum was a fishing town on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. It became Jesus' home base (Matthew 4:13). It was down from Nazareth because Nazareth was in the hills and Capernaum was by the lake, below sea level.

"They were astonished at His teaching, because His word was with authority." Most teachers in that day quoted other rabbis, saying what this teacher or that teacher had said. Jesus did not need to. He spoke as the One who gave the Law.

4:33-34 *And in the synagogue there was a man having a spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Ha! What **is there** to us and to You, Jesus **the** Nazarene? Did You come to destroy us? I know You, who You are: the Holy **One** of God."*

"In the synagogue there was a man having a spirit of an unclean demon." Demons are fallen angels who followed Satan in his rebellion. They are called unclean because they are wicked and they defile the people they control. Notice that this man was in the synagogue, at worship. Evil can be present even in religious places.

"Ha! What is there to us and to You, Jesus the Nazarene? Did You come to destroy us? I know You, who You are: the Holy One of God." The demon knew exactly who Jesus was, better than the people of Nazareth did. He knew Jesus had come to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). But knowing who Jesus is does not save anyone. The demons believe, and shudder (James 2:19).

4:35 *And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silenced, and come out of him!" And the demon, having thrown him into the midst, came out from him, having hurt him in nothing.*

"Jesus rebuked him," saying, "Be silenced, and come out of him!" Jesus did not want testimony from demons. He did not need it, and He would not let the enemy announce Him. There were no long rituals, no special words. He gave a command, and the demon had to obey.

"The demon, having thrown him into the midst, came out from him, having hurt him in nothing." Luke the doctor notes that the man was not hurt. The demon tried one last show of power, but it could not harm the man.

4:36-37 *And astonishment came upon all, and they were speaking to one another, saying, "What **is** this word, that with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out?" And a report concerning Him was going out into every place of the surrounding region.*

"What is this word, that with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out?" Authority is the right to command. Power is the ability to carry it out. Jesus has both. The people had never seen anything like it, and the news spread "into every place of the surrounding region."

4:38-39 *Then, having risen up from the synagogue, He entered into the house of Simon. And the mother-in-law of Simon was gripped with a great fever, and they asked Him concerning her. And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and immediately, having arisen, she was serving them.*

"He entered into the house of Simon." This is Simon Peter. Luke mentions him here before telling us how Jesus called him in chapter 5. Peter was married, and "the mother-in-law of Simon was gripped with a great fever." Luke the doctor gives us the detail that it was "a great fever," a high one.

"Standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her." Jesus spoke to the fever the same way He spoke to the demon. Sickness and demons both bow to His word. "And immediately, having arisen, she was serving them." No recovery time. She got up and served. That is the right response for anyone Jesus has healed. He lifts us up, and we serve.

4:40-41 *Now when the sun was setting, all who had **any** ailing with various diseases brought them to Him; and He, laying His hands on each one of them, healed them. And demons also were coming out from many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And rebuking **them**, He was not allowing them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.*

"When the sun was setting, all who had any ailing with various diseases brought them to Him." It was the Sabbath. The Jewish day ran from sunset to sunset, and the Sabbath rules kept people from carrying the sick until sundown. As soon as the sun set, they came in crowds.

"He, laying His hands on each one of them, healed them." Notice "each one." Jesus did not wave His hand over the crowd. He touched each person. He never treats people as a crowd. He sees each one.

"Demons also were coming out from many," crying out, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Again Jesus would not let them speak, "because they knew Him to be the Christ." He would reveal who He was in His own way and time, not through the mouths of demons.

4:42-43 *Now when day came, having gone out, He went into a deserted place; and the crowds were seeking Him, and they came up to Him and were holding Him back, so that He would not go away from them. But He said to them, "To the other cities also I must announce the kingdom of God as good news, because for this I have been sent."*

"When day came, having gone out, He went into a deserted place." After a long night of ministry, Jesus went off to be alone. Mark tells us He went there to pray (Mark 1:35). Even the Son of God needed time alone with His Father.

"The crowds were seeking Him, and they came up to Him and were holding Him back." Nazareth tried to throw Him out. Capernaum tried to hold Him in. They wanted Jesus to stay and keep healing.

"To the other cities also I must announce the kingdom of God as good news, because for this I have been sent." The kingdom of God means God's rule, through His King. Jesus' main mission was to

preach. Healing showed His power and compassion, but the message mattered most. Notice the word must again. Jesus knew why He had been sent, and He would not be pulled away from it, even by good things.

4:44 *And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.*

"He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee." Some Greek copies read Judea here instead of Galilee. The SLB follows the reading Galilee, which fits the context. Either way, Jesus kept moving, town after town, preaching the good news of the kingdom.

Chapter 4 Summary

Full of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was led into the wilderness and tempted by the devil for forty days. Three times the devil offered Him a shortcut: bread to satisfy His hunger, all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for worship, and a spectacular leap from the temple. Each time Jesus answered with Scripture from Deuteronomy, and the devil left Him until an opportune time. Returning to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, Jesus read Isaiah 61 in the synagogue at Nazareth and declared that it was fulfilled in Him. He stopped before the words about the day of vengeance, because He first came to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. His hometown marveled, then rejected Him, and when He reminded them that God had sent Elijah and Elisha to Gentiles, they tried to throw Him off a cliff, but He walked through the crowd. In Capernaum He taught with authority, cast out a demon, healed Peter's mother-in-law and many others, and then went on to preach the kingdom of God in other towns, because that was why He had been sent.

Chapter 4 Study Questions

1. Who led Jesus into the wilderness, and what does that tell us about times of testing? (4:1-2)

2. How did Jesus answer each of the devil's temptations? (4:4, 8, 12)

3. How did the devil misuse Psalm 91, and what does that teach us? (4:9-11)

4. What did Jesus say He was anointed and sent to do? (4:18-19)

5. Where did Jesus stop reading in Isaiah 61, and why does that matter? (4:19-21)

6. Why were the people of Nazareth so angry with Jesus? (4:25-29)

7. What did the people of Capernaum notice about Jesus' teaching and His power? (4:32, 36)

8. Why did Jesus leave Capernaum when the crowds wanted Him to stay? (4:42-43)

9. Which of the three kinds of temptation Jesus faced do you struggle with most? How can God's Word help you stand?

10. Jesus went to the synagogue "according to His custom." What habits help you stay close to God, and which one do you need to build?

Chapter 5: Fishers of Men and a Friend of Sinners

Scripture

5:1-11 Now it came to pass, while the crowd was pressing upon Him to hear the word of God, and He Himself was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and He saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen, having gone out from them, washed the nets. Then, having gotten into one of the boats, which was Simon's, He asked him to put out a little from the land. And having sat down, He was teaching the crowds from the boat. And when He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch." And answering, Simon said to Him, "Master, having toiled through the whole night, we took nothing; but at Your declaration I will let down the net." And having done this, they enclosed a great multitude of fish, and their net was breaking. And they signaled to the partners in the other boat to come ***and*** help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they were sinking. Now Simon Peter, having seen ***it***, fell at the knees of Jesus, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord." For astonishment seized him and all those with him at the catch of the fish which they had taken; and likewise also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear; from now on you will be catching men." And having brought the boats to land, having left all, they followed Him.

5:12-26 And it came to pass, while He was in one of the cities, and look, a man full of leprosy; and having seen Jesus, having fallen on ***his*** face, he begged Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You are able to cleanse me." And having stretched out His hand, He touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And He Himself ordered him to tell no one, "But having gone, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing just as Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." But the word concerning Him was spreading still more; and great crowds were coming together to hear and to be healed by Him from their sicknesses. But He Himself was withdrawing in the deserts and praying. And it came to pass on one of the days, and He Himself was teaching; and there were sitting ***there*** Pharisees and teachers of the law who had come out of every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem; and ***the*** power of ***the*** Lord was ***present*** for healing them. And look, men carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and to place ***him*** before Him. And not having found by what ***way*** they might bring him in because of the crowd, having gone up on the housetop, they let him down through the tiles with the cot into the midst before Jesus. And having seen their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins have been forgiven you." And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who is able to forgive sins except God alone?" But Jesus, having recognized their reasonings, answering, said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins" (He said to the paralyzed ***man***), "I say to you, arise, and having taken up your cot, go to your house." And immediately, having stood up before them, having taken up ***that*** on which he was lying, he departed to his house, glorifying God. And amazement seized all, and they were glorifying God, and they were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen remarkable things today."

5:27-39 And after these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me." And having left all, having arisen, he followed Him. And Levi made a great banquet for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining with them. And their scribes and the Pharisees were grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" And answering, Jesus said to them, "Those who are healthy have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call righteous ***ones*** but sinners to repentance." And they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make petitions, likewise also those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?" And He said to them, "Can you make the sons of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? But days will come, and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days." And He was also speaking a parable to them: "No one puts a patch of a new garment on an old garment; otherwise, the new also tears ***it***, and the patch that ***is*** from the new does not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the wineskins, and it will be spilled out, and the wineskins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved together. And no one having drunk old ***wine*** immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'"

Chapter 5 Preview

Chapter 5 shows us who Jesus calls and why. By the Sea of Galilee He borrows Simon Peter's boat to teach the crowd, then tells him to let down his nets after a long night of catching nothing. The nets fill until they begin to break, and Peter falls at Jesus' knees and says, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord." Jesus answers, "Do not fear; from now on you will be catching men." Peter, James and John leave everything and follow Him.

Then Jesus touches a man full of leprosy and makes him clean. He forgives the sins of a paralyzed man whose friends lower him through a roof, and when the Pharisees and scribes object that only God can forgive sins, He heals the man to prove He has that authority. He calls Levi, a tax collector, and eats at a great banquet with tax collectors and sinners, telling the grumbling Pharisees that He came to call sinners to repentance. The chapter ends with a question about fasting and a parable about new wine and old wineskins. Jesus did not come to patch up the old ways. He came to bring something new.

Chapter 5 Study

5:1-3 *Now it came to pass, while the crowd was pressing upon Him to hear the word of God, and He Himself was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and He saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen, having gone out from them, washed the nets. Then, having gotten into one of the boats, which was Simon's, He asked him to put out a little from the land. And having sat down, He was teaching the crowds from the boat.*

"The crowd was pressing upon Him to hear the word of God, and He Himself was standing by the lake of Gennesaret." The lake of Gennesaret is another name for the Sea of Galilee, taken from a plain on its western shore. It is a freshwater lake about thirteen miles long and seven miles wide. Luke, who had probably sailed the Mediterranean with Paul, calls it a lake, not a sea.

"He saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen, having gone out from them, washed the nets." The fishermen were done for the day. They had fished all night and were cleaning their nets.

"Having gotten into one of the boats, which was Simon's, He asked him to put out a little from the land." Jesus used the boat as a pulpit. The water carried His voice to the crowd on the shore. Peter had already met Jesus (John 1:40-42), and Jesus had healed his mother-in-law (4:38-39). Now Jesus asks to borrow his boat. Jesus often starts with something small. He asks for what we have, and He uses it.

5:4-5 *And when He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch." And answering, Simon said to Him, "Master, having toiled through the whole night, we took nothing; but at Your declaration I will let down the net."*

"Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch." This made no sense to a fisherman. On the Sea of Galilee, fishermen worked at night in shallow water, when the fish came up to feed. Fishing in deep water in the middle of the day was not how it was done. Jesus was a carpenter. Peter was the expert.

"Master, having toiled through the whole night, we took nothing; but at Your declaration I will let down the net." The word Master here means one who is in charge, a boss or overseer. Peter was tired. He knew there were no fish. But he obeyed anyway. Notice what he said: "but at Your declaration." That is faith. It is obeying Jesus even when it goes against our experience and our feelings. Many of us have toiled all night and caught nothing. The question is whether we will let down the net again because He said so.

5:6-7 *And having done this, they enclosed a great multitude of fish, and their net was breaking. And they signaled to the partners in the other boat to come **and** help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they were sinking.*

"They enclosed a great multitude of fish, and their net was breaking." It was not just a good catch. It was more than the nets could hold. "They signaled to the partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they were sinking." When Jesus blesses, He often gives more than we can hold.

5:8 *Now Simon Peter, having seen **it**, fell at the knees of Jesus, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord."*

"Simon Peter, having seen it, fell at the knees of Jesus," saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord." Peter did not shout for joy over the money he would make. He fell down in fear. In that moment he saw who Jesus really was, and seeing Jesus showed him who he really was. He went from calling Jesus Master to calling Him Lord.

This is what happens when a person truly meets God. Isaiah saw the Lord and cried, "Woe to me!" (Isaiah 6:5). Job saw God and said he repented in dust and ashes (Job 42:5-6). The closer we come to the holiness of Jesus, the more clearly we see our own sin. That is not a bad thing. It is the beginning of grace.

5:9-10 *For astonishment seized him and all those with him at the catch of the fish which they had taken; and likewise also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear; from now on you will be catching men."*

"Astonishment seized him and all those with him at the catch of the fish." Peter's partners were "James and John, sons of Zebedee." These three, Peter, James and John, would become Jesus' closest friends among the twelve.

"Do not fear; from now on you will be catching men." Peter asked Jesus to go away. Jesus did not go away. He gave Peter a new job. The word for catching here means to catch alive. Fishermen catch fish to kill them. Peter would catch men to give them life. Matthew tells us Jesus said He would make them "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). When we confess our sin, Jesus does not push us away. He forgives us and gives us a purpose.

5:11 *And having brought the boats to land, having left all, they followed Him.*

"Having brought the boats to land, having left all, they followed Him." They left their boats, their nets, and the biggest catch of their lives, lying on the shore. That is the cost and the joy of following Jesus. They did not leave everything because Jesus was poor and needed them. They left everything because they had found something worth far more. Jesus does not call every believer to leave his job, but He does call every believer to put Him first, above everything else.

5:12 *And it came to pass, while He was in one of the cities, and look, a man full of leprosy; and having seen Jesus, having fallen on* ***his*** *face, he begged Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You are able to cleanse me."*

"While He was in one of the cities, and look, a man full of leprosy." Luke the doctor notes that this man was "full of leprosy." His disease was advanced. In the Bible, leprosy covered a range of serious skin diseases. Under the Law a leper was unclean. He had to tear his clothes, cover his mouth, cry "Unclean! Unclean!" and live alone outside the camp (Leviticus 13:45-46). He could not worship with God's people or touch his family. Many people believed leprosy was a punishment from God.

Having fallen on his face, "he begged Him," saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You are able to cleanse me." He did not doubt Jesus' power. He wondered if Jesus would want to help someone like him. Many people still wonder the same thing. They know God can save. They are not sure He would want to save them.

5:13 *And having stretched out His hand, He touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy departed from him.*

"Having stretched out His hand, He touched him." Jesus could have healed him with a word, as He did others. But He touched him. This man may not have felt a human touch in years. Under the Law, touching a leper made a person unclean. But when Jesus touched the leper, Jesus did not become unclean. The leper became clean.

"I am willing; be cleansed." That is Jesus' answer to everyone who wonders if He is willing. "And immediately the leprosy departed from him." Luke likes the word immediately. When Jesus heals, He does not need time.

5:14 *And He Himself ordered him to tell no one, "But having gone, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing just as Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."*

"He Himself ordered him to tell no one." Jesus did not want to be known only as a miracle worker. Mark tells us the man did not obey, and Jesus could no longer enter a town openly because of the crowds (Mark 1:45).

"But having gone, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing just as Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." Leviticus 14 gave the steps for a healed leper. The priest had to examine him and declare him clean, and then he offered sacrifices. Jesus did not break the Law of Moses. He kept it, and He sent the man to the priests as living proof that God was at work.

5:15-16 *But the word concerning Him was spreading still more; and great crowds were coming together to hear and to be healed by Him from their sicknesses. But He Himself was withdrawing in the deserts and praying.*

"The word concerning Him was spreading still more; and great crowds were coming together to hear and to be healed by Him." Jesus was becoming famous.

"But He Himself was withdrawing in the deserts and praying." The more the crowds pressed in, the more Jesus pulled away to pray. The Greek tells us this was His habit. He did not let His busy schedule crowd out His time with the Father. If Jesus needed to get away and pray when the demands were greatest, we certainly do. The busier we get, the more we need to pray, not less.

5:17 *And it came to pass on one of the days, and He Himself was teaching; and there were sitting* ***there*** *Pharisees and teachers of the law who had come out of every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem; and* ***the*** *power of* ***the*** *Lord was* ***present*** *for healing them.*

"There were sitting there Pharisees and teachers of the law who had come out of every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem." This is the first time Luke mentions the Pharisees. The Pharisees were a group of Jews who were very strict about keeping the Law of Moses, along with many extra rules handed down by their teachers. Many of them were sincere, but many became proud and judged others. The teachers of the law, also called scribes, were experts who copied, studied and explained the Law. These men had come from all over, even from Jerusalem, to check out this new teacher.

"And the power of the Lord was present for healing them." Luke wants us to know that God's power was at work in that room.

5:18-19 *And look, men carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and to place* ***him*** *before Him. And not having found by what* ***way*** *they might bring him in because of the crowd, having gone up on the housetop, they let him down through the tiles with the cot into the midst before Jesus.*

"Men carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed." This man could not come to Jesus on his own. He needed friends to carry him. But the house was packed, and they could not get through the door.

So they went "up on the housetop" and "let him down through the tiles with the cot into the midst before Jesus." Houses in that region often had flat roofs with an outside stairway. Luke mentions tiles, which may mean this house had a tiled roof. Either way, they had to tear open the roof to get their friend to Jesus. Imagine the dust falling on the crowd and the hole opening up overhead.

These friends would not give up. Do we care about our friends enough to bring them to Jesus, even if it is hard? Some people will never come to Jesus unless someone carries them.

5:20 *And having seen their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins have been forgiven you."*

"Having seen their faith." Notice whose faith Jesus saw. It was the faith of the friends, and likely the paralyzed man's too. Their faith showed itself in action.

"Man, your sins have been forgiven you." That was not what anyone expected. The man came to be healed. Jesus went to his deeper need first. A paralyzed body is a terrible thing, but a soul without forgiveness is worse. This does not mean his illness was caused by a particular sin. Jesus simply dealt with the greatest need every person has.

5:21 *And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who is able to forgive sins except God alone?"*

"Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who is able to forgive sins except God alone?" Blasphemy is speaking against God or claiming for yourself what belongs only to God. The scribes and Pharisees were right about one thing. Only God can forgive sins (Isaiah 43:25). If you wrong me, I can forgive you for what you did to me. But sin is ultimately against God, and only He can forgive it. So either Jesus was a blasphemer, or He was God. There is no middle ground.

5:22-23 *But Jesus, having recognized their reasonings, answering, said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?*

"Jesus, having recognized their reasonings." They had not said a word out loud, but Jesus knew what they were thinking. That alone should have told them something.

"Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?" Telling a man his sins are forgiven is easy, because no one can see whether it happened. Telling him to get up and walk is harder, because everyone will know right away whether it worked. But actually doing either one takes the power of God.

5:24 *But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins" (He said to the paralyzed **man**), "I say to you, arise, and having taken up your cot, go to your house."*

"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins." This is the first time in Luke that Jesus calls Himself "the Son of Man." It was His favorite title for Himself. It comes from Daniel 7:13-14, where Daniel sees one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven and receiving an everlasting kingdom from God. The title speaks of His true humanity, and also of His heavenly glory and authority.

Then Jesus turned to the man: "I say to you, arise, and having taken up your cot, go to your house." He did the harder thing that could be seen, to prove He had done the thing that could not be seen. The healing was the proof that the forgiveness was real.

5:25-26 *And immediately, having stood up before them, having taken up **that** on which he was lying, he departed to his house, glorifying God. And amazement seized all, and they were glorifying God, and they were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen remarkable things today."*

"Immediately, having stood up before them, having taken up that on which he was lying, he departed to his house, glorifying God." The man walked out carrying the mat that had carried him. He went home praising God.

"Amazement seized all, and they were glorifying God, and they were filled with fear," saying, "We have seen remarkable things today." The word for remarkable is paradoxa, things that go against what anyone would expect. They had never seen anything like it.

5:27 *And after these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me."*

"He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth." Levi is the same man as Matthew, who later wrote the first Gospel (Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:14). As we saw in chapter 3, tax collectors worked for Rome and often cheated their own people. They were seen as traitors and were treated as outcasts. Capernaum was on a major trade road, and Levi's booth likely collected tolls on goods passing through.

"Follow Me." Two words. Jesus called the most hated man in town to be His disciple.

5:28 *And having left all, having arisen, he followed Him.*

"Having left all, having arisen, he followed Him." For the fishermen, leaving their nets was a big step, but they could always go back to fishing. Levi could not. Once he left his tax booth, someone else would take it, and he could never get it back. He gave up a lot of money to follow Jesus. But he gained far more. Matthew's careful records as a tax collector may be one reason his Gospel is so carefully ordered. God uses who we were, once we follow Him.

5:29 *And Levi made a great banquet for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining with them.*

"Levi made a great banquet for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining with them." The first thing Levi did after following Jesus was throw a party so his friends could meet Him. His friends were other tax collectors and sinners, people who would never be welcome in a Pharisee's home. That is a good pattern for any new believer. Introduce your friends to Jesus. People in that day reclined on couches at a feast, leaning on one elbow at a low table.

5:30 *And their scribes and the Pharisees were grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"*

"Their scribes and the Pharisees were grumbling at His disciples," saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" In that culture, eating with someone meant accepting him as a friend. The Pharisees would not eat with people they considered unclean. They thought Jesus was dirtying Himself by sitting at the same table. Notice that they grumbled to the disciples, not to Jesus.

5:31-32 *And answering, Jesus said to them, "Those who are healthy have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call righteous* ***ones*** *but sinners to repentance."*

Jesus answered for them. "Those who are healthy have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." Luke, the doctor, records this saying. A doctor does not avoid sick people. That is why he is there.

"I have not come to call righteous ones but sinners to repentance." Jesus was not saying the Pharisees were righteous. Paul tells us there is no one righteous, not even one (Romans 3:10). He meant that those who think they are righteous will never come to Him, because they do not think they need Him. Only those who know they are sick will go to the doctor. Notice also the last words, "to repentance." Jesus did not come to leave sinners as they were. He loved them too much for that. He came to call them to turn from their sin and follow Him, as Levi did.

5:33 *And they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make petitions, likewise also those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?"*

"Why do the disciples of John fast often and make petitions, likewise also those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?" Fasting means going without food for a time, usually to pray and seek God. The Law of Moses commanded only one fast a year, on the Day of Atonement. But many Pharisees fasted twice a week (18:12). John's disciples fasted too. Jesus' disciples were at a feast.

5:34-35 *And He said to them, "Can you make the sons of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? But days will come, and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days."*

"Can you make the sons of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?" The sons of the bridechamber were the groom's closest friends, like groomsmen today. A Jewish wedding

was a week-long celebration. No one fasted at a wedding. Jesus is the bridegroom. John the Baptist himself called Jesus the bridegroom (John 3:29). While He was with them, it was a time of joy.

"But days will come, and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days." This is the first hint in Luke that Jesus would be taken away by force. He was speaking of His death. After He went back to heaven, His followers did fast (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23). Fasting is right for believers today, as we wait for the Bridegroom to return for His bride.

5:36 *And He was also speaking a parable to them: "No one puts a patch of a new garment on an old garment; otherwise, the new also tears* ***it****, and the patch that* ***is*** *from the new does not match the old.*

Then Jesus told a parable. A parable is a short story from everyday life that teaches a spiritual truth. "No one puts a patch of a new garment on an old garment; otherwise, the new also tears it, and the patch that is from the new does not match the old." If you cut a piece out of a new coat to patch an old one, you ruin the new coat, and the patch will not match the old one anyway.

Jesus did not come to patch up the old religious system with a few improvements. He came to bring something new.

5:37-38 *And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the wineskins, and it will be spilled out, and the wineskins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved together.*

"No one puts new wine into old wineskins." In that day, wine was stored in bags made of animal skin. New wine was still fermenting and gave off gas, which made it expand. A new wineskin could stretch. An old one was dry and brittle, and it would burst. "But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved together."

The new wine is the life Jesus brings, the good news of grace and forgiveness. The old wineskins were the rigid rules of the Pharisees. The new life of the kingdom could not be poured into those old forms. It needed a new heart. This does not mean God's Law was bad. Jesus came to fulfill the Law, not to destroy it (Matthew 5:17). It means the man-made system of rule-keeping could not hold the joy and freedom He brings.

5:39 *And no one having drunk old* ***wine*** *immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'"*

"No one having drunk old wine immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'" Only Luke records this saying. People who are used to the old way do not want to change. The Pharisees were comfortable with their system. They did not want anything new, even if it came from God. Many people today are the same. They would rather keep the religion they know than receive the new life Jesus offers. It is a gentle warning. Do not let comfort with the old way keep you from what God is doing.

Chapter 5 Summary

Jesus taught the crowds from Simon Peter's boat and then told him to let down his nets in deep water. Peter obeyed at His word, and the catch was so great the nets began to break. Seeing it, Peter fell at Jesus' knees and confessed he was a sinful man, and Jesus told him that from now on he would catch men. Peter, James and John left everything and followed Him. Jesus touched and cleansed a man full of leprosy and sent him to the priest as the Law required, and He kept withdrawing to pray as the crowds grew. When friends lowered a paralyzed man through a roof, Jesus forgave his sins and then healed him to prove that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He called Levi the tax collector, who left everything and held a banquet for Jesus with his friends. When the Pharisees grumbled, Jesus said He came as a physician to call sinners to repentance. He told them His disciples would fast after the bridegroom was taken away, and He taught that the new life He brings cannot be poured into old wineskins.

Jesus told Peter to let down the nets again after a night of catching nothing. That is a big reason these books exist. I have tried and failed before, and He is asking me to try again His way.

Chapter 5 Study Questions

1. What did Jesus ask Peter to do, and how did Peter respond? (5:4-5)
2. Why did Peter say, "Depart from me," after the great catch? (5:8)
3. What did the leper believe about Jesus, and how did Jesus answer him? (5:12-13)
4. What did Jesus do when the crowds grew larger? (5:15-16)
5. Why did Jesus forgive the paralyzed man's sins before healing him? (5:20-24)
6. What did Levi give up to follow Jesus, and what did he do right after? (5:27-29)
7. What did Jesus mean when He said the healthy do not need a physician? (5:31-32)
8. What is the point of the parable of the new wine and old wineskins? (5:36-39)
9. Is there an area where Jesus is asking you to let down the nets again, even though you have tried and failed before?
10. The friends of the paralyzed man carried him to Jesus. Who could you help bring to Jesus, and what might it cost you?

Chapter 6: Lord of the Sabbath and the Sermon on the Plain

Scripture

6:1-11 Now it came to pass on a second-first Sabbath ***that*** He was passing through the grainfields, and His disciples were plucking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing ***them*** with their hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbaths?" And answering, Jesus said to them, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, how he entered into the house of God, and took the loaves of the presentation and ate, and gave also to those with him, which it is not lawful to eat except only for the priests?" And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." And it came to pass also on another Sabbath ***that*** He entered into the synagogue and was teaching; and a man was there, and his right hand was withered. And the scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against Him. But He Himself knew their thoughts, and He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Rise and stand in the midst." And having risen, he stood. Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you something: Is it lawful on the Sabbaths to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to destroy ***it***?" And having looked around on them all, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored sound as the other. But they themselves were filled with rage, and were discussing with one another what they might do to Jesus.

6:12-26 And it came to pass in those days ***that*** He went out to the mountain to pray, and He was spending the whole night in prayer to God. And when it became day, He called His disciples to ***Him***, and having chosen twelve from them, whom He also named apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the ***son*** of Alphaeus, and Simon, the one called Zealot, Judas of James, and Judas Iscariot, who also became ***the*** betrayer. And having come down with them, He stood on a level place, and a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases, and those who were troubled by unclean spirits; and they were being healed. And all the crowd was seeking to touch Him, because power was going out from Him and was healing all. And He, having lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, was saying, "Blessed ***are*** the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed ***are*** those who hunger now, for you will be filled. Blessed ***are*** those who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and insult ***you*** and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for look, your reward ***is*** great in heaven; for according to these things their fathers were doing to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have your comfort in full. Woe to you who have been filled, for you will hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for according to these things their fathers were doing to the false prophets.

6:27-38 But I say to you who are hearing: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you. To the one who strikes you on the

cheek, offer also the other; and from the one who takes away your cloak, do not withhold also the tunic. And give to everyone who asks you; and from the one who takes away what ***is*** yours, do not ask ***it*** back. And just as you desire that men do to you, you also do to them likewise. And if you love those who love you, what credit is ***there*** to you? For even the sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is ***there*** to you? For even the sinners do the same. And if you lend ***to those*** from whom you expect to receive back, what credit is ***there*** to you? For even the sinners lend to sinners, so that they may receive back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He Himself is kind to the ungrateful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. Do not judge, and you will certainly not be judged; do not condemn, and you will certainly not be condemned; release, and you will be released. Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, they will give into your lap. For with the same measure with which you measure, it will be measured back to you."

6:39-49 And He spoke a parable to them: "A blind ***man*** is not able to lead a blind ***man***, is he? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. And why do you look at the splinter that ***is*** in your brother's eye, but the beam that ***is*** in your own eye you do not notice? Or how are you able to say to your brother, 'Brother, allow ***that*** I cast out the splinter that ***is*** in your eye,' you yourself not seeing the beam in your eye? Hypocrite, first cast out the beam from your eye, and then you will see clearly to cast out the splinter that ***is*** in your brother's eye. For there is no good tree producing bad fruit, nor a bad tree producing good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For they do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they harvest a grape cluster from a bramble bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what ***is*** good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth what ***is*** evil; for out of the overflow of the heart his mouth speaks. And why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood came, the river burst against that house and was not able to shake it, for it had been founded on the rock. But the one who heard and did not do is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation, against which the river burst, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

Chapter 6 Preview

The conflict with the Pharisees grows sharper in chapter 6. On one Sabbath they accuse Jesus' disciples of breaking the Law by picking and rubbing heads of grain. On another Sabbath they watch Him closely in the synagogue to see if He will heal a man with a withered hand. Jesus tells them that "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath," and He heals the man in front of them all. They are filled with rage. Then Jesus spends the whole night in prayer on a mountain, and in the morning He chooses twelve of His disciples and names them apostles.

Coming down to a level place, Jesus teaches a great crowd. Bible teachers call this the Sermon on the Plain. It begins with four blessings and four woes that turn the world's values upside down. Then Jesus calls His followers to love their enemies, do good to those who hate them, give without

expecting anything back, and be merciful as their Father is merciful. He warns against judging others while ignoring our own sin, teaches that a tree is known by its fruit, and closes with two builders. The one who hears Jesus' words and does them is like a man who builds on the rock. The storm comes, and his house stands.

Chapter 6 Study

6:1-2 *Now it came to pass on a second-first Sabbath **that** He was passing through the grainfields, and His disciples were plucking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing **them** with their hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbaths?"*

"On a second-first Sabbath." This unusual phrase is in the Received Greek Text that the SLB follows. Most older Greek copies simply say on a Sabbath, and many modern Bibles read that way. No one is sure what second-first means. Some think it was the first Sabbath after the second day of Passover, others the first Sabbath of the second month or the second year in a cycle. It does not change the meaning of the story.

"His disciples were plucking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them with their hands." They were walking through a field, hungry, and they picked some grain, rubbed off the husks, and ate it. The Law allowed this. A traveler could pick grain by hand from a neighbor's field, as long as he did not use a sickle (Deuteronomy 23:25).

"Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbaths?" The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week, Saturday, which God set aside as a day of rest (Exodus 20:8-11). The problem was not stealing. It was the day. Over the years the Jewish teachers had added many rules to define what counted as work on the Sabbath. In their eyes, picking grain was harvesting, and rubbing it was threshing. The disciples were breaking the Pharisees' rules, not God's Law.

6:3-4 *And answering, Jesus said to them, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, how he entered into the house of God, and took the loaves of the presentation and ate, and gave also to those with him, which it is not lawful to eat except only for the priests?"*

"Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry?" These men prided themselves on knowing the Scriptures, and Jesus asked if they had ever read them. When David was running from King Saul, he and his men were hungry, and the priest gave them the holy bread from the tabernacle (1 Samuel 21:1-6). That bread, called "the loaves of the presentation," was twelve loaves set out before the Lord each week, and only priests were allowed to eat them (Leviticus 24:5-9).

Jesus' point was that human need came before a ceremonial rule, and God did not condemn David. If David could do this, how much more could the disciples of David's greater Son pick grain on the Sabbath? God's laws were given for our good, not to keep us hungry. Mark records Jesus saying that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).

Old Testament links: 1 Samuel 21:4-6 (alluded to); Leviticus 24:9 (alluded to)

6:5 *And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."*

"The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." This is a bold claim. God gave the Sabbath. To say you are Lord over it is to claim to be God. Jesus was not breaking the Sabbath. He was saying He had the right to tell them what it was for. The One who made the day of rest is the One who gives us true rest (Matthew 11:28; Hebrews 4:9-10).

6:6-7 *And it came to pass also on another Sabbath* ***that*** *He entered into the synagogue and was teaching; and a man was there, and his right hand was withered. And the scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against Him.*

On another Sabbath "He entered into the synagogue and was teaching; and a man was there, and his right hand was withered." Luke, the doctor, tells us it was the man's "right hand." For most people that is the hand they work with. This man likely could not earn a living.

"The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against Him." They did not care about the man. They were using him as bait. They were in a house of worship, on a holy day, looking for a reason to accuse the Son of God. Their rules said you could help a person on the Sabbath only if his life was in danger. A withered hand could wait until tomorrow.

6:8 *But He Himself knew their thoughts, and He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Rise and stand in the midst." And having risen, he stood.*

"He Himself knew their thoughts." They had not said anything, but Jesus knew. He did not try to hide what He was about to do. "Rise and stand in the midst." He brought the man right into the middle of the room, where everyone could see. Jesus was not afraid of the Pharisees. And He would not let a hurting man stay in the corner.

6:9 *Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you something: Is it lawful on the Sabbaths to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to destroy* ***it****?"*

"Is it lawful on the Sabbaths to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to destroy it?" Jesus turned the question on them. The real question was not whether it was legal to heal. It was whether it was right to do good on God's day. Refusing to do good when you can is a kind of evil. And notice the irony. Jesus wanted to save a life on the Sabbath. They were planning, on the Sabbath, how to destroy His.

6:10 *And having looked around on them all, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored sound as the other.*

"Having looked around on them all." Picture Jesus slowly looking each of them in the eye. No one answered.

"Stretch out your hand." The man could not do that. His hand was withered. But when Jesus gives a command, He also gives the power to obey it. "He did so, and his hand was restored sound as the

other." Jesus did not touch him or say a prayer. He did nothing anyone could call work. He spoke, the man obeyed, and he was healed.

6:11 *But they themselves were filled with rage, and were discussing with one another what they might do to Jesus.*

"They themselves were filled with rage, and were discussing with one another what they might do to Jesus." They had just seen a miracle, a crippled hand made whole in front of their eyes. And they were furious. Mark tells us they began to plot with the Herodians, the supporters of Herod, how to destroy Him (Mark 3:6). When people's hearts are set against God, even miracles will not change them. They only make them angrier.

6:12 *And it came to pass in those days **that** He went out to the mountain to pray, and He was spending the whole night in prayer to God.*

"He went out to the mountain to pray, and He was spending the whole night in prayer to God." Jesus was about to make one of the most important decisions of His ministry: choosing the twelve men He would train and send out. Before He chose, He prayed all night.

How often do we make big decisions without praying at all? Jesus was the Son of God, and He still spent a whole night seeking His Father. If He needed to, we need to far more.

6:13 *And when it became day, He called His disciples to **Him**, and having chosen twelve from them, whom He also named apostles:*

"When it became day, He called His disciples to Him, and having chosen twelve from them, whom He also named apostles." A disciple is a student or follower. Jesus had many disciples. From them He chose twelve to be "apostles." The word apostle means one who is sent, a messenger sent with the authority of the one who sent him. These twelve would be with Him, learn from Him, and then be sent out to preach. The number twelve matches the twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus later told them they would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel in His kingdom (22:30).

6:14-16 *Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the **son** of Alphaeus, and Simon, the one called Zealot, Judas of James, and Judas Iscariot, who also became **the** betrayer.*

Look at the men He chose. "Simon, whom He also named Peter." Peter means rock. "Andrew his brother, James and John." These four were fishermen. "Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas." Bartholomew is likely the same man John calls Nathanael (John 1:45). Matthew is Levi, the tax collector. Thomas would later doubt the resurrection until he saw Jesus, then worship Him as Lord and God (John 20:28).

"James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon, the one called Zealot." The Zealots were Jews who wanted to overthrow Rome, by force if necessary. Matthew had worked for Rome. Simon had wanted to fight Rome. Jesus put them side by side. Only Jesus can bring people like that together.

"Judas of James." He is likely the same man called Thaddaeus in Matthew and Mark. "And Judas Iscariot, who also became the betrayer." Even after a whole night of prayer, Jesus chose Judas. He knew what Judas would do (John 6:64, 70). Scripture fulfilled its purpose through him. These were ordinary men, not religious leaders, and none of them was perfect. God uses ordinary people.

6:17-19 *And having come down with them, He stood on a level place, and a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases, and those who were troubled by unclean spirits; and they were being healed. And all the crowd was seeking to touch Him, because power was going out from Him and was healing all.*

"Having come down with them, He stood on a level place." This is why this sermon is often called the Sermon on the Plain. Matthew records the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 to 7), which has many of the same teachings. Bible teachers differ on whether these are two reports of the same sermon or two different occasions. A level place could be a flat area on a mountainside, so they may be the same. But Jesus also taught many of the same truths more than once, in different places. Either way, the teaching is the same.

The crowd came from all over: "all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon." Tyre and Sidon were Gentile cities to the north. People came "to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases." Luke notes that "power was going out from Him and was healing all."

6:20 *And He, having lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, was saying, "Blessed **are** the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.*

"He, having lifted up His eyes toward His disciples." Jesus spoke to the crowd, but especially to His disciples, those who had chosen to follow Him.

"Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." Blessed means truly happy, well off in God's eyes, not just feeling cheerful. Matthew records "the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3). Luke records simply "the poor." Both are true. Jesus is speaking to His disciples, many of whom had left everything to follow Him. The poor who know they need God are the ones who receive His kingdom. Wealth often makes people feel they do not need God. Poverty can make it easier to see how much we depend on Him. Being poor does not save anyone. But God has a special care for the poor who trust Him, and the kingdom belongs to them.

6:21 *Blessed **are** those who hunger now, for you will be filled. Blessed **are** those who weep now, for you will laugh.*

"Blessed are those who hunger now, for you will be filled. Blessed are those who weep now, for you will laugh." Notice the word now. Jesus is comparing this life with the life to come. His followers may be hungry and weeping now. But a day is coming when they will be filled and will laugh. That is the promise of the kingdom. One day God Himself will wipe away every tear from their eyes (Revelation 21:4).

6:22-23 *Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and insult **you** and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for look, your reward **is** great in heaven; for according to these things their fathers were doing to the prophets.*

"Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and insult you and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man." Notice the reason: "on account of the Son of Man." This is not a blessing for people who are disliked because they are rude or unkind. It is for those who suffer because they belong to Jesus. To exclude means to cut someone off, as a Jew could be cut off from the synagogue for following Jesus (John 9:22).

"Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for look, your reward is great in heaven." How can anyone rejoice when they are being insulted? Because they know they are in good company, "for according to these things their fathers were doing to the prophets." God's people have always been treated this way, and God has always rewarded them.

6:24 *But woe to you who are rich, for you have your comfort in full.*

"But woe to you who are rich, for you have your comfort in full." Woe is a cry of sorrow and warning. It is the opposite of blessed. Jesus is not saying it is a sin to have money. Abraham and Job were rich. But the rich who live for this world and trust in their riches have their comfort in full, now. The word means paid in full, like a receipt. They have already received everything they will ever get. There is nothing left for them in the life to come.

6:25-26 *Woe to you who have been filled, for you will hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for according to these things their fathers were doing to the false prophets.*

"Woe to you who have been filled, for you will hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep." These are the mirror image of the blessings. Those who are satisfied with this life, who laugh now without a thought of God, will one day weep.

"Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for according to these things their fathers were doing to the false prophets." If everyone likes you, it may be because you are telling them only what they want to hear. The false prophets in Israel were popular because they said everything was fine (Jeremiah 6:14). A faithful follower of Jesus will not be loved by everyone. That does not mean we should try to be disliked. It means we should not try to please everyone at the cost of the truth.

6:27-28 *But I say to you who are hearing: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you.*

"But I say to you who are hearing: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you." This is one of the hardest teachings in the Bible. The word for love here is agape, the love that chooses to seek another's good, whether or not they deserve it.

Notice how practical it is. Love is not just a feeling. It is doing good, speaking blessing, and praying. You may not feel warm toward someone who has hurt you, but you can do good to him, speak well of him, and pray for him.

Why should we? Because that is how God loved us. Paul tells us that while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son (Romans 5:10). Jesus prayed for the men who crucified Him (23:34). This does not mean we let people go on hurting us or others. It means we refuse to hate, and we leave judgment to God (Romans 12:17-21).

6:29 *To the one who strikes you on the cheek, offer also the other; and from the one who takes away your cloak, do not withhold also the tunic.*

"To the one who strikes you on the cheek, offer also the other." A slap on the cheek was an insult more than an attack. Jesus is telling us not to strike back when we are insulted, not to take revenge. He is not teaching that we should never protect the weak or that governments should never punish crime (Romans 13:1-4).

"From the one who takes away your cloak, do not withhold also the tunic." The cloak was the outer coat. The tunic was the shirt underneath. Jesus says do not cling so tightly to your things that you fight over them. People matter more than possessions.

Old Testament links: Lamentations 3:30 (alluded to)

6:30 *And give to everyone who asks you; and from the one who takes away what **is** yours, do not ask **it** back.*

"Give to everyone who asks you; and from the one who takes away what is yours, do not ask it back." Jesus calls us to be generous, open-handed people. This does not mean we must give a drunk money for more alcohol. Paul says if a man will not work, he should not eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Giving wisely is still giving. But our first instinct should be generosity, not suspicion. Our things are not really ours anyway. They belong to God.

6:31 *And just as you desire that men do to you, you also do to them likewise.*

"Just as you desire that men do to you, you also do to them likewise." This is often called the Golden Rule. Many people before Jesus taught the negative form: do not do to others what you would not want done to you. Jesus put it in positive form. It is not enough to avoid hurting people. We must actively do for them the good we would want for ourselves.

6:32-34 *And if you love those who love you, what credit is **there** to you? For even the sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is **there** to you? For even the sinners do the same. And if you lend **to those** from whom you expect to receive back, what credit is **there** to you? For even the sinners lend to sinners, so that they may receive back the same amount.*

"If you love those who love you, what credit is there to you? For even the sinners love those who love them." Anyone can love his friends. Even criminals are loyal to their own gang. Jesus says the

same about doing good and lending. If we only do good to people who can pay us back, we are no different from anyone else. "Even the sinners do the same." The love Jesus calls us to is different. It reaches people who cannot or will not return it.

6:35 *But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He Himself is kind to the ungrateful and evil.*

"But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High." To be sons of the Most High means to show the family likeness. When we love our enemies, we look like our Father. "For He Himself is kind to the ungrateful and evil." God sends sun and rain on everyone (Matthew 5:45). Every breath an unbeliever takes is a gift of God's kindness. That is the kind of love He calls us to show.

This is not how we become God's children. We become His children by faith in Christ (John 1:12). It is how His children show they belong to Him.

6:36 *Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.*

"Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful." This sums up the whole section. Mercy is not giving people what they deserve. God has been merciful to us beyond measure. We should treat others the same way.

6:37 *Do not judge, and you will certainly not be judged; do not condemn, and you will certainly not be condemned; release, and you will be released.*

"Do not judge, and you will certainly not be judged; do not condemn, and you will certainly not be condemned." Many people quote this verse to say no one can ever call anything sin. That is not what Jesus meant. In this same sermon He tells us to recognize bad fruit (6:43-45), and elsewhere Scripture calls us to judge between right and wrong (John 7:24; 1 Corinthians 5:12). Jesus is warning against a harsh, critical, condemning spirit, the attitude of the Pharisees who looked down on everyone else. We are not anyone's final judge. That place belongs to God (James 4:12).

"Release, and you will be released." To release means to forgive, to let go of a debt. Those who forgive others show they have truly received God's forgiveness (Matthew 6:14-15).

6:38 *Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, they will give into your lap. For with the same measure with which you measure, it will be measured back to you."*

"Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, they will give into your lap." Picture a merchant selling grain. A generous seller fills the measure, presses it down, shakes it to settle it, and fills it again until it spills over. People wore a long robe with a fold at the waist that could be used like a pocket or a bag, which is what "into your lap" means.

"For with the same measure with which you measure, it will be measured back to you." This is a principle. Generous people tend to receive generosity. Stingy, harsh people tend to receive the same. This is not a promise that giving money will make you rich. Jesus is speaking of the whole way we treat people: mercy, forgiveness and generosity. God will repay, in this life or the next, in His way and His time.

6:39 *And He spoke a parable to them: "A blind **man** is not able to lead a blind **man**, is he? Will they not both fall into a pit?*

"A blind man is not able to lead a blind man, is he? Will they not both fall into a pit?" A spiritually blind teacher cannot lead others to the truth. Jesus later called the Pharisees blind guides (Matthew 15:14). Be careful whom you follow. And be careful about leading others when you cannot see clearly yourself.

6:40 *A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.*

"A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher." A student becomes like the one who teaches him. If you follow a blind teacher, you will end up blind. If you follow Jesus, you will become like Him. That is the goal of the Christian life (Romans 8:29).

6:41-42 *And why do you look at the splinter that **is** in your brother's eye, but the beam that **is** in your own eye you do not notice? Or how are you able to say to your brother, 'Brother, allow **that** I cast out the splinter that **is** in your eye,' you yourself not seeing the beam in your eye? Hypocrite, first cast out the beam from your eye, and then you will see clearly to cast out the splinter that **is** in your brother's eye.*

"Why do you look at the splinter that is in your brother's eye, but the beam that is in your own eye you do not notice?" Jesus uses humor here to make a serious point. Picture a man with a wooden beam sticking out of his eye, squinting at a speck of sawdust in his brother's eye. We are quick to see small faults in others and slow to see big ones in ourselves.

"Hypocrite, first cast out the beam from your eye, and then you will see clearly to cast out the splinter that is in your brother's eye." A hypocrite was an actor on a stage who wore a mask. Jesus does not say never help your brother with his speck. He says deal with your own sin first. Then you will be able to help him with humility and see clearly. Paul says the same thing (Galatians 6:1).

6:43-44 *For there is no good tree producing bad fruit, nor a bad tree producing good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For they do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they harvest a grape cluster from a bramble bush.*

"For there is no good tree producing bad fruit, nor a bad tree producing good fruit." What a tree is shows in what it produces. "For each tree is known by its own fruit." You do not pick figs from thorn bushes or grapes from brambles. A person's life shows what he really is. We cannot see another person's heart, but we can see his fruit over time.

6:45 *The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what* ***is*** *good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth what* ***is*** *evil; for out of the overflow of the heart his mouth speaks.*

"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth what is evil." The heart is the inner person, where we think, feel and choose. What is stored there comes out.

"For out of the overflow of the heart his mouth speaks." Our words show what is in our hearts. If you want to know what you truly love, listen to what you talk about. If you want to change what comes out of your mouth, you must let God change your heart.

6:46 *And why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?*

"Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" Calling Jesus Lord means He is our Master, and a master is someone you obey. To call Him Lord and ignore what He says makes no sense. Many people say the right words about Jesus. The question is whether we do what He says.

6:47-48 *Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood came, the river burst against that house and was not able to shake it, for it had been founded on the rock.*

"Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them." There are three steps: come to Jesus, hear His words, and do them.

"He is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep and laid a foundation on the rock." Digging down to bedrock is hard, slow work. In Israel, a riverbed could be dry most of the year, and a builder might be tempted to build on the easy, flat sand. But "when a flood came, the river burst against that house and was not able to shake it, for it had been founded on the rock." When the storms of life come, and they will, the house built on obedience to Jesus will stand.

6:49 *But the one who heard and did not do is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation, against which the river burst, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."*

"But the one who heard and did not do is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation." Notice that both men heard the words of Jesus. The difference was what they did with them. From the outside, the two houses may have looked the same. You could not tell the difference until the storm came. "Immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

The storm Jesus speaks of may be the trials of this life, but it is also the final judgment. Hearing sermons, reading the Bible, and knowing the right answers is not enough. A faith that never obeys is no real faith at all (James 2:17). The only safe foundation is Jesus Himself and His word, believed and obeyed (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Chapter 6 Summary

On one Sabbath the Pharisees accused Jesus' disciples of breaking the Law by plucking grain, and Jesus answered from the story of David and declared that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. On another Sabbath, while the scribes and Pharisees watched to accuse Him, He healed a man's withered hand, asking whether it was lawful to do good or evil, and they were filled with rage. After a whole night of prayer, Jesus chose twelve apostles. On a level place He taught a great crowd, blessing the poor, the hungry, the weeping and the persecuted, and pronouncing woes on the rich, the full, the laughing and the popular. He called His followers to love their enemies, do good, bless, pray, give and lend without expecting anything back, and to be merciful as their Father is merciful. He warned against a judging spirit, against blind guides, and against seeing a splinter in a brother's eye while ignoring a beam in our own. A tree is known by its fruit, and the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart. He closed by saying that the one who hears His words and does them is like a man who builds his house on the rock, which stands when the flood comes.

Chapter 6 Study Questions

1. What rule did the Pharisees think the disciples had broken, and how did Jesus answer them? (6:1-5)

2. Why were the scribes and Pharisees watching Jesus in the synagogue? (6:7)

3. What did Jesus do before He chose the twelve apostles? (6:12-13)

4. What is the difference between the blessings and the woes in verses 20 to 26?

5. What four things does Jesus tell us to do toward our enemies? (6:27-28)

6. Does "Do not judge" mean we can never call anything wrong? What does Jesus mean? (6:37, 41-45)

7. What is the difference between the two builders? (6:47-49)

8. What does what we say reveal about us? (6:45)

9. Is there someone in your life who has hurt you, whom Jesus is calling you to do good to and pray for? What is one step you could take this week? (6:27-28)

10. Jesus asked, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" Is there something He has told you to do that you have not yet done? (6:46)

Chapter 7: Great Faith and Great Love

Scripture

7:1-17 Now when He had completed all His declarations in the hearing of the people, He entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's slave, being sick, was about to die, who was highly valued by him. And having heard about Jesus, he sent to Him elders of the Jews, asking Him that, having come, He would save his slave. And having come to Jesus, they were begging Him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy for whom He will grant this, for he loves our nation, and he himself built the synagogue for us." And Jesus was going with them. And when He was already not far distant from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not be troubled, for I am not worthy that You should come in under my roof. Therefore neither did I count myself worthy to come to You; but say ***it*** with a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under myself; and I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does ***it***." And having heard these things, Jesus marveled at him, and having turned to the crowd that was following Him, He said, "I say to you, not even in Israel did I find such great faith." And those who had been sent, having returned to the house, found the ailing slave in good health. And it came to pass on the next ***day that*** He was going into a city called Nain, and many of His disciples were going with Him, and a great crowd. And as He drew near to the gate of the city, then look, one who had died was being carried out, an only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a considerable crowd of the city was with her. And having seen her, the Lord felt compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." And having come up, He touched the bier, and those carrying ***it*** stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." And the dead ***man*** sat up and began to speak, and He gave him to his mother. And fear seized all, and they were glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has been raised up among us!" and, "God has visited His people!" And this word concerning Him went out in all Judea and in all the surrounding region.

7:18-35 And the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. And having called to ***him*** a certain two of his disciples, John sent ***them*** to Jesus, saying, "Are You the ***One*** who is coming, or are we to look for another?" And having come to Him, the men said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the ***One*** who is coming, or are we to look for another?'" And in that same hour He healed many of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits, and to many ***who were*** blind He granted sight. And answering, Jesus said to them, "Having gone, report to John what you have seen and heard: that ***the*** blind receive sight, ***the*** lame walk, lepers are cleansed, ***the*** deaf hear, ***the*** dead are raised, ***the*** poor have the gospel preached ***to them***. And blessed is whoever is not caused to stumble in Me." And when the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What have you gone out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by ***the*** wind? But what have you gone out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Look, those who are in splendid clothing and living in luxury are in the royal palaces. But what have you gone out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. This is he concerning whom it has been written: 'Look, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.' For I say to you, among those born of women there is no greater prophet than John the Baptist; but the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

And all the people, having heard, and the tax collectors, justified God, having been baptized ***with*** the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him. And the Lord said, "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like little children who sit in a marketplace and call to one another and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge for you, and you did not weep.' For John the Baptist has come neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a man, a glutton and a wine drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' And wisdom was justified by all her children."

7:36-50 And one of the Pharisees was asking Him that He would eat with him; and having entered into the house of the Pharisee, He reclined ***at the table***. And look, a woman who was a sinner in the city, having learned that He was reclining ***at the table*** in the house of the Pharisee, having brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and having stood behind ***Him*** at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and she was wiping ***them*** with the hairs of her head, and was kissing His feet and anointing ***them*** with the fragrant oil. And having seen ***this***, the Pharisee who had invited Him spoke within himself, saying, "This ***man***, if He were a prophet, would know who and what sort of woman ***this is*** who is touching Him, that she is a sinner." And answering, Jesus said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he says, "Teacher, say ***it***." "There were two debtors to a certain creditor: the one was owing five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he graciously forgave both. Which of them therefore, tell ***Me***, will love him more?" And answering, Simon said, "I suppose that ***it is he*** to whom he graciously forgave the more." And He said to him, "You have judged rightly." And having turned to the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered into your house; you did not give water for My feet; but she wet My feet with her tears and wiped ***them*** with the hairs of her head. You did not give Me a kiss; but she, from ***the time*** I came in, has not ceased kissing My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil; but she anointed My feet with fragrant oil. For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he to whom little is forgiven loves little." And He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." And those reclining ***at the table*** with ***Him*** began to say within themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Chapter 7 Preview

Chapter 7 is full of people the world overlooked. A Roman centurion, a Gentile soldier, sends word asking Jesus to heal his dying slave, and he is so humble that he does not think himself worthy to have Jesus under his roof. Jesus marvels at his faith. Then at the gate of the town of Nain, Jesus meets a funeral procession for a widow's only son. He feels compassion for her, touches the bier, and raises the young man from the dead.

John the Baptist, sitting in Herod's prison, sends messengers to ask whether Jesus really is the One who is coming. Jesus answers by pointing to His works and to the Scriptures, then praises John as more than a prophet and rebukes a generation that would accept neither John nor Himself. The chapter ends at a Pharisee's dinner table, where a woman known in town as a sinner washes Jesus' feet with her tears and anoints them with oil. The Pharisee is offended. Jesus tells a

short story about two debtors and teaches that the one who is forgiven much loves much. Then He tells the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Chapter 7 Study

7:1-2 *Now when He had completed all His declarations in the hearing of the people, He entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's slave, being sick, was about to die, who was highly valued by him.*

"When He had completed all His declarations in the hearing of the people, He entered into Capernaum." Jesus had just finished the Sermon on the Plain, which ended with a call to hear His words and do them. Now Luke shows us a man who took Jesus at His word.

"A certain centurion's slave, being sick, was about to die, who was highly valued by him." A centurion was a Roman army officer in charge of about a hundred soldiers. He was a Gentile, a non-Jew, and part of the force that kept the Jewish people under Roman rule. The slave was "highly valued" by him. The word can mean precious or dear. Many masters saw slaves as property. This man cared about his slave as a person.

7:3 *And having heard about Jesus, he sent to Him elders of the Jews, asking Him that, having come, He would save his slave.*

"Having heard about Jesus, he sent to Him elders of the Jews." Elders were the respected older men who led the Jewish community in a town. The centurion did not come himself. Perhaps he knew a Jewish teacher might not want to deal directly with a Gentile. He asked the Jewish leaders to go for him.

Matthew tells this story more briefly and speaks as if the centurion came himself (Matthew 8:5-13). In that day, it was normal to say a man did something when he did it through his messengers, just as we might say a president signed a peace treaty when his ambassador did. Luke gives us the fuller picture.

7:4-5 *And having come to Jesus, they were begging Him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy for whom He will grant this, for he loves our nation, and he himself built the synagogue for us."*

"He is worthy for whom He will grant this, for he loves our nation, and he himself built the synagogue for us." It is unusual to hear Jewish elders speak this way about a Roman soldier. This man loved the Jewish people, and he had paid to build the synagogue in Capernaum. He was likely a God-fearer, a Gentile who worshiped the God of Israel but had not become a Jew. The remains of a later synagogue still stand in Capernaum today, built on what many believe were the foundations of an older one.

Notice what the elders said: "He is worthy." They thought Jesus should help him because of all the good he had done. Watch what the centurion says about himself.

7:6-7 *And Jesus was going with them. And when He was already not far distant from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not be troubled, for I am not worthy that You should come in under my roof. Therefore neither did I count myself worthy to come to You; but say* ***it*** *with a word, and my servant will be healed.*

"Jesus was going with them." Jesus did not hesitate to go to a Gentile's house. But before He got there, "the centurion sent friends to Him."

"Lord, do not be troubled, for I am not worthy that You should come in under my roof." The elders said he was worthy. He said he was not. A Jew who entered a Gentile's house was considered unclean by the rules of that day. The centurion may not have wanted to put Jesus in that position. But more than that, he knew who Jesus was, and he knew who he was before Him. That is humility.

"Therefore neither did I count myself worthy to come to You; but say it with a word, and my servant will be healed." He believed Jesus did not need to be there. A word from Him was enough.

7:8 *For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under myself; and I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does* ***it****."*

"For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under myself." He understood authority. He took orders from those above him, and he gave orders to those under him. When he said go, a soldier went. When he said come, a soldier came. He did not need to be there to make sure it happened.

He saw that Jesus had that kind of authority over sickness. Jesus could give the order, and the sickness would have to go. That is great faith. It is not a feeling. It is trusting that Jesus' word has power.

7:9 *And having heard these things, Jesus marveled at him, and having turned to the crowd that was following Him, He said, "I say to you, not even in Israel did I find such great faith."*

"Having heard these things, Jesus marveled at him." Twice in the Gospels Jesus is said to marvel. Here He marvels at a Gentile's faith. In Mark 6:6 He marvels at the unbelief of the people in His own hometown.

"I say to you, not even in Israel did I find such great faith." Israel had the Law, the prophets and the promises. But a Roman soldier understood who Jesus was better than most of them. This is a theme all through Luke: the good news is for Gentiles too, and sometimes they receive it more readily than those who grew up with it.

7:10 *And those who had been sent, having returned to the house, found the ailing slave in good health.*

"Those who had been sent, having returned to the house, found the ailing slave in good health." Jesus did not even say a word that Luke records. He did not go into the house. He did not touch the

man. The slave was simply well. Jesus' authority does not depend on distance. He can work in our lives today, with the same word, from heaven.

7:11-12 *And it came to pass on the next **day that** He was going into a city called Nain, and many of His disciples were going with Him, and a great crowd. And as He drew near to the gate of the city, then look, one who had died was being carried out, an only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a considerable crowd of the city was with her.*

"He was going into a city called Nain." Nain was a small town about six miles southeast of Nazareth. This is the only time it is mentioned in the Bible. Jesus had a crowd with Him, many disciples and others.

"As He drew near to the gate of the city, then look, one who had died was being carried out." Two crowds met at the town gate. One was following the Lord of life. The other was following a dead body. In that day, the dead were buried the same day, outside the town.

"An only son of his mother, and she was a widow." Luke packs the sorrow into one line. She had already lost her husband. Now she had lost her only son. In that culture, a widow with no son had no one to support or protect her. She had lost her family, her future, and her means of living, all at once. "A considerable crowd of the city was with her." Funerals in that day were loud with wailing, and the whole town would come out.

7:13 *And having seen her, the Lord felt compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep."*

"Having seen her, the Lord felt compassion for her." Notice that Luke calls Jesus "the Lord" here, the first time he uses that title for Him in the story itself. The word for compassion means a feeling deep in the gut, a love that hurts with someone. No one asked Jesus to do anything. No one had faith in Him here. He simply saw her pain and was moved.

"Do not weep." Coming from anyone else, that would be a cruel thing to say to a grieving mother. Coming from Jesus, it was a promise. He was about to take away the reason for her tears.

7:14 *And having come up, He touched the bier, and those carrying **it** stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."*

"Having come up, He touched the bier, and those carrying it stood still." A bier was an open stretcher or frame used to carry the body, usually wrapped in cloth. Touching anything connected with a dead body made a Jew ceremonially unclean (Numbers 19:11). But just as with the leper, Jesus' touch did not make Him unclean. It made the dead alive.

"Young man, I say to you, arise." Jesus did not pray to the Father first, as Elijah and Elisha did when they raised the dead (1 Kings 17:20-22; 2 Kings 4:33-35). He spoke on His own authority. He spoke to a dead man as if he could hear, because to Jesus, he could.

7:15 *And the dead **man** sat up and began to speak, and He gave him to his mother.*

"The dead man sat up and began to speak." He did not slowly come around. He sat up and talked. "And He gave him to his mother." Those words are tender. Luke uses the same words that describe Elijah giving the widow's son back to his mother (1 Kings 17:23). Jesus did not raise the young man for show. He did it for her.

This is one of three people Jesus raised from the dead in the Gospels. The others are the daughter of Jairus (8:49-56) and Lazarus (John 11). Each one was a preview of the day Jesus will raise all the dead, and every believer to a body that will never die again (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

Old Testament links: 1 Kings 17:23 (alluded to)

7:16-17 *And fear seized all, and they were glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has been raised up among us!" and, "God has visited His people!" And this word concerning Him went out in all Judea and in all the surrounding region.*

"Fear seized all, and they were glorifying God," saying, "A great prophet has been raised up among us!" and, "God has visited His people!" They were right on both counts, and more right than they knew. Elijah had raised a widow's son at Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24), and Elisha had raised a mother's only son at Shunem, just across the valley from Nain (2 Kings 4:8-37). The people saw Jesus as a prophet like them. But He was more than a prophet. In Jesus, God Himself had come to visit His people. Zechariah had sung that God had visited His people (1:68), and here it was.

"This word concerning Him went out in all Judea and in all the surrounding region." Judea here likely means the whole land of the Jews.

7:18-20 *And the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. And having called to **him** a certain two of his disciples, John sent **them** to Jesus, saying, "Are You the **One** who is coming, or are we to look for another?" And having come to Him, the men said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the **One** who is coming, or are we to look for another?'"*

"The disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things." John was in prison by now (3:20). Matthew tells us he heard in prison about the works of the Christ (Matthew 11:2).

"Are You the One who is coming, or are we to look for another?" The One who is coming was a way of speaking of the Messiah. Why would John ask this? He had baptized Jesus. He had seen the Spirit come down and heard the Father's voice. But now he was sitting in Herod's prison, and things were not going the way he expected. John had preached about an ax at the root of the trees and fire for the chaff (3:9, 17). Jesus was healing people and eating with sinners, not judging the wicked. And John was still locked up.

Even great men of faith can have seasons of doubt, especially when they are suffering. John did the right thing with his doubt. He took it to Jesus.

7:21 *And in that same hour He healed many of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits, and to many **who were** blind He granted sight.*

"In that same hour He healed many of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits, and to many who were blind He granted sight." Jesus did not answer right away with words. He let John's messengers watch Him work.

7:22-23 *And answering, Jesus said to them, "Having gone, report to John what you have seen and heard: that **the** blind receive sight, **the** lame walk, lepers are cleansed, **the** deaf hear, **the** dead are raised, **the** poor have the gospel preached **to them**. And blessed is whoever is not caused to stumble in Me."*

"Having gone, report to John what you have seen and heard." Then Jesus listed what they had seen: "the blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them." Almost every item on that list echoes the prophet Isaiah, in passages about the coming Messiah and His kingdom (Isaiah 35:5-6; 61:1). John knew his Bible. He would recognize those words and understand: Jesus is doing exactly what the Messiah was promised to do.

What about the judgment John preached? It is still coming. Remember, Jesus stopped reading Isaiah 61 before "a day of vengeance of our God" (Isaiah 61:2; see 4:19). The judgment John spoke of will come when Jesus returns. First He came with mercy.

"And blessed is whoever is not caused to stumble in Me." To stumble means to be offended, to trip over Jesus and fall away because He did not do what we expected. Jesus gently tells John, and us, to trust Him even when we do not understand His timing.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 35:5-6 (alluded to); Isaiah 29:18 (alluded to)

7:24-25 *And when the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What have you gone out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by **the** wind? But what have you gone out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Look, those who are in splendid clothing and living in luxury are in the royal palaces.*

After the messengers left, Jesus praised John to the crowd. He did not want anyone to think less of John because of his question. "What have you gone out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?" Reeds grew along the Jordan River and bent with every breeze. John was not like that. He stood firm against kings.

"A man clothed in soft garments? Look, those who are in splendid clothing and living in luxury are in the royal palaces." John wore camel's hair. He did not live for comfort. And now he was in one of Herod's strongholds all right, but in its prison.

7:26-27 *But what have you gone out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. This is he concerning whom it has been written: 'Look, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.'*

"A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet." Why more? Because John was the subject of prophecy himself. "This is he concerning whom it has been written: 'Look, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.'" Jesus quotes Malachi 3:1. John was the messenger who would go before the Lord. Other prophets spoke about the Messiah from far away. John saw Him and pointed to Him.

Old Testament links: Malachi 3:1 (quoted)

7:28 *For I say to you, among those born of women there is no greater prophet than John the Baptist; but the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."*

"Among those born of women there is no greater prophet than John the Baptist." That is high praise. John was the last and greatest of the Old Testament prophets.

"But the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." What does that mean? Jesus is not saying John was not saved. John will be in the kingdom. Jesus is speaking of privilege and position. John stood at the doorway of the new age, but he died before the cross, the resurrection and Pentecost. The humblest believer who lives after the cross knows more of God's plan, and enjoys the full blessings of the new covenant, than John did in his lifetime. That should make us grateful, and it should make us want to live up to what we have been given.

7:29-30 *And all the people, having heard, and the tax collectors, justified God, having been baptized **with** the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.*

"All the people, having heard, and the tax collectors, justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John." To justify God here means to declare that God was right. The ordinary people and the tax collectors had repented and been baptized by John. They agreed with God's verdict about their sin, and now they agreed with Jesus' words about John.

"But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him." Lawyers were experts in the Law of Moses, the same as scribes. God had a plan for them too, but they refused it. They would not admit they were sinners who needed to repent. Notice the words "for themselves." They were the ones who lost out. When we reject God's counsel, we only hurt ourselves.

7:31-32 *And the Lord said, "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like little children who sit in a marketplace and call to one another and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge for you, and you did not weep.'*

"To what then shall I liken the men of this generation?" Jesus compares them to "little children who sit in a marketplace and call to one another." Picture children playing in the town square. One group wants to play wedding and plays the flute, but the others will not dance. So they play

funeral and sing a sad song, but the others will not mourn. Nothing pleases them. They will not play any game.

7:33-34 *For John the Baptist has come neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a man, a glutton and a wine drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'*

That was how the people treated John and Jesus. "John the Baptist has come neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.'" John lived a strict life in the desert, and they said he was crazy.

"The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a man, a glutton and a wine drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" Jesus went to dinners and spent time with people, and they said He loved food and wine too much. A glutton is someone who overeats. Neither charge was true. Jesus never sinned. But one part of the insult was true, and it is the best news in the world. Jesus is "a friend of tax collectors and sinners." That is why there is hope for us.

People who do not want to hear God's message will always find an excuse to reject the messenger. If he is too strict, he is a fanatic. If he is too friendly, he is worldly. The problem is not the messenger. It is the heart.

7:35 *And wisdom was justified by all her children."*

"Wisdom was justified by all her children." God's wisdom is proven right by those who receive it. The people who believed John and Jesus, the tax collectors and sinners whose lives were changed, are the proof that God's way was right. You can tell wisdom by what it produces.

7:36 *And one of the Pharisees was asking Him that He would eat with him; and having entered into the house of the Pharisee, He reclined* ***at the table****.*

"One of the Pharisees was asking Him that He would eat with him." We learn in verse 40 that his name was Simon. Not every Pharisee was hostile to Jesus. This one invited Him to dinner, though as we will see, he did not treat Him with much honor. "He reclined at the table." At a formal dinner, guests lay on low couches around the table, leaning on the left elbow, with their feet stretched out behind them. That is how a woman could stand behind Jesus at His feet.

7:37-38 *And look, a woman who was a sinner in the city, having learned that He was reclining* ***at the table*** *in the house of the Pharisee, having brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and having stood behind* ***Him*** *at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and she was wiping* ***them*** *with the hairs of her head, and was kissing His feet and anointing* ***them*** *with the fragrant oil.*

"A woman who was a sinner in the city." Luke does not tell us her sin. Everyone in town knew her reputation. Many have assumed she was a prostitute, but the text does not say so. Some later traditions said she was Mary Magdalene, but there is no evidence for that in Scripture. Luke introduces Mary Magdalene as someone new in the very next chapter (8:2). This is also a

different event from the time Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus in the last week of His life (John 12:1-8). That was in Judea, at a different time, at a different house.

In that day, people could come into the courtyard during a dinner to listen to a visiting teacher. She came, "having brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil." Alabaster was a soft, beautiful stone, and the oil inside would have been costly.

"Having stood behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears." She did not plan to cry. It just poured out of her. She had nothing to wipe His feet with, so "she was wiping them with the hairs of her head." A respectable Jewish woman did not let her hair down in public. She did not care. She "was kissing His feet and anointing them with the fragrant oil." Everything she did showed deep love, sorrow for sin, and gratitude.

7:39 *And having seen **this**, the Pharisee who had invited Him spoke within himself, saying, "This **man**, if He were a prophet, would know who and what sort of woman **this is** who is touching Him, that she is a sinner."*

"This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner." Simon did not say it out loud. He "spoke within himself." He thought he had proven Jesus was not a prophet. A real prophet would know this woman was a sinner, and a holy man would never let her touch him.

Simon was wrong on both counts. Jesus knew exactly who she was. And Jesus knew exactly what Simon was thinking, which proved He was a prophet after all.

7:40-42 *And answering, Jesus said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he says, "Teacher, say **it**." "There were two debtors to a certain creditor: the one was owing five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he graciously forgave both. Which of them therefore, tell **Me**, will love him more?"*

"Simon, I have something to say to you." Simon answered politely, "Teacher, say it." So Jesus told him a short story.

"There were two debtors to a certain creditor: the one was owing five hundred denarii, and the other fifty." A denarius was a Roman silver coin, about a day's wage for a laborer. Five hundred denarii was more than a year and a half of work. Fifty was less than two months. "When they had nothing to pay, he graciously forgave both." Neither one could pay. Both were forgiven, freely. "Which of them therefore, tell Me, will love him more?"

7:43 *And answering, Simon said, "I suppose that **it is he** to whom he graciously forgave the more." And He said to him, "You have judged rightly."*

"I suppose that it is he to whom he graciously forgave the more." Simon answered carefully, as if he sensed a trap. And Jesus said, "You have judged rightly." Simon had just judged himself.

7:44-46 *And having turned to the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered into your house; you did not give water for My feet; but she wet My feet with her tears and wiped* ***them*** *with the hairs of her head. You did not give Me a kiss; but she, from* ***the time*** *I came in, has not ceased kissing My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil; but she anointed My feet with fragrant oil.*

"Having turned to the woman," Jesus said to Simon, "Do you see this woman?" Simon had seen her as a sinner, a category, a problem. Jesus asked him to really see her.

Then Jesus compared the two of them. In that day a good host showed honor to a guest in three ways. He had a servant wash the guest's dusty feet. He greeted him with a kiss. He put a little oil on his head. Simon did none of it. "You did not give water for My feet; but she wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. You did not give Me a kiss; but she, from the time I came in, has not ceased kissing My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil; but she anointed My feet with fragrant oil." The sinful woman had treated Jesus with more honor than the religious man who invited Him.

7:47 *For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he to whom little is forgiven loves little."*

"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much." We need to read this carefully. Jesus is not saying she earned forgiveness by loving Him. The story He just told makes the order clear. The debtor who was forgiven more loved more. Love is the result of forgiveness, not the cause. Her great love was the proof that she had already been forgiven. In verse 50 Jesus tells us what saved her: her faith.

"But he to whom little is forgiven loves little." Simon was not a smaller sinner than this woman. He just did not know how much he needed forgiveness. He thought he owed God fifty denarii, if anything. So he loved little. The person who knows how much he has been forgiven will love Jesus much.

7:48 *And He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven."*

"Your sins have been forgiven." Jesus said it to her directly, in front of everyone. She had been forgiven already, and now He told her so publicly. Everyone in that room had looked down on her. Now the Son of God declared her clean. Imagine what those words meant to her.

7:49 *And those reclining* ***at the table*** *with* ***Him*** *began to say within themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"*

"Who is this who even forgives sins?" The other guests asked the same question the scribes asked in chapter 5 (5:21). It is the right question. Only God can forgive sins. Luke leaves it hanging for us to answer.

7:50 *And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*

"Your faith has saved you; go in peace." Here is how she was saved: by faith. Not by her tears, not by her perfume, not by her love, but by trusting Jesus. Her love was how she showed her faith. Paul tells us it is by grace we are saved through faith, and that it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). "Go in peace" means go in the peace of a heart made right with God. She came in carrying shame. She left with peace. That is what Jesus still does for anyone who comes to Him in faith.

Chapter 7 Summary

A Roman centurion sent Jewish elders and then friends to ask Jesus to heal his dying slave. Though the elders called him worthy, he said he was not worthy to have Jesus under his roof and asked Him only to say the word. Jesus marveled at his faith, greater than any He had found in Israel, and the slave was healed. At Nain Jesus felt compassion for a widow whose only son had died, touched the bier, raised the young man, and gave him back to his mother, and the people said that God had visited His people. John the Baptist, in prison, sent to ask if Jesus was the One who was coming, and Jesus pointed to His works, which fulfilled Isaiah's words about the Messiah. He then praised John as more than a prophet, the messenger of Malachi 3:1, and rebuked a generation that rejected both John and Himself, calling Him a friend of tax collectors and sinners. At the house of Simon the Pharisee, a sinful woman washed Jesus' feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair and anointed them. Jesus told the parable of two debtors, showing that the one forgiven much loves much, declared her sins forgiven, and told her that her faith had saved her.

Chapter 7 Study Questions

1. What did the Jewish elders say about the centurion, and what did he say about himself? (7:4-7)

2. How did the centurion's understanding of authority show his faith? (7:8)

3. What moved Jesus to raise the widow's son at Nain? (7:13)

4. Why do you think John the Baptist asked if Jesus was the One who was coming, and how did Jesus answer? (7:19-23)

5. What did Jesus say about John to the crowds? (7:26-28)

6. How did people respond to John and to Jesus, and what does that show about their hearts? (7:33-34)

7. What did the sinful woman do that Simon the Pharisee did not? (7:44-46)

8. According to verse 50, what saved the woman? How does that fit with verse 47? (7:47, 50)

9. When have you had doubts, as John did? What can you do with your doubts, according to this chapter? (7:19)

10. Do you think of yourself more like Simon or more like the woman? How does knowing how much you have been forgiven change how you love Jesus? (7:47)

Chapter 8: Seeds, Storms, and a Daughter Raised

Scripture

8:1-15 And it came to pass soon afterward ***that*** He Himself was traveling throughout every city and village, proclaiming and preaching the gospel ***of*** the kingdom of God; and the twelve ***were*** with Him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, the one called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, wife of Chuza, a steward of Herod, and Susanna, and many others, who were ministering to Him from their possessions. And when a great crowd was coming together, and those from each city were coming to Him, He spoke by a parable: "The sower went out to sow his seed. And in his sowing, some fell along the road, and it was trampled down, and the birds of the heaven devoured it. And other fell on the rock, and having sprung up, it withered, because of not having moisture. And other fell in ***the*** midst of the thorns, and the thorns, having sprung up with ***it***, choked it. And other fell on the good soil, and having sprung up, it produced fruit a hundredfold." Saying these things, He was calling out, "The one who has ears to hear, let him hear." And His disciples were asking Him, saying, "What might this parable be?" And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest ***it is*** in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now this is the parable: the seed is the word of God. And those along the road are those who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not, having believed, be saved. And those on the rock ***are*** those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a time, and in a time of testing fall away. And that which fell into the thorns, these are those who have heard, and going along, are choked by cares and riches and pleasures of life, and do not bring ***fruit*** to maturity. And that in the good soil, these are those who, having heard the word in a noble and good heart, hold ***it*** fast and bear fruit with perseverance.

8:16-25 Now no one, having lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts ***it*** under a bed; but he puts ***it*** on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not become manifest, nor ***is anything*** secret that will not be known and come into the open. Therefore watch how you hear; for whoever has, to him it will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken away from him." And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were not able to get to Him because of the crowd. And it was reported to Him, ***some*** saying, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see You." But answering, He said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it." And it came to pass on one of the days ***that*** He Himself got into a boat, and His disciples, and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." And they set out. And as they were sailing, He fell asleep. And a storm of wind came down onto the lake, and they were being swamped and were in danger. And having come to ***Him***, they woke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And having arisen, He rebuked the wind and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and a calm came. And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And having become afraid, they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"

8:26-39 And they sailed down to the region of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He had gone out onto the land, a certain man out of the city met Him, who had demons for a long time, and was not wearing a garment, and was not staying in a house, but in the tombs. And having seen Jesus, and having cried out, he fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What ***is there*** to me and to You, Jesus, Son of God Most High? I beg You, do not torment me!" For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out from the man. For many times it had seized him, and he was bound with chains and shackles, being kept under guard; and breaking the bonds, he was driven by the demon into the deserted places. And Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered into him. And they were begging Him that He would not command them to depart into the abyss. Now there was a herd of many pigs feeding there on the mountain; and they were begging Him that He would allow them to enter into those. And He allowed them. And the demons, having gone out from the man, entered into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. And those feeding ***them***, having seen what had happened, fled, and having gone, reported ***it*** in the city and in the fields. And they went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone out sitting, clothed and being of sound mind, at the feet of Jesus; and they were afraid. And those also who had seen ***it*** reported to them how the one who had been demon-possessed was saved. And all the multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, because they were seized with great fear. And He, having gotten into the boat, returned. And the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him to be with Him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your house, and relate how much God has done for you." And he departed through all the city, proclaiming how much Jesus had done for him.

8:40-56 And it came to pass, when Jesus returned, ***that*** the crowd received Him; for they were all looking for Him. And look, a man came whose name ***was*** Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue; and having fallen at the feet of Jesus, he was begging Him to come into his house, because he had an only daughter, about twelve years ***old***, and she was dying. And as He was going, the crowds were pressing around Him. And a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who, having spent all her living on physicians, was not able to be healed by anyone, having come up behind ***Him***, touched the fringe of His cloak; and immediately the flow of her blood stopped. And Jesus said, "Who ***is*** the one who touched Me?" And when all were denying ***it***, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the crowds are surrounding You and pressing in ***on You***, and You say, 'Who ***is*** the one who touched Me?'" But Jesus said, "Someone touched Me, for I knew ***that*** power had gone out from Me." And the woman, having seen that she was not hidden, came trembling, and having fallen down before Him, she declared to Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, "Take courage, daughter; your faith has saved you. Go in peace." While He was still speaking, someone comes from the ***house of the*** synagogue ruler, saying to him, "Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher." But Jesus, having heard, answered him, saying, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be saved." And having come into the house, He did not allow anyone to go in except Peter and James and John, and the father of the child and the mother. Now all were weeping and mourning for her. But He said, "Do not weep; she did not die, but sleeps." And they were laughing at Him, knowing that she had died. And He, having put ***them*** all outside and having taken hold of

her hand, called out, saying, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately; and He directed ***that something*** be given to her to eat. And her parents were amazed; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened.

Chapter 8 Preview

Chapter 8 opens with Jesus traveling from town to town preaching the kingdom of God, with the twelve and a group of women He had healed, who supported Him out of their own money. Then He tells the parable of the sower. The seed is the word of God, and the soil is the human heart. Some hearts are hard, some are shallow, some are crowded with worries and riches, and some are good soil that holds the word fast and bears fruit with perseverance. Jesus tells His listeners to watch how they hear, and He says His true family are those who hear the word of God and do it.

Then Luke shows us four scenes of Jesus' power. He calms a storm on the lake with a word. He frees a man possessed by a legion of demons, who ends up sitting at His feet, clothed and in his right mind. A woman who has suffered with bleeding for twelve years touches the fringe of His cloak and is healed, and He calls her daughter. And when word comes that Jairus' twelve-year-old daughter has died, Jesus says, "Do not fear; only believe," takes her by the hand, and raises her from the dead. Nature, demons, disease and death all bow to Him.

Chapter 8 Study

8:1 *And it came to pass soon afterward **that** He Himself was traveling throughout every city and village, proclaiming and preaching the gospel **of** the kingdom of God; and the twelve **were** with Him,*

"He Himself was traveling throughout every city and village, proclaiming and preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God." Jesus did not wait for people to come to Him. He went to them, town by town. Galilee had many villages close together, and Jesus walked from one to the next.

"The twelve were with Him." They were learning by watching Him. That is how Jesus trained His disciples. He did not just teach them in a classroom. He brought them along.

8:2-3 *and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, the one called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, wife of Chuza, a steward of Herod, and Susanna, and many others, who were ministering to Him from their possessions.*

"Certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities." Only Luke tells us this. In that day, it was unusual for a rabbi to have women among his followers. Many teachers would not even teach women the Law. Jesus welcomed them, taught them, and let them travel with His group.

"Mary, the one called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out." Magdalene means from Magdala, a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had set her free from terrible bondage. She would stay faithful to the end. She stood near the cross (John 19:25), and she was the first person to see Jesus after He rose from the dead (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18). Nothing

in Scripture says she had been a prostitute. That idea came from later church tradition, not from the Bible.

"Joanna, wife of Chuza, a steward of Herod." A steward managed a household or estate. Chuza worked for Herod Antipas, the same ruler who imprisoned John. So the good news had reached even into Herod's household. Joanna would also be at the empty tomb (24:10). "And Susanna, and many others, who were ministering to Him from their possessions." These women used their own money to support Jesus and the twelve. The Son of God, who made everything, allowed Himself to be supported by the gifts of women He had healed. Their giving was part of His ministry, and God recorded their names.

8:4 *And when a great crowd was coming together, and those from each city were coming to Him, He spoke by a parable:*

"When a great crowd was coming together, and those from each city were coming to Him, He spoke by a parable." A parable is a short story from everyday life that teaches a spiritual truth. Jesus often used farming, fishing and household pictures that everyone understood. A crowd this large would have many kinds of hearers in it, and this parable is about exactly that.

8:5 *"The sower went out to sow his seed. And in his sowing, some fell along the road, and it was trampled down, and the birds of the heaven devoured it.*

"The sower went out to sow his seed." In that day a farmer walked through his field throwing seed by hand. Some seed landed where he did not intend. "Some fell along the road, and it was trampled down, and the birds of the heaven devoured it." Paths ran through the fields, and the ground there was packed hard by feet. Seed could not sink in. People walked on it, and birds ate it.

8:6 *And other fell on the rock, and having sprung up, it withered, because of not having moisture.*

"Other fell on the rock, and having sprung up, it withered, because of not having moisture." Much of the land in Galilee has a layer of limestone just under the soil. Seed that fell there would sprout fast, because the thin soil warmed quickly. But the roots could not go down to find water, and the plant dried up.

8:7 *And other fell in **the** midst of the thorns, and the thorns, having sprung up with **it**, choked it.*

"Other fell in the midst of the thorns, and the thorns, having sprung up with it, choked it." The farmer might not see the thorn roots under the plowed ground. The good seed came up, but so did the thorns, and they grew faster and took over.

8:8 *And other fell on the good soil, and having sprung up, it produced fruit a hundredfold." Saying these things, He was calling out, "The one who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

"Other fell on the good soil, and having sprung up, it produced fruit a hundredfold." A hundredfold means a hundred times what was sown. That was an amazing harvest.

"The one who has ears to hear, let him hear." Jesus called out these words loudly. Everyone in the crowd had ears. But not everyone was really listening. Jesus was telling them to pay attention, because this story was about them.

8:9-10 *And His disciples were asking Him, saying, "What might this parable be?" And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest **it is** in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.*

"What might this parable be?" Even the disciples did not understand it. They had to ask.

"To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." In the Bible, a mystery is not a puzzle to be solved by clever people. It is a truth God had kept hidden and now reveals to those He chooses. The disciples were not smarter than anyone else. It was given to them.

"But to the rest it is in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand." Jesus is quoting Isaiah 6:9-10. This sounds harsh. Did Jesus use parables to keep people from understanding? For those who wanted to know the truth, parables opened it up. They made truth easy to remember and invited people to come and ask, as the disciples did. For those who had already rejected Him, parables hid the truth. God does not force His truth on people who do not want it. Those who harden their hearts against the light end up losing the light they had. That is what Jesus warns about in verse 18.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 6:9 (quoted)

8:11 *Now this is the parable: the seed is the word of God.*

"Now this is the parable: the seed is the word of God." The seed is always good. The sower is the same. The difference is in the soil. When the word of God does not bear fruit in someone's life, the problem is never with the word. It is with the heart that receives it.

8:12 *And those along the road are those who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not, having believed, be saved.*

"Those along the road are those who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not, having believed, be saved." The hard path is a hard heart. The word never sinks in. They hear a sermon and forget it before they get to the car. And the devil is at work. He snatches the word away. Notice his goal: "so that they may not, having believed, be saved." He knows the word of God is how people come to faith and are saved. That is why he works so hard to take it away.

8:13 *And those on the rock **are** those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a time, and in a time of testing fall away.*

"Those on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy." This is the shallow heart. These people get excited. They respond quickly. "And these have no root, who believe for a time, and in a time of testing fall away." When following Jesus becomes hard, when it costs them friends, comfort or reputation, they walk away.

Bible teachers differ on whether these people were ever truly saved. Many believe their faith was never real saving faith, because it had no root, and true faith endures (1 John 2:19). Others believe this describes real believers who stop following, and they apply the warning that way. Either way, the lesson is the same: a quick, emotional response is not the same as a rooted faith. What matters is not how fast a person starts, but whether he keeps going.

8:14 *And that which fell into the thorns, these are those who have heard, and going along, are choked by cares and riches and pleasures of life, and do not bring **fruit** to maturity.*

"That which fell into the thorns, these are those who have heard, and going along, are choked by cares and riches and pleasures of life, and do not bring fruit to maturity." This is the crowded heart. These people hear the word, and something begins to grow. But other things grow too. Notice the three thorns: cares, the worries of life; riches, the pursuit of money and things; and pleasures, the good times of this life. None of these is always sinful. But they crowd out God's word slowly, the way weeds crowd out a garden.

I think this soil is the one most of us need to watch. We do not usually walk away from Jesus all at once. We just get busy. The thorns grow quietly while we are not paying attention.

8:15 *And that in the good soil, these are those who, having heard the word in a noble and good heart, hold **it** fast and bear fruit with perseverance.*

"That in the good soil, these are those who, having heard the word in a noble and good heart, hold it fast and bear fruit with perseverance." The good soil is the heart God has prepared. Notice what the good soil does. It hears the word. It holds it fast, keeping hold of it and not letting it go. And it bears fruit "with perseverance," steady endurance over time. Fruit does not grow overnight. It takes a season. A true believer keeps going, through hard times and good times, and over the long haul his life shows the fruit of God's word.

8:16 *Now no one, having lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts **it** under a bed; but he puts **it** on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light.*

"No one, having lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed." A lamp in that day was a small clay bowl of olive oil with a wick. You would not light one and then hide it. "He puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light." The truth Jesus gives His disciples is not meant to be kept secret. It is meant to be shared, so others can see.

8:17 *For nothing is hidden that will not become manifest, nor **is anything** secret that will not be known and come into the open.*

"For nothing is hidden that will not become manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come into the open." The mysteries of the kingdom were hidden for a time, but they would be made known. One day everything will come into the open, including what is hidden in our hearts (1 Corinthians 4:5). That is both a promise and a warning.

8:18 *Therefore watch how you hear; for whoever has, to him it will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken away from him."*

"Therefore watch how you hear." This is the point of everything Jesus has said since verse 4. How we listen to God's word matters. Do we listen with hard hearts, shallow hearts, crowded hearts, or good hearts?

"For whoever has, to him it will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken away from him." The person who receives the word and acts on it will be given more understanding. The person who ignores it will lose even the little he thought he had. Truth that we hear and do not obey does not stay with us. It slips away.

8:19-20 *And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were not able to get to Him because of the crowd. And it was reported to Him,* ***some*** *saying, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see You."*

"His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were not able to get to Him because of the crowd." These were Mary and the sons she had with Joseph after Jesus was born. Mark tells us they had come to take Him home because they thought He was "beside Himself," out of His mind (Mark 3:21, 31). John tells us His brothers did not believe in Him at that time (John 7:5). Later, after the resurrection, they did. His brother James became a leader of the church in Jerusalem and wrote the letter of James (Acts 1:14; 15:13; Galatians 1:19).

Roman Catholic and Orthodox teaching holds that Mary remained a virgin all her life, and reads these brothers as cousins or as Joseph's sons from an earlier marriage. Read plainly, along with Matthew 1:25 and Mark 6:3, the text points to Jesus' half-brothers, the younger sons of Mary and Joseph.

8:21 *But answering, He said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."*

"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it." Jesus was not being cold to His family. He loved His mother, and from the cross He made sure she would be cared for (John 19:26-27). But He was teaching that there is a family closer than blood. Everyone who hears God's word and does it belongs to Jesus' family. That ties straight back to the parable. The good soil hears the word and holds it fast. If you hear and obey, you are as close to Jesus as His own mother and brothers.

8:22 *And it came to pass on one of the days* ***that*** *He Himself got into a boat, and His disciples, and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." And they set out.*

"He Himself got into a boat, and His disciples," and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." Remember those words. Jesus said they were going to the other side. He did not say they would go halfway and drown.

8:23 *And as they were sailing, He fell asleep. And a storm of wind came down onto the lake, and they were being swamped and were in danger.*

"As they were sailing, He fell asleep." Jesus was exhausted after a long day of teaching. He was fully man, and He got tired. This is the only time the Gospels tell us Jesus slept.

"A storm of wind came down onto the lake, and they were being swamped and were in danger." The Sea of Galilee sits about seven hundred feet below sea level, with hills around it. Cold air can rush down through the valleys and stir up a sudden, violent storm. Several of these men were fishermen who knew the lake well. They knew this storm could kill them.

8:24 *And having come to **Him**, they woke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And having arisen, He rebuked the wind and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and a calm came.*

"Master, Master, we are perishing!" They woke Him in a panic. Mark tells us they asked if He even cared (Mark 4:38). At least they went to the right person.

"Having arisen, He rebuked the wind and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and a calm came." He spoke to the storm the same way He spoke to the fever and the demons, with a rebuke, as their Master. Usually after a storm the waves keep rolling for hours. This time the wind and the water stopped at once.

8:25 *And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And having become afraid, they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"*

"Where is your faith?" Jesus did not say they had no faith. He asked where it was. They had faith, but in the storm they forgot it. Jesus had told them they were going to the other side. And Jesus was in the boat with them.

"Having become afraid, they marveled," saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?" Notice that they were afraid of the storm, and then they were even more afraid after it stopped. They had just seen something only God can do. The Psalms say it is God who stills the roaring of the seas and makes the storm a calm (Psalm 65:7; 107:29). Who is this? That is the question Luke wants every reader to answer. Jesus is the Lord of the wind and the waves.

8:26-27 *And they sailed down to the region of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He had gone out onto the land, a certain man out of the city met Him, who had demons for a long time, and was not wearing a garment, and was not staying in a house, but in the tombs.*

"They sailed down to the region of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee." This was on the east side of the lake, in a mostly Gentile area called the Decapolis, meaning ten cities. Different Greek copies of the Gospels name the region from different nearby towns, Gadara, Gerasa or Gergesa. They all point to the same general area.

"A certain man out of the city met Him, who had demons." Matthew tells us there were two men (Matthew 8:28). Luke and Mark focus on one, likely the one who spoke, or the better known of the two. If there were two, there was certainly one. That is not a contradiction.

Look at this man's life. He "for a long time, and was not wearing a garment, and was not staying in a house, but in the tombs." Tombs were caves cut into hillsides, unclean places under the Law. He was naked, homeless, and living among the dead. This is what Satan does to people. He promises freedom and gives bondage. He strips people of their dignity and isolates them from everyone who loves them.

8:28 *And having seen Jesus, and having cried out, he fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What **is there** to me and to You, Jesus, Son of God Most High? I beg You, do not torment me!"*

"Having seen Jesus, and having cried out, he fell down before Him." The demons could not stay away. They were forced to bow before Him.

"What is there to me and to You, Jesus, Son of God Most High? I beg You, do not torment me!" The demons knew exactly who Jesus was. The title Most High was often used by Gentiles to speak of the God of Israel. The demons did not doubt Jesus' power. They knew He was their judge, and they begged for mercy.

8:29 *For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out from the man. For many times it had seized him, and he was bound with chains and shackles, being kept under guard; and breaking the bonds, he was driven by the demon into the deserted places.*

"For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out from the man." Luke now explains what had already happened. Jesus had ordered the spirit out, and the spirit responded by crying out in fear.

"For many times it had seized him, and he was bound with chains and shackles, being kept under guard; and breaking the bonds, he was driven by the demon into the deserted places." The people of the town had tried to control him with chains. Nothing worked. Human power could not set him free. Only Jesus could.

8:30 *And Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered into him.*

"What is your name?" Jesus asked. The man answered Legion, "because many demons had entered into him." A Roman legion was an army unit of several thousand soldiers. This man was not tormented by one demon, but by many. The fact that Jesus asked his name did not mean He needed it to have power over them. It showed everyone how great the man's bondage was, and how great the victory would be.

8:31 *And they were begging Him that He would not command them to depart into the abyss.*

"They were begging Him that He would not command them to depart into the abyss." The abyss is the bottomless pit, a place where some fallen spirits are kept locked up (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). In

Revelation, Satan himself will be thrown into the abyss for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3). The demons knew that place was real, and they were terrified of it. They knew Jesus had the authority to send them there.

8:32-33 *Now there was a herd of many pigs feeding there on the mountain; and they were begging Him that He would allow them to enter into those. And He allowed them. And the demons, having gone out from the man, entered into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.*

"There was a herd of many pigs feeding there on the mountain." Jews did not raise pigs, since pigs were unclean under the Law. This was Gentile country. Mark tells us there were about two thousand (Mark 5:13).

The demons begged to go into the pigs, "and He allowed them." Then "the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned." Why did Jesus allow this? Scripture doesn't tell us directly. It showed everyone how many demons there were and how destructive they are. Satan comes to destroy. It also gave the man visible proof that the demons were truly gone. And it showed that one human soul is worth more to Jesus than two thousand pigs.

8:34-35 *And those feeding **them**, having seen what had happened, fled, and having gone, reported **it** in the city and in the fields. And they went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone out sitting, clothed and being of sound mind, at the feet of Jesus; and they were afraid.*

"Those feeding them, having seen what had happened, fled, and having gone, reported it in the city and in the fields." The herdsmen ran to tell everyone. The townspeople came out to see.

"They came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone out sitting, clothed and being of sound mind, at the feet of Jesus." What a change. He had been running wild among the tombs. Now he was sitting. He had been naked. Now he was clothed. He had been out of his mind. Now he was of sound mind. And he was sitting "at the feet of Jesus," the place of a disciple, a learner. That is a picture of what Jesus does for every person He saves.

"And they were afraid." They should have rejoiced. Instead they were afraid.

8:36-37 *And those also who had seen **it** reported to them how the one who had been demon-possessed was saved. And all the multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, because they were seized with great fear. And He, having gotten into the boat, returned.*

"Those also who had seen it reported to them how the one who had been demon-possessed was saved." Luke uses the word saved. The man was healed, but more than that, he was rescued.

"All the multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, because they were seized with great fear." They were afraid of a power they could not control. And they had lost a herd of pigs, a lot of money. They cared more about their pigs and their

comfort than about a man set free. Sadly, people still do that. Many would rather keep their lives as they are than let Jesus in and have Him change everything.

"And He, having gotten into the boat, returned." Jesus does not force Himself on people. They asked Him to leave, and He left.

8:38-39 *And the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him to be with Him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your house, and relate how much God has done for you." And he departed through all the city, proclaiming how much Jesus had done for him.*

"The man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him to be with Him." Look at the difference. The town begged Jesus to leave. The man begged to go with Him.

"But Jesus sent him away," saying, "Return to your house, and relate how much God has done for you." Jesus said no to his request, but He gave him something better: a mission. The man would be a living witness in his own home and region, where Jesus had been asked to leave. Everyone knew who he had been. Now they could see who he was.

"He departed through all the city, proclaiming how much Jesus had done for him." Jesus told him to tell how much God had done. He told how much Jesus had done. He understood that they were the same. Mark tells us he preached through the Decapolis, and all marveled (Mark 5:20). Not everyone is called to leave home and go far away. Sometimes the hardest and best mission field is your own house.

8:40-42 *And it came to pass, when Jesus returned, **that** the crowd received Him; for they were all looking for Him. And look, a man came whose name **was** Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue; and having fallen at the feet of Jesus, he was begging Him to come into his house, because he had an only daughter, about twelve years **old**, and she was dying. And as He was going, the crowds were pressing around Him.*

When Jesus returned, "the crowd received Him; for they were all looking for Him." The Gentile town sent Him away. The crowd in Galilee was waiting for Him.

"A man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue." A ruler of the synagogue was a leader who arranged the services and looked after the building. He was an important, respected man. Many synagogue leaders were turning against Jesus by this time. But Jairus did not care what anyone thought. "Having fallen at the feet of Jesus, he was begging Him to come into his house, because he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying." An important man fell at Jesus' feet in front of the whole crowd. Desperate need makes us humble.

"As He was going, the crowds were pressing around Him." Picture the scene: Jesus walking quickly with a frightened father, the crowd pushing in on every side.

8:43 *And a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who, having spent all her living on physicians, was not able to be healed by anyone,*

"A woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years." Jairus' daughter had lived twelve years. This woman had suffered for twelve years. Under the Law, a woman with this kind of bleeding was unclean all the time (Leviticus 15:25-27). Anyone she touched became unclean. She could not go to the temple or the synagogue. She would have been cut off from her family and her community for twelve long years.

"Having spent all her living on physicians, was not able to be healed by anyone." She had spent everything trying to get well, and nothing worked. It is interesting that Luke, a doctor himself, includes this detail plainly. Some older Greek copies leave out the words about spending her living on physicians, but Mark tells us the same thing (Mark 5:26).

8:44 *having come up behind **Him**, touched the fringe of His cloak; and immediately the flow of her blood stopped.*

"Having come up behind Him, touched the fringe of His cloak." The fringe was likely the tassel that Jewish men wore on the corners of their outer garment, as the Law commanded (Numbers 15:38-39). She was not supposed to touch anyone. She came from behind, hoping no one would notice. She believed that if she could just touch His clothes, she would be healed.

"Immediately the flow of her blood stopped." Twelve years of suffering ended in a moment.

8:45-46 *And Jesus said, "Who **is** the one who touched Me?" And when all were denying **it**, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the crowds are surrounding You and pressing in **on You**, and You say, 'Who **is** the one who touched Me?'" But Jesus said, "Someone touched Me, for I knew **that** power had gone out from Me."*

"Who is the one who touched Me?" Everyone denied it. Peter pointed out the obvious: "Master, the crowds are surrounding You and pressing in on You." People were bumping into Jesus on every side.

"Someone touched Me, for I knew that power had gone out from Me." There is a difference between bumping into Jesus and touching Him in faith. Many people in the crowd were close to Jesus. Only one reached out to Him in faith. Many people today are around Jesus, at church and in Christian homes, but have never reached out to Him in faith for themselves.

8:47 *And the woman, having seen that she was not hidden, came trembling, and having fallen down before Him, she declared to Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately.*

"The woman, having seen that she was not hidden, came trembling, and having fallen down before Him, she declared to Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately." Why did Jesus make her come forward? Not to shame her. For twelve years she had been unclean and hidden. Now, in front of everyone, the whole town would

hear that she had been healed. She would no longer be an outcast. Jesus wanted her healing to be public so that her return to the community would be complete.

8:48 *And He said to her, "Take courage, daughter; your faith has saved you. Go in peace."*

"Take courage, daughter; your faith has saved you. Go in peace." She is the only person in the Gospels whom Jesus speaks to as "daughter" (Matthew and Mark tell the same event). She had been cut off from everyone, and Jesus welcomed her into His family. Her body was healed, and He tells her that her faith had saved her, the same words He spoke to the sinful woman (7:50). She came for a cure. She left with a Savior.

8:49 *While He was still speaking, someone comes from the* ***house of the*** *synagogue ruler, saying to him, "Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher."*

"Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher." While Jesus was speaking to the woman, the worst news came. Jairus had been waiting while Jesus stopped. And now it was too late.

Imagine how Jairus felt. If Jesus had not stopped, maybe He would have gotten there in time. Sometimes God's delays feel like disasters. But as we will see, Jesus is never too late.

8:50 *But Jesus, having heard, answered him, saying, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be saved."*

"Do not fear; only believe, and she will be saved." Jesus heard the message and spoke to Jairus right away, before fear could take over. Fear and faith pull in opposite directions. Jesus said to let go of fear and hold on to faith. Jairus had just watched a woman be healed by faith. Now Jesus asked him to believe even when it looked hopeless.

8:51 *And having come into the house, He did not allow anyone to go in except Peter and James and John, and the father of the child and the mother.*

"He did not allow anyone to go in except Peter and James and John, and the father of the child and the mother." Jesus brought His three closest disciples and the parents. These three would also see the transfiguration (9:28) and be near Him in the garden (Mark 14:33). There would be no crowd and no show. Just a quiet room and a grieving family.

8:52-53 *Now all were weeping and mourning for her. But He said, "Do not weep; she did not die, but sleeps." And they were laughing at Him, knowing that she had died.*

"All were weeping and mourning for her." In that day, families often hired professional mourners to wail and play sad music at a death.

"Do not weep; she did not die, but sleeps." Jesus did not mean she was only in a coma. Verse 55 tells us "her spirit returned," so she had truly died. Jesus meant that for Him, death is like sleep, something He can wake a person from. Jesus spoke of Lazarus the same way (John 11:11-14), and Paul calls the death of believers falling asleep (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14). For those who belong to Jesus, death is not the end. It is sleep, and morning is coming.

"They were laughing at Him, knowing that she had died." Their laughter showed they had no faith in Him. They knew death when they saw it. They did not know the Lord of life.

8:54-55 *And He, having put **them** all outside and having taken hold of her hand, called out, saying, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately; and He directed **that something** be given to her to eat.*

"He, having put them all outside and having taken hold of her hand, called out," saying, "Child, arise." Again Jesus touched the dead, and again He was not made unclean. Mark gives us His words in Aramaic: "Talitha koumi" (Mark 5:41).

"Her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately." When a person dies, the spirit leaves the body (James 2:26). Jesus called her spirit back. She did not slowly recover. She stood up.

"He directed that something be given to her to eat." This is such a caring, practical detail, and it is just the kind of thing a doctor like Luke would notice. She was hungry. She was really alive, in a real body. Jesus cares about the small, ordinary needs of the people He loves.

8:56 *And her parents were amazed; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened.*

"Her parents were amazed; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened." Of course people would find out. The whole town knew she had died. But Jesus did not want to be followed by crowds looking for miracles. He wanted people to come to Him for who He is, not just for what He could do for them. His time to be openly revealed had not yet come.

In this one stretch of chapter 8 Jesus showed authority over nature, over demons, over disease and over death. There is nothing He cannot handle. The question He asked the disciples in the boat is the question for us too: "Where is your faith?"

Chapter 8 Summary

Jesus traveled through the towns of Galilee preaching the kingdom of God, with the twelve and women He had healed, who supported Him from their own possessions. He told the parable of the sower: the seed is the word of God, and it falls on four kinds of soil, hard, rocky, thorny and good. Only the good soil holds the word fast and bears fruit with perseverance. Jesus taught that a lamp is meant to be seen, warned His hearers to watch how they hear, and said that His mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it. On the lake He calmed a deadly storm with a word and asked His disciples where their faith was. In the region of the Gadarenes He freed a man possessed by a legion of demons, who were allowed to go into a herd of pigs that drowned. The man sat clothed and in his right mind at Jesus' feet, but the townspeople begged Jesus to leave, and He sent the man home to tell what God had done for him. A woman who had bled for twelve years touched the fringe of His cloak and was healed, and He called her daughter. When Jairus' daughter died, Jesus told him, "Do not fear; only believe," and He took her by the hand and raised her to life.

Chapter 8 Study Questions

1. What did the women who traveled with Jesus do for Him, and why is that significant? (8:2-3)

2. What do the four kinds of soil stand for in the parable of the sower? (8:11-15)

3. What three things choke the word in the thorny soil? (8:14)

4. Who did Jesus say are His mother and brothers? (8:21)

5. What did Jesus ask His disciples after He calmed the storm, and why? (8:25)

6. Describe the man from the tombs before and after Jesus freed him. (8:27, 35)

7. Why did the people of the region ask Jesus to leave, and what did Jesus tell the healed man to do? (8:37-39)

8. What did Jesus say to Jairus when the news came that his daughter had died? (8:50)

9. Which of the soils best describes how you have been hearing God's word lately? What thorns might be crowding it out? (8:14-15, 18)

10. Jesus told the healed man to go home and tell how much God had done for him. What has God done for you, and who in your own home or town needs to hear it? (8:39)

Chapter 9: Who Is This Jesus?

Scripture

9:1-9 And having called together His twelve disciples, He gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. And He sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal those who were sick. And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; nor have two tunics apiece. And into whatever house you enter, remain there, and go out from there. And as many as do not receive you, going out from that city, shake off even the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." And going out, they were passing through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all the things being done by Him, and he was perplexed, because it was being said by some that John had been raised from ***the*** dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that a prophet, one of the ancients, had risen. And Herod said, "John I beheaded; but who is this concerning whom I hear such things?" And he was seeking to see Him.

9:10-17 And having returned, the apostles related to Him all that they had done. And having taken them, He withdrew privately into a deserted place of a city called Bethsaida. But the crowds, having learned ***it***, followed Him; and having received them, He was speaking to them concerning the kingdom of God, and those who had need of healing He was healing. And the day began to decline; and having come, the twelve said to Him, "Dismiss the crowd, so that, having gone into the surrounding villages and the countryside, they may lodge and find provisions; for here we are in a deserted place." But He said to them, "You give them ***something*** to eat." And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps, having gone, we buy food for all this people." For they were about five thousand men. And He said to His disciples, "Make them recline in groups of fifty each." And they did so, and made all recline. And having taken the five loaves and the two fish, having looked up to heaven, He blessed them and broke ***them***, and He was giving ***them*** to the disciples to set before the crowd. And they ate and were all satisfied; and what was left over by them was taken up, twelve baskets of fragments.

9:18-27 And it came to pass, as He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" And answering, they said, "John the Baptist, and others Elijah, and others that a prophet, one of the ancients, has risen." And He said to them, "But you, who do you say that I am?" And answering, Peter said, "The Christ of God." And having strictly warned them, He instructed ***them*** to tell this to no one, having said, "It is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things, and to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and on the third day to be raised." And He was saying to all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life on account of Me, this one will save it. For what is a man profited, having gained the whole world, but having lost or forfeited himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His glory and the ***glory*** of the Father and of the holy angels. But I say to you truly, there are some of those standing here who will certainly not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

9:28-36 And it came to pass about eight days after these words, and having taken Peter and John and James, He went up on the mountain to pray. And it came to pass, as He was praying, the appearance of His face ***became*** different, and His clothing ***became*** white, flashing like lightning. And look, two men were talking with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who, having appeared in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to fulfill in Jerusalem. But Peter and those with him were weighed down with sleep; and having become fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. And it came to pass, as they were departing from Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tents, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah," not knowing what he was saying. And while he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as those entered into the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, the Beloved; listen to Him." And when the voice came, Jesus was found alone. And they were silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

9:37-50 And it came to pass on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met Him. And look, a man from the crowd cried out, saying, "Teacher, I beg You, look upon my son, for he is my only ***child***. And look, a spirit seizes him, and suddenly he cries out, and it convulses him with foaming, and with difficulty it departs from him, bruising him. And I begged Your disciples that they might cast it out, and they were not able." And answering, Jesus said, "O unbelieving and perverted generation, until when will I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." And while he was still approaching, the demon threw him down and convulsed ***him***. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. And they were all astonished at the majesty of God. But while all were marveling at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, "You, put these words into your ears; for the Son of Man is about to be delivered into ***the*** hands of men." But they did not understand this declaration, and it was veiled from them so that they might not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him concerning this declaration. And a reasoning came in among them, this: who of them might be greater. And Jesus, having seen the reasoning of their heart, having taken hold of a child, stood him beside Himself, and He said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For the one who is least among you all, this one will be great." And answering, John said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us." And Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid ***him***; for whoever is not against us is for us."

9:51-62 And it came to pass, when the days of His being taken up were being fulfilled, that He Himself set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. And He sent messengers before His face. And having gone, they entered into a village of ***the*** Samaritans so as to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was going toward Jerusalem. And having seen ***it***, His disciples James and John said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as Elijah also did?" But having turned, He rebuked them, and said, "You do not know of what kind of spirit you are. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy ***the*** lives of men, but to save ***them***." And they went to another village. And it came to pass, as they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go, Lord." And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven ***have*** nests, but the Son of Man does not have ***a place*** where He may lay His head." And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said,

"Lord, allow me, having gone away, first to bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but you, having gone, declare the kingdom of God." And another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first allow me to bid farewell to those at my house." And Jesus said to him, "No one having put his hand on ***the*** plow and looking at the things behind is fit for the kingdom of God."

Chapter 9 Preview

Chapter 9 keeps coming back to one question. Herod asks it: "Who is this concerning whom I hear such things?" Jesus asks it of His disciples: "Who do you say that I am?" And God the Father answers it from a cloud on a mountain: "This is My Son, the Beloved; listen to Him." Along the way Jesus sends out the twelve to preach and heal, feeds five thousand men with five loaves and two fish, and tells His disciples for the first time that He must suffer, be killed, and be raised on the third day.

The second half of the chapter shows how slow the disciples were to learn. They cannot cast out a demon. They argue about who is the greatest. They want to stop a man who is not part of their group, and they want to call down fire on a Samaritan village. Then comes a turning point in Luke's Gospel. In verse 51 Jesus sets His face to go to Jerusalem, where the cross is waiting. From here to chapter 19, Luke tells the story of that long journey, and the chapter closes with three would-be followers who learn what it costs to walk with Him.

Chapter 9 Study

9:1-2 *And having called together His twelve disciples, He gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. And He sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal those who were sick.*

Jesus "called together His twelve disciples" and gave them "power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases." Power is the ability to do something. Authority is the right to do it. Jesus gave them both. Then He sent them "to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal those who were sick."

Notice the order. Preaching comes first, and healing goes with it. The miracles were not the main message. They backed up the message, showing that the King had come and that His kingdom was near. These twelve are now called apostles (9:10), a word that means sent ones. They were sent with His message and His power.

9:3-5 *And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; nor have two tunics apiece. And into whatever house you enter, remain there, and go out from there. And as many as do not receive you, going out from that city, shake off even the dust from your feet as a testimony against them."*

"Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money." This was a short, urgent mission. They were to travel light and trust God to provide through the people who

welcomed them. They were to stay in one house in each town and not shop around for a better place to stay.

If a town would not receive them, they were to "shake off even the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." Jews returning from Gentile lands sometimes shook the dust off their feet so as not to carry unclean soil into Israel. Here the apostles do it to Jewish towns that reject the King. It was a warning: you have heard, and you are responsible for what you did with it.

These instructions were for this mission. Later Jesus told them to take a purse and a bag (22:35-36). The principle still stands, though. We go where He sends us, trusting Him to supply what we need.

9:6 *And going out, they were passing through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.*

"And going out, they were passing through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere." They obeyed. The word gospel means good news. The good news was that God's promised King had come. Wherever they went, the message and the healings went together. Ordinary fishermen and a tax collector were now doing the work of the kingdom, because Jesus had sent them.

9:7-9 *Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all the things being done by Him, and he was perplexed, because it was being said by some that John had been raised from **the** dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that a prophet, one of the ancients, had risen. And Herod said, "John I beheaded; but who is this concerning whom I hear such things?" And he was seeking to see Him.*

"Herod the tetrarch" heard about all this. This is Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great. A tetrarch was a ruler over part of a kingdom. Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea under Rome. People were saying that Jesus was John raised from the dead, or Elijah, or one of the old prophets.

Herod was troubled. "John I beheaded; but who is this concerning whom I hear such things?" Luke has already told us Herod put John in prison (3:19-20). Now we learn he had him killed. A guilty conscience does not rest easy. Herod "was seeking to see Him." He finally did, on the day of the cross, and Jesus would not say a word to him (23:8-9). Curiosity is not the same as faith.

9:10 *And having returned, the apostles related to Him all that they had done. And having taken them, He withdrew privately into a deserted place of a city called Bethsaida.*

The apostles came back and "related to Him all that they had done." Then Jesus took them "privately into a deserted place of a city called Bethsaida." Bethsaida was a town on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. Mark tells us Jesus wanted them to rest awhile (Mark 6:31).

There is a lesson here for anyone who serves the Lord. After a season of hard work, it is right to come away with Jesus, tell Him about it, and rest. Busy people in ministry burn out when they skip this step.

9:11 *But the crowds, having learned **it**, followed Him; and having received them, He was speaking to them concerning the kingdom of God, and those who had need of healing He was healing.*

"But the crowds, having learned it, followed Him." The quiet time was over before it started. Look at how Jesus responded. He did not send them away. "Having received them, He was speaking to them concerning the kingdom of God, and those who had need of healing He was healing."

Jesus welcomed people who interrupted His rest. That is His heart. He never sees a needy person as an annoyance. Many of us do not always respond that way when our plans get changed. This verse shows us a better way.

9:12-13 *And the day began to decline; and having come, the twelve said to Him, "Dismiss the crowd, so that, having gone into the surrounding villages and the countryside, they may lodge and find provisions; for here we are in a deserted place." But He said to them, "You give them **something** to eat." And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps, having gone, we buy food for all this people."*

As the day wore on, the twelve said, "Dismiss the crowd," so the people could find food and lodging. It sounded sensible. Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat." They had "no more than five loaves and two fish."

Why would Jesus ask them to do something impossible? To show them their own lack, so they would look to Him. The disciples counted what they had and came up short. That is often where God begins. When we finally admit we do not have enough, we are ready to see what He can do with the little we bring.

9:14-15 *For they were about five thousand men. And He said to His disciples, "Make them recline in groups of fifty each." And they did so, and made all recline.*

"For they were about five thousand men." That count is only the men. With women and children, the crowd could have been two or three times as large. Jesus told the disciples to have them "recline in groups of fifty each." People in that day ate reclining on the ground or on low couches.

The groups of fifty made the crowd orderly and easy to serve. God is not a God of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Even a miracle was done in an orderly way. "And they did so." The disciples obeyed before they saw how it would work out.

9:16-17 *And having taken the five loaves and the two fish, having looked up to heaven, He blessed them and broke **them**, and He was giving **them** to the disciples to set before the crowd. And they ate and were all satisfied; and what was left over by them was taken up, twelve baskets of fragments.*

Jesus took the loaves and fish, "having looked up to heaven, He blessed them and broke them." He gave thanks to His Father, the way every Jewish head of a home did before a meal. Then He kept giving the food to the disciples, and they kept setting it before the people. The bread multiplied in His hands.

"And they ate and were all satisfied." Everyone had enough. Then they picked up "twelve baskets of fragments," one for each apostle. God does not just meet needs; He provides more than enough. This is the only miracle besides the resurrection told in all four Gospels (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; John 6:1-14). John tells us that the next day Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). The One who fed the crowd is Himself the bread our souls need.

9:18-19 *And it came to pass, as He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" And answering, they said, "John the Baptist, and others Elijah, and others that a prophet, one of the ancients, has risen."*

Luke is the Gospel of prayer, and here is another example. "As He was praying alone," Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" Before this important question, Jesus had been talking with His Father.

They gave the same answers Herod had heard: "John the Baptist, and others Elijah, and others that a prophet, one of the ancients, has risen." The crowds thought well of Jesus. They put Him with the great men of God. But a great prophet is not enough. Many people today will say Jesus was a good teacher or a prophet. That is a long way from the truth.

9:20 *And He said to them, "But you, who do you say that I am?" And answering, Peter said, "The Christ of God."*

Then Jesus made it personal. "But you, who do you say that I am?" Peter answered for all of them: "The Christ of God."

Christ is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Messiah, which means the anointed one. The Jews were waiting for the Messiah promised by the prophets, the King from David's line. Peter says Jesus is that King, the one God Himself anointed and sent. Matthew gives a longer account (Matthew 16:13-20).

This is the most important question you will ever answer. Not what your parents believe or what your church teaches, but what you believe. Who do you say Jesus is?

9:21-22 *And having strictly warned them, He instructed **them** to tell this to no one, having said, "It is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things, and to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and on the third day to be raised."*

Jesus "strictly warned them" to tell no one. Why? Because most people expected a Messiah who would drive out the Romans and set up an earthly kingdom right away. Announcing Him as Messiah at that point would have stirred up the wrong kind of excitement.

Then Jesus told them what kind of Messiah He was. "It is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things, and to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and on the third day to be raised." Son of Man was Jesus' favorite name for Himself. It comes from Daniel 7:13-14, where one like a son of man receives an everlasting kingdom. The elders, chief priests and scribes made up the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council in Jerusalem. Scribes were experts who copied and taught the law of Moses. Jesus says the leaders of His own people will

reject Him and have Him killed. Notice the words "it is necessary." The cross was not an accident. It was God's plan for our salvation.

9:23 *And He was saying to all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." To deny yourself is to say no to yourself, to stop putting your own wishes first. To take up a cross was not a picture of putting up with a bad back or a hard boss. Everyone in that day knew what it meant. A man carrying a cross was on his way to die.

Luke alone records the word "daily." Following Jesus is not a one-time decision we make and then forget. Every morning we lay down our own way and pick up His. Salvation is a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9), but following Him costs us everything we are.

9:24-25 *For whoever desires to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life on account of Me, this one will save it. For what is a man profited, having gained the whole world, but having lost or forfeited himself?*

"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life on account of Me, this one will save it." This sounds backward, but it is true. The person who holds on to his life, living only for himself, ends up losing what matters most. The one who gives his life to Jesus finds real life, now and forever.

"For what is a man profited, having gained the whole world, but having lost or forfeited himself?" Imagine owning everything in the world and losing your own soul. That is a terrible trade. Jesus asks us to do the math.

9:26 *For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His glory and the **glory** of the Father and of the holy angels.*

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His glory." To be ashamed of Jesus is to hide that we belong to Him because we fear what others will think.

Jesus speaks here of His coming "in His glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." That points to His return to the earth in power at the end of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:30; Revelation 19:11-16). The One who was rejected will come back as King. How foolish it is to be ashamed now of the One every knee will bow to then (Philippians 2:10-11).

9:27 *But I say to you truly, there are some of those standing here who will certainly not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."*

"There are some of those standing here who will certainly not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." What did Jesus mean? The very next event in Luke gives the best answer. Eight days later, three of the disciples saw Jesus in His kingdom glory on the mountain. Peter later

wrote that he was an eyewitness of His majesty on the holy mountain (2 Peter 1:16-18). The transfiguration was a preview of the coming kingdom.

9:28 *And it came to pass about eight days after these words, and having taken Peter and John and James, He went up on the mountain to pray.*

"About eight days after these words," Jesus took Peter, John and James "up on the mountain to pray." Matthew and Mark say six days. Luke says "about" eight, likely counting the first and last days. There is no conflict.

Scripture does not name the mountain. Many think it was Mount Hermon in the north, near Caesarea Philippi. Others hold to Mount Tabor in Galilee. Notice again that Jesus went up to pray. The glory came while He prayed.

9:29 *And it came to pass, as He was praying, the appearance of His face* ***became*** *different, and His clothing* ***became*** *white, flashing like lightning.*

"As He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white, flashing like lightning." This is called the transfiguration, from a word Matthew and Mark use that means to be changed in form.

Jesus did not borrow a light from somewhere else. The glory that was always His as the Son of God shone through for a moment. John wrote of this kind of glory when he said, "we beheld His glory" (John 1:14). For a short time the three disciples saw who Jesus really is.

9:30-31 *And look, two men were talking with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who, having appeared in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to fulfill in Jerusalem.*

"Two men were talking with Him, who were Moses and Elijah." Moses gave the law. Elijah was the great prophet. Together they stand for the Law and the Prophets, the whole Old Testament, which pointed to Jesus.

Only Luke tells us what they talked about. They "were speaking of His departure which He was about to fulfill in Jerusalem." The word for departure is exodus, a way out. Moses had led Israel out of slavery in Egypt. Now Jesus would lead His people out of slavery to sin, through His death, resurrection and ascension in Jerusalem. On the mountain of glory, the subject was the cross.

9:32-33 *But Peter and those with him were weighed down with sleep; and having become fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. And it came to pass, as they were departing from Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tents, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah," not knowing what he was saying.*

Peter, James and John "were weighed down with sleep." This would happen again in the garden of Gethsemane (22:45). When they woke up fully, "they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him."

As Moses and Elijah were leaving, Peter blurted out, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tents." Maybe he wanted to make the moment last. But Luke adds, "not knowing what he was saying." Putting Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah was a mistake. He is far above them.

9:34-35 *And while he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as those entered into the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, the Beloved; listen to Him."*

"A cloud came and overshadowed them." In the Old Testament, God showed His presence in a cloud, at Mount Sinai and in the tabernacle (Exodus 24:15-16; 40:34). The disciples were afraid, and rightly so. Then the Father spoke. "This is My Son, the Beloved; listen to Him."

That answers Peter's idea about the three tents. Moses and Elijah were servants. Jesus is the Son. Moses had foretold a Prophet like himself and told Israel, "to him you shall listen" (Deuteronomy 18:15). Here God points to that Prophet. The Father's command for us today is the same: listen to Him.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 18:15 (alluded to)

9:36 *And when the voice came, Jesus was found alone. And they were silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.*

"When the voice came, Jesus was found alone." Moses and Elijah were gone. Jesus is the one who remains. Everything else in the Bible points to Him.

"And they were silent and told no one in those days." Matthew and Mark tell us Jesus told them to keep quiet until He rose from the dead (Mark 9:9). They would not understand what they had seen until after the cross and the empty tomb.

9:37-40 *And it came to pass on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met Him. And look, a man from the crowd cried out, saying, "Teacher, I beg You, look upon my son, for he is my only **child**. And look, a spirit seizes him, and suddenly he cries out, and it convulses him with foaming, and with difficulty it departs from him, bruising him. And I begged Your disciples that they might cast it out, and they were not able."*

Coming down the next day, they met a great crowd. A father cried out, "Teacher, I beg You, look upon my son, for he is my only child." Luke, the doctor, likes to tell us when a child was an only child (7:12; 8:42). He felt the weight of a parent's pain.

A spirit would seize the boy and convulse him, throwing him into fits with foaming at the mouth. Then came the sad words: "I begged Your disciples that they might cast it out, and they were not able." Only days earlier they had been given authority over demons (9:1). Now they failed. From the mountain of glory, Jesus came down into a valley full of need and failure.

9:41 *And answering, Jesus said, "O unbelieving and perverted generation, until when will I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here."*

"O unbelieving and perverted generation, until when will I be with you and bear with you?" To be perverted is to be twisted, bent out of the right shape. Jesus speaks to the whole generation, His disciples included. Their failure came from a lack of faith (Matthew 17:19-20).

Jesus was weary of their unbelief, but He did not walk away. "Bring your son here." When others fail us, Jesus does not.

9:42-45 *And while he was still approaching, the demon threw him down and convulsed* ***him****. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. And they were all astonished at the majesty of God. But while all were marveling at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, "You, put these words into your ears; for the Son of Man is about to be delivered into* ***the*** *hands of men." But they did not understand this declaration, and it was veiled from them so that they might not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him concerning this declaration.*

"While he was still approaching, the demon threw him down and convulsed him." The enemy did his worst one last time. "But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father." I love that last phrase. Jesus handed the boy back to his dad, whole.

"They were all astonished at the majesty of God." The people saw this was the work of God Himself. Luke wants us to see that in Jesus, God's own greatness was on display.

While everyone was marveling, Jesus took His disciples aside. "You, put these words into your ears; for the Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." He said it to them again while the crowd was cheering, because popularity can make us forget the cross.

"But they did not understand this declaration, and it was veiled from them." They could not fit a suffering Messiah into their thinking. They were also "afraid to ask Him." Sometimes we do not ask God hard questions because we are afraid of the answer. They would understand after His resurrection, when He opened their minds (24:45).

9:46-48 *And a reasoning came in among them, this: who of them might be greater. And Jesus, having seen the reasoning of their heart, having taken hold of a child, stood him beside Himself, and He said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For the one who is least among you all, this one will be great."*

Right after Jesus spoke of His death, the disciples argued about "who of them might be greater." It is almost hard to believe. Jesus knew "the reasoning of their heart." He set a child beside Himself.

"Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me." A child had no rank in that world. To welcome a child for Jesus' sake, with nothing to gain, is to welcome Jesus Himself and the Father who sent Him. Then the punch line: "the one who is least among you all, this one will be great." In God's kingdom, the way up is down.

9:49-50 *And answering, John said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us." And Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid **him**; for whoever is not against us is for us."*

John, perhaps feeling uneasy after the lesson about the child, said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us." Notice the words "with us." The problem was not that the man was wrong. He was not in their group.

Jesus said, "Do not forbid him; for whoever is not against us is for us." This man was really working in Jesus' name, and the demons were really going out. Later Jesus said, "The one who is not with Me is against Me" (11:23). Both are true. When it comes to Jesus Himself, there is no neutral ground. But among His followers, we should not oppose someone who truly serves Christ just because he is not part of our church or our group.

9:51 *And it came to pass, when the days of His being taken up were being fulfilled, that He Himself set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem.*

This verse is a turning point in Luke. "When the days of His being taken up were being fulfilled, that He Himself set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem." Being "taken up" points to the whole path ahead: His death, His resurrection and His ascension to heaven (Acts 1:2, 11).

To set your face is to make up your mind and not turn back. Isaiah wrote of the Servant of the Lord who set His face like flint (Isaiah 50:7). Jesus knew what waited for Him in Jerusalem. He went anyway, for us. From here until He enters the city in 19:28, Luke records the long journey. Much of what we read in chapters 10 to 18 is found only in Luke.

9:52-53 *And He sent messengers before His face. And having gone, they entered into a village of **the** Samaritans so as to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was going toward Jerusalem.*

Jesus sent messengers ahead to "a village of the Samaritans" to get things ready. The Samaritans lived between Galilee and Judea. They were part Jewish and part Gentile, descended from Israelites who had mixed with foreign peoples after the Assyrians conquered the north. They had once had their own temple on Mount Gerizim, and they still worshiped there. Jews and Samaritans had hated each other for centuries (John 4:9).

"They did not receive Him, because His face was going toward Jerusalem." Since He was heading to worship at the temple in Jerusalem, the village would not welcome Him.

9:54-56 *And having seen **it**, His disciples James and John said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as Elijah also did?" But having turned, He rebuked them, and said, "You do not know of what kind of spirit you are. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy **the** lives of men, but to save **them**." And they went to another village.*

James and John were furious. "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as Elijah also did?" They were thinking of 2 Kings 1:10-12, when Elijah called

down fire on the soldiers sent by a wicked king. Mark tells us Jesus called these two brothers "Sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17). We can see why.

Jesus "rebuked them." He said, "You do not know of what kind of spirit you are. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy the lives of men, but to save them." They wanted judgment. Jesus came, this first time, to bring salvation. Judgment will come at His return, but not yet. The same John later went to Samaria with Peter and saw Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17). God changed him from a man who wanted fire to fall on Samaritans to a man who prayed for them.

The words "as Elijah also did" and the sentences that begin "You do not know of what kind of spirit you are" are in the Received Greek Text the SLB follows. Many older Greek copies do not have them, and many modern Bibles put them in a footnote. No teaching of the faith rests on them alone. Jesus says the same kind of thing plainly in 19:10 and John 3:17.

Old Testament links: 2 Kings 1:10 (alluded to); 2 Kings 1:12 (alluded to)

9:57-58 *And it came to pass, as they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go, Lord." And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven* ***have*** *nests, but the Son of Man does not have* ***a place*** *where He may lay His head."*

Now Luke gives us three people who wanted to follow Jesus. The first said, "I will follow You wherever You go, Lord." It sounds wonderful. But Jesus answered, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of Man does not have a place where He may lay His head."

Jesus wanted him to know what he was signing up for. The Creator of the world had no home of His own on this journey. Following Him does not promise comfort. Before you say "wherever," count the cost.

9:59-60 *And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, allow me, having gone away, first to bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but you, having gone, declare the kingdom of God."*

Jesus said to another man, "Follow Me." He answered, "Lord, allow me, having gone away, first to bury my father." Jesus said, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but you, having gone, declare the kingdom of God."

This sounds harsh. Burying a parent was a sacred duty among the Jews. But many Bible teachers think the man's father was not yet dead. He was saying, in effect, that he would follow Jesus later, once his father had passed and the family matters were settled. Either way, Jesus' point is clear. Let the spiritually dead take care of the things of this world. The kingdom comes first.

9:61-62 *And another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first allow me to bid farewell to those at my house." And Jesus said to him, "No one having put his hand on* ***the*** *plow and looking at the things behind is fit for the kingdom of God."*

A third man said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first allow me to bid farewell to those at my house." Elijah let Elisha do this (1 Kings 19:19-21). Jesus asks for more.

"No one having put his hand on the plow and looking at the things behind is fit for the kingdom of God." A farmer plowing with oxen had to keep his eyes fixed ahead, or the furrow would go crooked. A man who keeps looking back over his shoulder will plow a crooked row. Jesus wants followers who do not keep looking back at what they left. Notice the word "first" in both of the last two men. Jesus will not be second to anything. What do you need to stop looking back at, so you can follow Him with your whole heart?

Old Testament links: 1 Kings 19:20 (alluded to)

Chapter 9 Summary

Jesus sends out the twelve with power and authority to preach the kingdom of God and heal, and their work troubles Herod, who asks who Jesus is. After the apostles return, Jesus feeds more than five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, with twelve baskets left over. While praying, He asks His disciples who they say He is, and Peter answers, "The Christ of God." Jesus then tells them He must suffer, be killed and be raised, and that anyone who follows Him must deny himself and take up his cross daily. On the mountain, Peter, James and John see Jesus' glory, hear Moses and Elijah speak of His departure in Jerusalem, and hear the Father say, "This is My Son, the Beloved; listen to Him." Coming down, Jesus casts out a demon His disciples could not, again tells them of His coming betrayal, and corrects their pride, their narrow spirit and their desire to call down fire on a Samaritan village. Then He sets His face to go to Jerusalem and warns three would-be followers that following Him must come first.

Chapter 9 Study Questions

1. What did Jesus give the twelve before He sent them out, and what were they to do? (9:1-2)

2. What did Herod hear about Jesus, and what did he want? (9:7-9)

3. What did the disciples have to offer, and what did Jesus do with it? (9:13-17)

4. How did Peter answer when Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am?" (9:20)

5. What three things does Jesus say a follower must do, and what does the word "daily" add? (9:23)

6. What did Moses and Elijah talk about with Jesus on the mountain, and what did the Father say? (9:30-35)

7. What does it mean that Jesus "set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem"? (9:51)

8. Why did Jesus rebuke James and John in the Samaritan village? (9:54-56)

9. If Jesus asked you today, "Who do you say that I am?" what would you answer, and how does your life show it? (9:20)

10. Is there anything you keep looking back at, or anything you want to do "first," before following Jesus fully? (9:59-62)

Chapter 10: The Seventy Sent and the Good Samaritan

Scripture

10:1-16 Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to come. Then He was saying to them, "The harvest ***is*** indeed plentiful, but the workers ***are*** few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest that He send out workers into His harvest. Go; look, I send you out as lambs in ***the*** midst of wolves. Do not carry a purse, nor a bag, nor sandals; and greet no one on the road. And into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' And if indeed the son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him; but if not, it will return to you. And remain in that same house, eating and drinking the things ***supplied*** by them; for the worker is worthy of his wages. Do not move from house to house. And into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat the things set before you, and heal the sick in it, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has drawn near to you.' But into whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, having gone out into its streets, say, 'Even the dust of your city which has clung to us we wipe off against you; yet know this, that the kingdom of God has drawn near to you.' And I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city. Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that took place in you had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who have been exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. The one who hears you hears Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and the one who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

10:17-24 And the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall like lightning out of heaven. Look, I give you the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will by any means injure you. Yet do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice that your names were written in the heavens." In that same hour Jesus rejoiced greatly in the spirit and said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You hid these things from ***the*** wise and intelligent and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for so it became well-pleasing before You." "All things were delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal ***Him***." And having turned to the disciples privately, He said, "Blessed ***are*** the eyes that see what you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see ***it***, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear ***it***."

10:25-42 And look, a certain lawyer stood up, testing Him and saying, "Teacher, having done what will I inherit eternal life?" And He said to him, "What has been written in the law? How do you read?" And answering, he said, "'You shall love ***the*** Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" And having taken ***it*** up, Jesus said, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who, having both stripped him and inflicted wounds, went away, having left ***him*** half dead as he was.

And by chance a certain priest was going down on that road, and having seen him, he passed by on the opposite side. And likewise a Levite also, having been at the place, having come and seen ***him***, passed by on the opposite side. But a certain Samaritan, journeying, came to him, and having seen him, he felt compassion, and having approached, he bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and having put him on his own animal, he brought him to an inn and took care of him. And on the next day, having gone out, having taken out two denarii, he gave ***them*** to the innkeeper and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I, when I return, will repay you.' Which therefore of these three seems to you to have become a neighbor to the one who fell among the robbers?" And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go, and you do likewise." And it came to pass, as they were going, 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, who also, having sat down beside the feet of Jesus, was listening to His word. But Martha was distracted about much serving; and having come up, she said, "Lord, does it not concern You that my sister has left me alone to serve? Tell her therefore that she help me." And answering, Jesus said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but there is need of one ***thing***; and Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Chapter 10 Preview

Jesus is now on the road to Jerusalem, and He sends seventy messengers ahead of Him, two by two, into the towns He is about to visit. He tells them the harvest is plentiful and the workers are few, and He warns that the towns that reject them will face a judgment worse than Sodom's. The seventy come back full of joy because even the demons obeyed them. Jesus tells them there is something better to rejoice about: their names are written in heaven. Then He rejoices in the Holy Spirit and thanks His Father for revealing these things to little children.

The second half of the chapter holds one of the best-known stories Jesus ever told. A lawyer asks what he must do to inherit eternal life, and then asks, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus answers with the parable of the good Samaritan, a man from a hated people who stops to help a stranger when a priest and a Levite pass by. The chapter ends in the home of Martha and Mary, where a busy sister learns that sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to His word is the one thing that is needed.

Chapter 10 Study

10:1 *Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to come.*

"Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to come." Only Luke tells us about this mission. The twelve had been sent out in chapter 9. Now a wider group of seventy goes ahead to prepare the way.

Why two by two? The law said a matter was confirmed by two witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). Two also could encourage each other, pray together and keep each other accountable. Jesus never meant His servants to work alone. Some see meaning in the number seventy. Moses had seventy elders (Numbers 11:16), and Genesis 10 lists about seventy nations. Scripture does not tell us why Jesus chose that number, so I will not push it.

The SLB, following the Received Greek Text, reads seventy. Some old Greek copies read seventy-two, and some modern Bibles follow them. It makes no difference to the meaning.

10:2 *Then He was saying to them, "The harvest **is** indeed plentiful, but the workers **are** few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest that He send out workers into His harvest.*

"The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the workers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest that He send out workers into His harvest." A harvest is ripe grain ready to be brought in, and it does not wait. Jesus pictures people ready to hear the gospel, and too few willing to go and tell them.

Notice the first thing He tells them to do. Before they go, they pray. And they pray for more workers. The harvest belongs to the Lord. He is the one who sends. Have you ever prayed for God to send workers, and then realized He was sending you?

10:3-4 *Go; look, I send you out as lambs in **the** midst of wolves. Do not carry a purse, nor a bag, nor sandals; and greet no one on the road.*

"Go; look, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves." Lambs have no way to defend themselves. Jesus did not hide the danger from them. Some would welcome them, and some would turn on them.

"Do not carry a purse, nor a bag, nor sandals; and greet no one on the road." They were to travel light and move fast. Greetings in the East could be long and drawn out, with meals and visits. Jesus was not telling them to be rude. He was telling them the mission was urgent and they could not afford to waste time on the road.

10:5-6 *And into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' And if indeed the son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him; but if not, it will return to you.*

When they came into a house, they were to say first, "Peace to this house." The Jewish greeting was shalom, peace. It meant more than the absence of trouble. It meant wholeness and well-being from God.

"If indeed the son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him." The son of peace means the person in that house who is open to God's peace, ready to receive the message. If no such person lived there, the blessing would "return to you." The messengers lost nothing when they were turned away. Their blessing came back to them.

10:7 *And remain in that same house, eating and drinking the things **supplied** by them; for the worker is worthy of his wages. Do not move from house to house.*

"Remain in that same house, eating and drinking the things supplied by them; for the worker is worthy of his wages." They were not to move around looking for a nicer place to stay. They were to accept the hospitality they were given, gratefully.

Paul quotes the words "the worker is worthy of his wages" in 1 Timothy 5:18 and calls it Scripture. It teaches that those who give their lives to preaching the gospel should be supported by the people they serve (1 Corinthians 9:14). It also teaches the worker not to be greedy or picky.

10:8-9 *And into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat the things set before you, and heal the sick in it, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has drawn near to you.'*

In a town that received them, they were to "eat the things set before you." This would matter more and more as the gospel moved into Gentile lands, where the food was not always what a Jew was used to.

They were to "heal the sick in it," and tell the people, "The kingdom of God has drawn near to you." The healings showed the kingdom's power. The message explained it. The King Himself was on the road, coming right behind them. The kingdom had come near because the King had come near.

10:10-12 *But into whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, having gone out into its streets, say, 'Even the dust of your city which has clung to us we wipe off against you; yet know this, that the kingdom of God has drawn near to you.' And I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.*

If a town did not receive them, they were to go into its streets and say, "Even the dust of your city which has clung to us we wipe off against you; yet know this, that the kingdom of God has drawn near to you." Even in rejection, the message was the same. The kingdom had come close, and they had turned it away.

"It will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city." Sodom was so wicked that God destroyed it with fire (Genesis 19). Yet Jesus says a town that rejects Him will face worse judgment. Why? Because the greater the light, the greater the responsibility. Sodom never saw the Son of God or heard His messengers. These towns did.

10:13-14 *Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that took place in you had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you.*

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!" Chorazin and Bethsaida were towns near the north end of the Sea of Galilee, close to where Jesus did many of His miracles. Tyre and Sidon were Gentile cities on the coast, known in the Old Testament for pride and idolatry (Ezekiel 28). Jesus says if they had seen the same miracles, "they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth

and ashes." Sackcloth was rough cloth worn in mourning, and ashes were put on the head as a sign of grief over sin.

This tells us God knows not only what people do, but what they would have done. And it tells us that judgment will be in line with what each person knew.

10:15 *And you, Capernaum, who have been exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades.*

"And you, Capernaum, who have been exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades." Capernaum was Jesus' home base in Galilee (Matthew 4:13). It had been honored above every town, because the Son of God lived there. But honor does not save anyone. Only faith does.

Hades is the Greek word for the place of the dead. In this verse it pictures being brought down from the highest height to the lowest depth. Today Capernaum and Chorazin are empty ruins, and even the place where Bethsaida stood is debated.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 14:13-15 (alluded to)

10:16 *The one who hears you hears Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and the one who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."*

"The one who hears you hears Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and the one who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me." This is a weighty statement. When the messengers spoke the message of Jesus, people who listened to them were really listening to Him. People who turned them away were turning away Jesus and the Father.

This still applies when we faithfully share His word. We do not have to be eloquent. If people reject the gospel, they are not rejecting us. They are rejecting Him. That should make us both humble and bold.

10:17 *And the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."*

"And the seventy returned with joy." They said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." Jesus had told them to heal the sick. They found that even the demons had to obey them when they spoke in Jesus' name. They came back thrilled.

Notice they said "in Your name." They knew the power was not their own. The name of Jesus stands for His person and His authority. Demons do not fear us. They fear Him.

10:18 *And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall like lightning out of heaven.*

"I was watching Satan fall like lightning out of heaven." What did Jesus mean? Bible teachers give a few answers. Some think He was looking back to Satan's first fall, when he rebelled against God before the creation of man (Isaiah 14:12-15 is often read this way). Others think Jesus was saying that the mission of the seventy was a defeat for Satan, a sign that his kingdom was being broken. Others point ahead to Revelation 12:7-10, when Satan is thrown down from heaven during the Tribulation.

The plain point is clear in context. Satan's power is real, but it is not equal to God's. His fall is as sure and as sudden as lightning. The success of the seventy was a sign of that.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 14:12 (alluded to)

10:19 *Look, I give you the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will by any means injure you.*

"Look, I give you the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will by any means injure you." Serpents and scorpions were real dangers on the roads of Israel. They also picture evil spiritual powers (Genesis 3:15; Psalm 91:13).

This was a promise to the seventy for their mission. It is not a command for us to handle snakes to prove our faith. Paul was bitten by a viper on Malta and was not harmed (Acts 28:3-6), but he did not go looking for it. The deeper promise is this: no power of the enemy can separate God's people from Him or take away what He has given them (Romans 8:38-39).

Old Testament links: Psalm 91:13 (alluded to)

10:20 *Yet do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice that your names were written in the heavens."*

"Yet do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice that your names were written in the heavens." This verse is a gentle correction. Power in ministry is exciting. But it is not the main thing. The greatest gift is not what we can do for God, but what He has done for us.

To have your name "written in the heavens" means to belong to God, to be recorded among His people (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 21:27). Miracles and success can come and go. A name written in heaven by God cannot be erased. If you know Christ, this is the reason for your deepest joy, on good days and bad.

10:21 *In that same hour Jesus rejoiced greatly in the spirit and said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You hid these things from* ***the*** *wise and intelligent and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for so it became well-pleasing before You."*

"In that same hour Jesus rejoiced greatly in the spirit." Luke is the Gospel that speaks most of joy and of the Holy Spirit, and here they come together. Jesus prays, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You hid these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to little children."

The wise and intelligent are those who think they know it all, like many of the scribes and Pharisees. The little children are the humble, the ones who come to God knowing their need, like these seventy ordinary followers. God does not reveal Himself to the proud. He gives understanding to those who are willing to receive it like children. "Yes, Father, for so it became well-pleasing before You." Jesus rejoiced in His Father's wise plan.

10:22 *"All things were delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal **Him**."*

"All things were delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." This sounds very much like the Gospel of John. Jesus claims a relationship with the Father that no one else has. The Father and the Son know each other fully.

How can we know God then? Only through the Son. Jesus is the one who makes the Father known (John 1:18; 14:6). We cannot reach God by our own wisdom. He has to show Himself to us, and He does that in Jesus.

10:23-24 *And having turned to the disciples privately, He said, "Blessed **are** the eyes that see what you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see **it**, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear **it**."*

Jesus turned to the disciples privately and said, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see." Then He added, "many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it."

Think of Isaiah, David, Daniel and the other prophets. They wrote about the coming Messiah, but they did not see Him with their own eyes. Peter says they searched and asked about the time and the person their prophecies were pointing to (1 Peter 1:10-12). These disciples were living in the fulfillment. We have something they had too: the full written word of God, telling us who Jesus is. That is a great blessing.

10:25 *And look, a certain lawyer stood up, testing Him and saying, "Teacher, having done what will I inherit eternal life?"*

"And look, a certain lawyer stood up, testing Him." A lawyer here is not a courtroom attorney. He was an expert in the law of Moses, like a scribe. He asked, "Teacher, having done what will I inherit eternal life?"

It is a good question asked with a wrong motive. He was "testing Him," trying to trap Jesus or show Him up in public. Notice too the way he asks. He wants to know what he must do. He was thinking of eternal life as something to earn.

10:26-27 *And He said to him, "What has been written in the law? How do you read?" And answering, he said, "'You shall love **the** Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'"*

Jesus answered with a question. "What has been written in the law? How do you read?" Jesus sent him back to the Scriptures he claimed to know.

The lawyer answered well. He quoted Deuteronomy 6:5, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind," and Leviticus 19:18, "your neighbor as yourself." Jesus Himself named these as the two greatest commandments (Matthew 22:37-40). Love for God comes first, with every part of us. Love for others flows out of it.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 6:5 (quoted); Leviticus 19:18 (quoted)

10:28 *And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."*

"You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." Was Jesus teaching that we can earn eternal life by keeping the law? No. He was showing the man the standard of the law, so he could see how far short he fell.

Who has loved God with all his heart, soul, strength and mind every moment of his life? Who has loved every neighbor as himself? No one but Jesus. The law shows us our sin (Romans 3:20). It drives us to look for a Savior. If you try to be saved by doing, the standard is perfection. That is why we need grace.

10:29 *But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

"But he, desiring to justify himself," asked, "And who is my neighbor?" To justify himself means to make himself look right. The lawyer felt the sting of Jesus' answer. So he tried to narrow the command down to something he could manage.

Many Jews of that day thought of a neighbor as a fellow Jew, or even only a fellow law-keeping Jew. Gentiles and Samaritans did not count. If he could limit the circle, he could tell himself he had kept the law. We do the same thing when we try to decide who we have to love and who we do not.

10:30 *And having taken **it** up, Jesus said, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who, having both stripped him and inflicted wounds, went away, having left **him** half dead as he was.*

Jesus answered with a story. "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers." The road from Jerusalem down to Jericho drops about 3,300 feet in fifteen miles or so, through rocky, desert country. It was known for robbers who hid in the rocks and caves.

The robbers "stripped him and inflicted wounds" and left him "half dead." Notice that Jesus does not tell us who the man was. Stripped of his clothes and lying unconscious, there was no way to tell if he was a Jew or a Gentile, rich or poor. He was just a human being in need.

10:31-32 *And by chance a certain priest was going down on that road, and having seen him, he passed by on the opposite side. And likewise a Levite also, having been at the place, having come and seen* ***him****, passed by on the opposite side.*

"By chance a certain priest was going down on that road." A priest served at the temple and offered sacrifices. If anyone should have helped, he should. But "having seen him, he passed by on the opposite side." He crossed the road to avoid him.

"And likewise a Levite also." Levites came from the tribe of Levi and assisted the priests in the temple. He too came, looked, and "passed by on the opposite side."

Why did they not help? Jesus does not say. Some suggest they feared touching a dead body, which would make them ceremonially unclean (Numbers 19:11). Some suggest they feared the robbers were still around. Whatever their reasons, the result was the same. They knew the law about loving their neighbor, and they walked away. Religion without love is empty.

10:33 *But a certain Samaritan, journeying, came to him, and having seen him, he felt compassion,*

"But a certain Samaritan, journeying, came to him, and having seen him, he felt compassion." This is the shock of the story. The hero is a Samaritan. Jews and Samaritans despised each other. The lawyer would never have expected a Samaritan to be the good one.

Notice the words "having seen him." The priest saw him. The Levite saw him. The Samaritan saw him too. The difference was not in what they saw but in what they felt and did. Compassion is a deep feeling of pity that moves you to act. The Samaritan's heart was moved.

10:34 *and having approached, he bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and having put him on his own animal, he brought him to an inn and took care of him.*

"Having approached, he bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine." The others moved away. The Samaritan moved closer. Oil soothed the wounds. Wine, with its alcohol, cleaned them. Luke the doctor would have liked that detail.

Then "having put him on his own animal, he brought him to an inn and took care of him." That meant the Samaritan walked so the hurt man could ride. He did not just do first aid and leave. He stayed with him through the night. Real love costs us time, comfort and money.

10:35 *And on the next day, having gone out, having taken out two denarii, he gave* ***them*** *to the innkeeper and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I, when I return, will repay you.'*

"On the next day, having gone out, having taken out two denarii, he gave them to the innkeeper." A denarius was a Roman silver coin, a day's wage for a working man. Two denarii would pay for some days' lodging and care. Then he said, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I, when I return, will repay you."

He gave freely and promised more. He took full responsibility for a stranger, maybe even an enemy. That is what love for a neighbor looks like.

10:36-37 *Which therefore of these three seems to you to have become a neighbor to the one who fell among the robbers?" And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go, and you do likewise."*

Then Jesus turned the lawyer's question around. "Which therefore of these three seems to you to have become a neighbor to the one who fell among the robbers?" The lawyer had asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus asks who acted like a neighbor. The question is not who deserves my love. The question is whether I will show love to whoever is in front of me.

The lawyer could not even bring himself to say "the Samaritan." He said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Jesus said, "Go, and you do likewise."

Many have seen Jesus Himself in the good Samaritan. He came to us when we were lost and half dead in our sins, despised by many, and He paid the cost to heal us. That is a true picture of what He did. But the main point of the story, in context, is the command at the end. Go and do the same. Who has God put on your road this week?

10:38 *And it came to pass, as they were going, that He entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house.*

"As they were going, that He entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house." John tells us the village was Bethany, near Jerusalem, and that Martha and Mary had a brother named Lazarus (John 11:1). Martha welcomed Jesus into her home. That was a good thing to do. The story goes right from a lesson on loving your neighbor to a lesson on loving God by listening to Him.

10:39 *And she had a sister called Mary, who also, having sat down beside the feet of Jesus, was listening to His word.*

"And she had a sister called Mary, who also, having sat down beside the feet of Jesus, was listening to His word." To sit at a teacher's feet was the place of a student, a disciple (Acts 22:3). In that day, it was unusual for a woman to sit as a student of a rabbi. A rabbi was a Jewish teacher of the law. Jesus welcomed her there. Luke often shows Jesus' care for women and His respect for them as disciples (8:1-3).

10:40 *But Martha was distracted about much serving; and having come up, she said, "Lord, does it not concern You that my sister has left me alone to serve? Tell her therefore that she help me."*

"But Martha was distracted about much serving." The word distracted means pulled away, dragged in many directions. She was busy making a meal for Jesus and His disciples, maybe thirteen or more guests. That is a lot of work.

She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, does it not concern You that my sister has left me alone to serve? Tell her therefore that she help me." Look at what is going on in her heart. She is upset with

Mary, and she is upset with Jesus too. "Does it not concern You?" When we are stressed and overloaded, we can start to think God does not care.

10:41-42 *And answering, Jesus said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but there is need of one **thing**; and Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."*

"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things." Jesus said her name twice, which shows tender care, not anger. He loved Martha (John 11:5). But He told her the truth. She was anxious about many things.

"But there is need of one thing; and Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." The one thing is to be with Jesus and hear His word. Serving is good. Jesus never says Martha's work was wrong. But serving that pulls us away from Him becomes a burden. The meal would be eaten and forgotten. What Mary received from Jesus would last forever.

Are you more like Martha or Mary? Many of us who love the Lord are so busy working for Him that we spend little time with Him. Take time today to sit at His feet, open His word and listen.

Chapter 10 Summary

Jesus sends seventy messengers two by two into the towns He will visit, telling them to pray for more workers, travel light, bring peace, heal the sick, and announce that the kingdom of God has drawn near. He pronounces woe on Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum for rejecting the light they were given. The seventy return rejoicing that even the demons obeyed them, and Jesus tells them to rejoice more that their names are written in heaven. He thanks the Father for revealing these things to little children and declares that only the Son can make the Father known. When a lawyer asks how to inherit eternal life and then asks, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus tells of a Samaritan who showed mercy to a beaten man after a priest and a Levite passed by, and He says, "Go, and you do likewise." In the home of Martha and Mary, Jesus gently tells busy Martha that only one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen it by sitting at His feet and listening to His word.

Chapter 10 Study Questions

1. How many did Jesus send out, how did He send them, and what did He tell them to pray for? (10:1-2)

2. What were the messengers to say to a town that did not receive them? (10:10-11)

3. Why will it be more tolerable for Sodom, Tyre and Sidon than for the towns that saw Jesus' miracles? (10:12-15)

4. What did Jesus say the seventy should rejoice about more than their power over demons? (10:20)

5. To whom does the Father reveal these things, and to whom does He hide them? (10:21-22)

6. What two commandments did the lawyer quote, and why could he not be saved by keeping them? (10:27-29)

7. What did the Samaritan do for the wounded man that the priest and the Levite did not? (10:33-35)

8. How did Jesus change the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor?" (10:29, 36-37)

9. Who has God put on your road who needs mercy, and what will you do this week to help? (10:37)

10. Are you more like Martha or Mary right now, and how can you make time to sit at Jesus' feet? (10:41-42)

Chapter 11: Teach Us to Pray

Scripture

11:1-13 And it came to pass, while He was in a certain place praying, when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples." Then He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Our Father who ***is*** in the heavens, let Your name be sanctified; let Your kingdom come; let Your will be done, as in heaven, also on the earth. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'" And He said to them, "Which of you will have a friend, and will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, since a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing that I will set before him'; and that one, answering from within, says, 'Do not cause me trouble; the door has already been shut, and my children are with me in the bed; I am not able, having risen, to give to you'? I say to you, even if he will not give to him, having risen, because of his being his friend, yet because of his shamelessness, having risen, he will give him as many as he needs. And I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Now which of you ***who is*** the father, ***if*** the son will ask for bread, will give him a stone? And if a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or also if he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know ***how*** to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father who ***is*** from heaven give ***the*** Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

11:14-28 And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. And it came to pass, the demon having gone out, the mute ***man*** spoke; and the crowds marveled. But some of them said, "By Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, He casts out the demons." And others, testing ***Him***, were seeking from Him a sign from heaven. But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and a house against a house falls. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say that I cast out the demons by Beelzebul. And if I cast out the demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast ***them*** out? Because of this they will be your judges. But if I cast out the demons by ***the*** finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. When the strong ***man***, fully armed, guards his own courtyard, his possessions are in peace; but when one stronger than he, having come upon ***him***, overcomes him, he takes away his full armor in which he had trusted, and divides his spoils. The one who is not with Me is against Me, and the one who does not gather with Me scatters. When the unclean spirit goes out from the man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest; and not finding ***any***, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came out.' And having come, it finds ***it*** swept and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more evil than itself, and having entered, they dwell there; and the last ***state*** of that man becomes worse than the first." And it came to pass, while He was saying these things, a certain woman from the crowd, having lifted up ***her*** voice, said to Him, "Blessed ***is*** the womb that bore You, and ***the*** breasts at which You nursed!" But He said, "Rather, blessed ***are*** those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

11:29-36 And while the crowds were gathering together, He began to say, "This generation is evil; it seeks a sign, and a sign will not be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For just as

Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. ***The*** queen of ***the*** south will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and look, ***something*** greater than Solomon ***is*** here. ***The*** men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and look, ***something*** greater than Jonah ***is*** here. Now no one, having lit a lamp, puts ***it*** in a hidden place, nor under the basket, but on the lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, your body also ***is*** full of darkness. Watch out therefore lest the light that ***is*** in you is darkness. If therefore your whole body ***is*** full of light, not having any part dark, the whole will be full of light, as when the lamp by ***its*** shining gives you light."

11:37-54 And while He was speaking, a certain Pharisee was asking Him to dine with him; and having gone in, He reclined. And the Pharisee, having seen ***it***, marveled that He did not first wash before the dinner. Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but your inside is full of plundering and wickedness. Fools! Did not the One who made the outside make the inside also? But give ***as*** alms the things that are within, and look, all things are clean to you. But woe to you Pharisees, because you tithe the mint and the rue and every herb, and you pass by justice and the love of God. These things you ought to have done, and not to leave those ***undone***. Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the first seat in the synagogues and the greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are like the unmarked tombs, and the men who walk over ***them*** do not know ***it***." And answering, one of the lawyers says to Him, "Teacher, saying these things You insult us also." And He said, "Woe to you lawyers also! Because you load men ***with*** burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you, because you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. So you bear witness and consent to the works of your fathers; because they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. Because of this also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and ***some*** of them they will kill and persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, which is being shed from ***the*** foundation of ***the*** world, may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the house.' Yes, I say to you, it will be required of this generation. Woe to you lawyers, because you have taken away the key of knowledge. You yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering." And as He was saying these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press ***Him*** hard and to provoke Him to speak about many things, lying in wait for Him and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, so that they might accuse Him.

Chapter 11 Preview

Chapter 11 opens with Jesus praying, and one of His disciples asks, "Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus gives them the prayer we call the Lord's Prayer, then a story about a friend who knocks at midnight, and a promise: ask, seek, knock. The Father in heaven is far better than any earthly father, and He will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

The rest of the chapter grows darker. When Jesus casts out a demon, some say He does it by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons. Jesus answers that a kingdom divided cannot stand, and that He is the stronger man who has come to overpower Satan. He warns a generation that wants signs that the only sign it will get is the sign of Jonah. Then, at a Pharisee's dinner table, He speaks a series of woes against the Pharisees and the lawyers for cleaning the outside while the inside is full of greed, for loading others with burdens, and for shutting the door of knowledge. By the end, the scribes and Pharisees are lying in wait to catch Him in His words.

Chapter 11 Study

11:1 *And it came to pass, while He was in a certain place praying, when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples."*

"While He was in a certain place praying." Once again Luke shows Jesus at prayer. The disciples had watched Him pray many times. They saw the place prayer had in His life, and they wanted it in theirs. When He stopped, one of them said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples."

The Gospels never tell us that the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to preach or to work miracles. They asked Him to teach them to pray. It is a good request for us too. Prayer does not come naturally. It has to be learned.

11:2 *Then He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Our Father who **is** in the heavens, let Your name be sanctified; let Your kingdom come; let Your will be done, as in heaven, also on the earth.*

"When you pray, say," He told them, and the prayer begins, "Our Father who is in the heavens." Jesus teaches us to come to God as Father. The Jews knew God as the Father of their nation (Isaiah 63:16), but Jesus invited His followers to speak to God personally, as children speak to a loving father. Only those who have trusted Christ have that right (John 1:12; Galatians 4:6).

"Let Your name be sanctified." To sanctify means to set apart as holy. God's name stands for who He is. The first thing we ask is not for ourselves. It is that God would be honored as holy, in our lives and in the world.

"Let Your kingdom come." We pray for the day when Christ returns to reign on the earth, and we pray for His rule in hearts now. "Let Your will be done, as in heaven, also on the earth." In heaven God's will is done gladly and fully. We ask for that here, starting with ourselves.

11:3 *Give us each day our daily bread.*

"Give us each day our daily bread." After God's honor comes our need. Bread stands for everything we need to live. Jesus teaches us to ask for it a day at a time. Israel received manna one day at a time in the wilderness (Exodus 16:4). God wants us to depend on Him daily.

Even if your pantry is full, pray this prayer. Every meal, every paycheck, every breath is a gift from Him. Asking for daily bread keeps us humble and thankful.

11:4 *And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'"*

"And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us." We need forgiveness as much as we need bread. Sin is a debt we owe God. Notice the connection. A person who has received God's forgiveness forgives others. We do not earn God's forgiveness by forgiving, but a heart that holds on to grudges shows it has not understood how much it has been forgiven (Matthew 18:21-35).

"And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil." God does not tempt anyone to sin (James 1:13). This is a humble prayer: Lord, keep me from places and trials where I am likely to fall, and when the test comes, rescue me. The word "evil" can mean evil in general or the evil one, Satan. Both are true. We need God's help against both.

Luke's form of the prayer is shorter than Matthew's (Matthew 6:9-13). Jesus likely taught it more than once, on different occasions. The SLB, following the Received Greek Text, includes the words "Our Father who is in the heavens," "let Your will be done, as in heaven, also on the earth," and "but deliver us from evil" here in Luke. Many older Greek copies of Luke have a shorter form without these phrases, and many modern Bibles follow them. Every one of these words is found in Matthew's form, so nothing is lost either way. This prayer is a pattern, not a magic formula. Jesus warned against empty repetition (Matthew 6:7). Pray it, and pray like it.

11:5-7 *And He said to them, "Which of you will have a friend, and will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, since a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing that I will set before him'; and that one, answering from within, says, 'Do not cause me trouble; the door has already been shut, and my children are with me in the bed; I am not able, having risen, to give to you'?*

Then Jesus told a story. A man has a friend come to him "at midnight" and say, "Friend, lend me three loaves, since a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing that I will set before him." In that culture, travelers often walked in the cool of the evening. Hospitality was a sacred duty. To have nothing to serve a guest was a real shame.

The friend inside answers, "Do not cause me trouble; the door has already been shut, and my children are with me in the bed." A poor family in a one-room house would all sleep together on mats. Getting up meant waking everyone, children included. The answer was no.

11:8 *I say to you, even if he will not give to him, having risen, because of his being his friend, yet because of his shamelessness, having risen, he will give him as many as he needs.*

"Even if he will not give to him, having risen, because of his being his friend, yet because of his shamelessness, having risen, he will give him as many as he needs." The word shamelessness means boldness, not giving up, not caring about looking pushy. The man at the door kept knocking, and finally his friend got up just to get rid of him.

Is Jesus saying God is like a grumpy neighbor we must wear down? No. This is a lesson from the lesser to the greater. If even a tired neighbor will give to bold asking, how much more will our

loving Father, who never sleeps (Psalm 121:4), hear His children. The point is to keep praying, boldly and without giving up.

11:9-10 *And I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." The Greek verbs here carry the idea of keeping on: keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking. Each word is stronger than the last. Asking is with words. Seeking adds effort. Knocking keeps at it until the door opens.

"For everyone who asks receives." This is a promise. It is not a blank check to get whatever we want. James tells us some do not receive because they ask with wrong motives (James 4:3), and John tells us we must ask according to His will (1 John 5:14). But God hears and answers His children. Sometimes the answer is yes, sometimes wait, and sometimes something better than what we asked.

11:11-12 *Now which of you **who is** the father, **if** the son will ask for bread, will give him a stone? And if a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or also if he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion?*

"Now which of you who is the father, if the son will ask for bread, will give him a stone?" A small round loaf could look a little like a stone. A fish could look like a serpent. A curled-up scorpion could look like an egg. What father would play such a cruel trick on his hungry child? None. Even a poor father wants to give his children good things.

11:13 *If you then, being evil, know **how** to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father who **is** from heaven give **the** Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father who is from heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Jesus calls us "evil." Compared with God, even the best human father is sinful. Yet we still give good things to our kids. How much more will a perfect, loving Father do for His children?

Matthew 7:11 says the Father gives "good things." Luke says He gives the Holy Spirit, the greatest gift of all. Before Pentecost, the disciples were to ask for the Spirit. After the cross and resurrection, every believer receives the Holy Spirit at the moment of faith (Acts 2:38; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13). Today we can still ask God to fill us with His Spirit, to lead us and strengthen us day by day (Ephesians 5:18).

11:14 *And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. And it came to pass, the demon having gone out, the mute **man** spoke; and the crowds marveled.*

"He was casting out a demon, and it was mute." The demon kept the man from speaking. When it left, "the mute man spoke; and the crowds marveled." The crowd had no doubt something amazing had happened. The question was what it meant.

11:15-16 *But some of them said, "By Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, He casts out the demons." And others, testing **Him**, were seeking from Him a sign from heaven.*

But some of them said, "By Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, He casts out the demons." Beelzebul was a name for Satan. It may come from Baal-zebub, a god of the Philistines (2 Kings 1:2). They could not deny the miracle, so they attacked its source.

"Others, testing Him, were seeking from Him a sign from heaven." They had just seen a man set free, and still they wanted more proof. Hearts that are set against Jesus will never have enough evidence. The problem is not the mind. It is the will.

11:17-18 *But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and a house against a house falls. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say that I cast out the demons by Beelzebul.*

"Knowing their thoughts," Jesus answered them. "Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and a house against a house falls." Then He applied it. "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?"

It makes no sense for Satan to cast out his own demons. That would be like a general shooting his own soldiers. Satan is evil, but he is not foolish. If Jesus was destroying the devil's work, He could not be working for the devil.

11:19 *And if I cast out the demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast **them** out? Because of this they will be your judges.*

"If I cast out the demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?" Some Jewish exorcists of that day tried to cast out demons (Acts 19:13). Jesus says, if you say I work by Satan, what about your own people? You do not accuse them. "They will be your judges." Their own followers would show how unfair the charge was.

11:20 *But if I cast out the demons by **the** finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

"But if I cast out the demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." The "finger of God" is a phrase from Exodus 8:19. When Moses did signs in Egypt that Pharaoh's magicians could not copy, they said, "It is the finger of God." Matthew says "the Spirit of God" (Matthew 12:28). It means God's own power.

If Jesus is driving out demons by God's power, then the King is here, and His kingdom has broken in. The miracles showed that God's rule had arrived in the person of the King.

Old Testament links: Exodus 8:19 (alluded to)

11:21-22 *When the strong **man**, fully armed, guards his own courtyard, his possessions are in peace; but when one stronger than he, having come upon **him**, overcomes him, he takes away his full armor in which he had trusted, and divides his spoils.*

"When the strong man, fully armed, guards his own courtyard, his possessions are in peace." The strong man is Satan. He holds people captive. But "one stronger than he" comes upon him, "overcomes him, he takes away his full armor in which he had trusted, and divides his spoils."

Jesus is the stronger one. He came to tie up the strong man and set his captives free. Every demon cast out was a sign of it. At the cross Jesus disarmed the powers of darkness (Colossians 2:15). Satan is still active, but he is a defeated enemy, and his final end is sure (Revelation 20:10).

11:23 *The one who is not with Me is against Me, and the one who does not gather with Me scatters.*

"The one who is not with Me is against Me, and the one who does not gather with Me scatters." There is no middle ground with Jesus. In 9:50 He told His disciples not to forbid a man who was serving in His name. Here He tells the crowd that no one can be neutral about Him. You are either gathering with Him or scattering. Which is it for you?

11:24-26 *When the unclean spirit goes out from the man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest; and not finding **any**, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came out.' And having come, it finds **it** swept and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more evil than itself, and having entered, they dwell there; and the last **state** of that man becomes worse than the first."*

Jesus gives a warning picture. An unclean spirit leaves a man, wanders through "waterless places seeking rest," and finds none. So it says, "I will return to my house from which I came out." It finds the house "swept and put in order." Then it brings "seven other spirits more evil than itself," and "the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

The house is clean but empty. Getting rid of evil is not enough. A life must be filled with God. Reform without new birth leaves a person open to worse things. Many in Israel were glad to see demons driven out, but they would not receive the One who drove them out. The same is true of anyone who cleans up his life on the outside but never gives his heart to Christ.

11:27-28 *And it came to pass, while He was saying these things, a certain woman from the crowd, having lifted up **her** voice, said to Him, "Blessed **is** the womb that bore You, and **the** breasts at which You nursed!" But He said, "Rather, blessed **are** those who hear the word of God and keep it!"*

A woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts at which You nursed!" She was saying, How blessed Your mother must be to have a son like You! It was a sincere compliment.

Jesus answered, "Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" He was not putting down His mother. Mary was blessed (1:42, 48). But she was blessed most of all because she believed and obeyed God's word (1:38, 45). Jesus turns the attention away from a special family tie to something everyone can have. The greatest blessing is to hear God's word and obey it.

11:29-30 *And while the crowds were gathering together, He began to say, "This generation is evil; it seeks a sign, and a sign will not be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation.*

As the crowds grew, Jesus said, "This generation is evil; it seeks a sign, and a sign will not be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet." They had seen many signs already. They wanted one on their terms.

"For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation." Jonah came to Nineveh as a man who had been, in effect, brought back from death after three days in the great fish. Matthew makes that point clear (Matthew 12:40). Jesus' resurrection after three days would be the great sign to His generation. Jonah's preaching was also part of the sign. He warned Nineveh, and they repented. Jesus warned Israel. Would they?

Old Testament links: Jonah 3:4 (pictured)

11:31 ***The*** *queen of* ***the*** *south will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and look,* ***something*** *greater than Solomon* ***is*** *here.*

"The queen of the south will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and will condemn them." This was the queen of Sheba, from southern Arabia (1 Kings 10:1-13). She traveled a long way to hear the wisdom of Solomon. "And look, something greater than Solomon is here."

She was a Gentile, and she came a great distance to hear wisdom. These people had the very wisdom of God standing in their streets, and they would not listen. At the judgment, her example will testify against them.

Old Testament links: 1 Kings 10:1 (alluded to); 1 Kings 10:4 (alluded to)

11:32 ***The*** *men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and look,* ***something*** *greater than Jonah* ***is*** *here.*

"The men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah." Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, one of Israel's cruelest enemies. Yet the whole city repented when Jonah preached (Jonah 3:5-10). "And look, something greater than Jonah is here."

Jesus is greater than Israel's wisest king and greater than one of its prophets. If pagans repented at less, how much more should God's people repent at the preaching of His Son? The same warning applies to anyone today who has heard the gospel many times.

Old Testament links: Jonah 3:5 (alluded to)

11:33 *Now no one, having lit a lamp, puts **it** in a hidden place, nor under the basket, but on the lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light.*

"No one, having lit a lamp, puts it in a hidden place, nor under the basket, but on the lampstand." Lamps in that day were small clay bowls with oil and a wick. You put a lamp up high so it could light the room. God has not hidden the light. In Jesus He has put it out where everyone can see it. The problem is not a lack of light, as the next verses show.

11:34 *The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, your body also **is** full of darkness.*

"The lamp of the body is the eye." The eye lets light into the body. "When your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, your body also is full of darkness." A clear eye is a healthy one, focused and single. An evil eye is a diseased one. In the Bible, an evil eye can also picture a greedy, stingy heart.

The point is that the problem with Jesus' hearers was not in the light but in their eyes. They had plenty of light. They would not see. How we look at Jesus decides whether we live in light or darkness.

11:35-36 *Watch out therefore lest the light that **is** in you is darkness. If therefore your whole body **is** full of light, not having any part dark, the whole will be full of light, as when the lamp by **its** shining gives you light."*

"Watch out therefore lest the light that is in you is darkness." This is a sobering warning. A person can think he sees clearly while he is really in the dark. The Pharisees thought they were full of light, and they were blind (John 9:40-41).

"If therefore your whole body is full of light, not having any part dark, the whole will be full of light." Jesus wants every corner of our lives open to His light, with nothing held back in the dark. Ask the Lord to show you any area of your life you have kept from Him.

11:37-38 *And while He was speaking, a certain Pharisee was asking Him to dine with him; and having gone in, He reclined. And the Pharisee, having seen **it**, marveled that He did not first wash before the dinner.*

"A certain Pharisee was asking Him to dine with him." A Pharisee was a member of a strict Jewish group who carefully kept the law of Moses and many traditions added to it by their teachers. Jesus accepted the invitation and "reclined" at the table.

"The Pharisee, having seen it, marveled that He did not first wash before the dinner." This was not about clean hands. It was a ceremony. The Pharisees washed their hands in a certain way before meals as a ritual of purity, following the tradition of the elders (Mark 7:3-4). The law of Moses did not require it. Jesus skipped it, and the host was shocked.

11:39-40 *Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but your inside is full of plundering and wickedness. Fools! Did not the One who made the outside make the inside also?*

"Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but your inside is full of plundering and wickedness." Jesus uses the picture of washing dishes. Who would clean the outside of a cup and leave the inside dirty? That is what they were doing with their lives. They looked clean, but their hearts were full of greed and wickedness. Plundering means robbing, grabbing what belongs to others.

"Fools! Did not the One who made the outside make the inside also?" God made the whole person. He cares about the heart as much as the outward life, and more. Outward religion cannot cover an unclean heart.

11:41 *But give **as** alms the things that are within, and look, all things are clean to you.*

"But give as alms the things that are within, and look, all things are clean to you." Alms are gifts to the poor. Bible teachers read this verse in slightly different ways. Some take it to mean, give from the heart, give yourself, not just your money. Others take it to mean, give what is inside the cup and dish, your food and goods, to the poor, instead of grabbing for yourself.

Either way, the cure for a greedy heart is generous love. When the heart is right with God and shows it in mercy to others, the outward rituals no longer matter so much.

11:42 *But woe to you Pharisees, because you tithe the mint and the rue and every herb, and you pass by justice and the love of God. These things you ought to have done, and not to leave those **undone**.*

"But woe to you Pharisees, because you tithe the mint and the rue and every herb." To tithe is to give a tenth. The law said to tithe grain, wine, oil and the produce of the land (Deuteronomy 14:22-23). The Pharisees were so careful they even tithed the little herbs from their gardens.

"And you pass by justice and the love of God." That was the problem. They were careful with tiny things and careless with the big things. "These things you ought to have done, and not to leave those undone." Jesus does not say tithing was wrong. He says it was not enough. Doing the small things right does not make up for neglecting justice and love.

11:43 *Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the first seat in the synagogues and the greetings in the marketplaces.*

"Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the first seat in the synagogues and the greetings in the marketplaces." A synagogue was a local Jewish meeting place for prayer and the reading of Scripture. The first seats were up front, facing the people, where everyone could see you. In the marketplace, people greeted religious leaders with honored titles.

They loved being noticed. Their religion was about their own image. That is a danger for every church leader and every church member. Do we serve to be seen, or to please God?

11:44 *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are like the unmarked tombs, and the men who walk over* ***them*** *do not know* ***it****."*

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are like the unmarked tombs, and the men who walk over them do not know it." A hypocrite was an actor, someone who wore a mask on stage. Under the law, touching a grave made a person unclean for seven days (Numbers 19:16). Jews marked tombs with white paint so people would not step on them by accident.

Jesus says the Pharisees were like unmarked graves. People walked by them, thinking they were holy men, and were made unclean without knowing it. Instead of leading people to God, they spread spiritual death.

11:45-46 *And answering, one of the lawyers says to Him, "Teacher, saying these things You insult us also." And He said, "Woe to you lawyers also! Because you load men* ***with*** *burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.*

"One of the lawyers" spoke up: "Teacher, saying these things You insult us also." The lawyers, the experts in the law, felt the sting. Most of the Pharisees' rules came from their teaching.

Jesus did not back down. "Woe to you lawyers also! Because you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers." They piled hundreds of rules on the people and found clever ways to excuse themselves. They gave no help to those who were crushed under the load. Jesus offers the opposite. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

11:47-48 *Woe to you, because you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. So you bear witness and consent to the works of your fathers; because they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs.*

"Woe to you, because you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them." It sounds like an honor to build monuments to the prophets. But Jesus says it showed they were just like their fathers. Their fathers killed the prophets, and they built the tombs. They honored dead prophets while rejecting the living word those prophets spoke. And they were about to kill the greatest Prophet of all.

It is easy to praise the faithful men of the past while ignoring what they said. Honoring God's servants means listening to God's message.

11:49-51 *Because of this also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and **some** of them they will kill and persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, which is being shed from **the** foundation of **the** world, may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the house.' Yes, I say to you, it will be required of this generation.*

"The wisdom of God said," and then come the words, "I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute." Jesus speaks of what God had planned and said. He would send messengers, and they would be rejected. As a result, "the blood of all the prophets, which is being shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation."

"From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah." Abel was the first person murdered in the Bible (Genesis 4:8). Zechariah was stoned in the temple court (2 Chronicles 24:20-22). In the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles is the last book, so this covers the whole Old Testament from first to last. This generation, which would reject God's own Son, would bear the weight of all that rejection. That judgment fell when Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70.

Old Testament links: Genesis 4:8 (alluded to); 2 Chronicles 24:20-21 (alluded to); 2 Chronicles 24:22 (alluded to); Genesis 4:10 (alluded to)

11:52 *Woe to you lawyers, because you have taken away the key of knowledge. You yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering."*

"Woe to you lawyers, because you have taken away the key of knowledge. You yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering." The key of knowledge is the true understanding of God's word, which opens the door to knowing Him. The lawyers were the ones who were supposed to teach Scripture. Instead they buried it under their traditions. They did not go in, and they kept others out.

This is a heavy warning to anyone who teaches the Bible. A teacher who twists God's word does not just hurt himself. He blocks the way for others.

11:53-54 *And as He was saying these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press **Him** hard and to provoke Him to speak about many things, lying in wait for Him and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, so that they might accuse Him.*

"The scribes and the Pharisees began to press Him hard and to provoke Him to speak about many things." From now on they were openly hostile. They fired question after question at Him, "lying in wait for Him and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, so that they might accuse Him."

They had no interest in the truth. They were hunting. This is where the road to the cross becomes plain. Yet Jesus would not soften His words to save Himself. He loved them enough to tell them the truth. Do we love people enough to do the same, gently and honestly?

Chapter 11 Summary

After watching Jesus pray, a disciple asks Him to teach them to pray. Jesus gives the Lord's Prayer: honor God's name, seek His kingdom and will, ask for daily bread, forgiveness and protection. He tells of a friend who keeps knocking at midnight and teaches His followers to keep asking, seeking and knocking, because the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. When some say He casts out demons by Beelzebul, Jesus answers that a divided kingdom cannot stand, that He works by the finger of God, and that He is the stronger man who overpowers Satan. He warns that an empty life will be filled with worse evil, and that the truly blessed hear God's word and keep it. To a generation seeking signs, He gives only the sign of Jonah, warning that the queen of the south and the men of Nineveh will condemn them. At a Pharisee's table, Jesus pronounces woes on the Pharisees and the lawyers for their outward religion, their neglect of justice and love, their love of honor, their heavy burdens and their rejection of the prophets. From then on the scribes and Pharisees lie in wait to catch Him.

Chapter 11 Study Questions

1. What did the disciple ask Jesus after watching Him pray? (11:1)

2. What are the requests in the Lord's Prayer, and what comes first? (11:2-4)

3. What does the story of the friend at midnight teach about prayer? (11:5-10)

4. What gift does the Father give to those who ask Him? (11:13)

5. How did Jesus answer the charge that He cast out demons by Beelzebul? (11:17-22)

6. What is the warning in the story of the unclean spirit that returns to a clean, empty house? (11:24-26)

7. What is "the sign of Jonah," and why will the men of Nineveh condemn that generation? (11:29-32)

8. What did Jesus say was wrong with cleaning the outside of the cup? (11:39-42)

9. Which part of the Lord's Prayer do you find hardest to pray honestly, and why? (11:2-4)

10. Is there any area where your outward life looks clean but your heart needs God's cleansing? (11:39-41)

Chapter 12: Treasure in Heaven and Ready Servants

Scripture

12:1-12 In these ***circumstances***, when the myriads of the crowd had gathered together, so as to trample on one another, He began to say to His disciples first, "Be on guard for yourselves against the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Now nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, and ***nothing is*** hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken into the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops. Now I say to you, My friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after these things do not have anything more to do. But I will show you whom you should fear: fear the One who, after the killing, has authority to cast into Gehenna. Yes, I say to you, fear Him. Are not five sparrows sold for two assaria? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the hairs of your head have all been numbered. Therefore do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. Now I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man also will confess him before the angels of God; but the one who has denied Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. And everyone who will speak a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to the one who has blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven. And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you should answer in defense, or what you should say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that same hour what you must say."

12:13-21 Then someone from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or divider over you?" And He said to them, "Watch out and guard yourselves from covetousness, because even when anyone has abundance, his life is not from his possessions." Then He spoke a parable to them, saying, "The land of a certain rich man produced abundantly. And he was reasoning within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, because I do not have ***a place*** where I will store my fruits?' And he said, 'This I will do: I will tear down my barns and build greater ***ones***, and I will store there all my produce and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; rest, eat, drink, be merry."' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night they are demanding your soul from you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So ***is*** the one who treasures up for himself and is not rich toward God."

12:22-34 And He said to His disciples, "Because of this I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, what you will eat, nor for the body, what you will put on. The life is more than the food, and the body ***more*** than the clothing. Consider the ravens, that they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than the birds! And which of you, being anxious, is able to add to his lifespan approximately 1.5 feet (one cubit)? If then you are not able ***to do*** even the least, why are you anxious about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they do not labor nor do they spin; but I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is ***here*** today and tomorrow is thrown into ***the*** furnace, how much more you, ***you*** of little faith! And you, do not seek what you will eat or what you will drink, and do not be unsettled. For the nations of the world seek all these things; and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the

kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you. Do not fear, little flock, because your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give alms; make for yourselves purses that do not grow old, an unfailing treasure in the heavens, where a thief does not come near nor a moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart also will be.

12:35-48 Let your waists be girded and the lamps burning; and you ***be*** like men who are waiting for their master, when he will return from the wedding feasts, so that when he has come and knocked, they may immediately open to him. Blessed ***are*** those slaves whom the master, having come, will find watching. Truly I say to you that he will gird himself and have them recline ***at table***, and having come up, he will serve them. And if he comes in the second watch, and comes in the third watch, and finds ***them*** so, blessed are those slaves. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief is coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You also therefore be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You speaking this parable to us, or also to all?" And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager whom the master will set over his household servants, to give ***them*** the measure of grain in season? Blessed ***is*** that slave whom his master, having come, will find doing so. In truth I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master delays to come,' and begins to beat the male servants and the female servants, and to eat and to drink and to get drunk, the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in two and will assign his portion with the unfaithful. And that slave who knew the will of his master and did not prepare nor do according to his will, will be beaten ***with*** many ***blows***; but the one who did not know, and did things worthy of blows, will be beaten ***with*** few. And everyone to whom much was given, much will be required from him; and to whom they entrusted much, they will ask of him all the more.

12:49-59 I came to cast fire into the earth, and what do I wish, if it has already been kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized ***with***, and how I am distressed until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace on the earth? No, I say to you, but rather division. For from now on there will be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." And He was also saying to the crowds, "When you see the cloud rising from ***the*** west, immediately you say, 'A rainstorm is coming,' and so it happens. And when ***you see*** a south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. Hypocrites! You know ***how*** to discern the appearance of the sky and of the earth, but how is it that you do not discern this time? And why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is righteous? For as you are going with your adversary before a ruler, on the way give effort to be released from him, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. I say to you, you will certainly not come out from there until you have paid even the last lepton."

Chapter 12 Preview

Thousands of people are crowding around Jesus, so many that they are stepping on each other. He turns first to His disciples and warns them against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Everything

hidden will one day come to light. He tells them not to fear those who can only kill the body, but to fear God, and in the same breath He reminds them that God does not forget a single sparrow. He promises that the Holy Spirit will give them the words to say when they are dragged before rulers.

Then a man asks Jesus to settle a family fight over an inheritance, and Jesus warns the crowd against greed with the parable of the rich fool, who built bigger barns and died that same night. He tells His disciples not to worry about food and clothing, but to seek God's kingdom and store up treasure in heaven. The second half of the chapter is about readiness. Like servants waiting up for their master, we must be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour we do not expect. Jesus closes by saying He came to bring division, not easy peace, and He urges the crowds to read the times and make things right with God before it is too late.

Chapter 12 Study

12:1 *In these **circumstances**, when the myriads of the crowd had gathered together, so as to trample on one another, He began to say to His disciples first, "Be on guard for yourselves against the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

"When the myriads of the crowd had gathered together, so as to trample on one another." A myriad is ten thousand, so the word means a huge, uncounted crowd. Jesus was at the height of His popularity. Yet He spoke "to His disciples first."

"Be on guard for yourselves against the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Leaven is yeast. A little of it works its way through the whole lump of dough. Hypocrisy is like that. It starts small, a bit of pretending, a bit of putting on a show, and spreads through a life and through a church. Jesus had just been at a Pharisee's table (11:37-54). Now He warns His own followers not to catch the same disease.

12:2-3 *Now nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, and **nothing is** hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken into the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.*

"Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, and nothing is hidden that will not be known." Hypocrisy is foolish because it cannot last. One day everything will come out.

"Whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken into the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops." Houses in Israel had flat roofs, and people would call out news from them. Jesus says the things we whisper in secret will one day be announced for all to hear. God will judge the secrets of men (Romans 2:16). Live today as if every word and deed will be made public, because one day it will.

12:4-5 *Now I say to you, My friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after these things do not have anything more to do. But I will show you whom you should fear: fear the One who, after the killing, has authority to cast into Gehenna. Yes, I say to you, fear Him.*

"I say to you, My friends." Jesus calls His disciples friends. He is about to say something hard, and He says it as a friend. "Do not fear those who kill the body, and after these things do not have anything more to do."

Men can kill the body, and that is all. "But I will show you whom you should fear: fear the One who, after the killing, has authority to cast into Gehenna." Gehenna is the word Jesus used for hell. It was the name of the Valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where children had once been sacrificed in fire to false gods (Jeremiah 7:31). It became a picture of the place of final punishment. The One to fear is God. This kind of fear is not terror that drives us away from Him. It is a deep respect that keeps us faithful to Him even when men threaten us.

12:6-7 *Are not five sparrows sold for two assaria? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the hairs of your head have all been numbered. Therefore do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.*

"Are not five sparrows sold for two assaria? And not one of them is forgotten before God." An assarion was a small copper coin, worth about a sixteenth of a day's wage. Sparrows were the cheapest birds in the market, food for the poor. Matthew says two sparrows sold for one assarion (Matthew 10:29). Here five sell for two. The fifth one was thrown in for free. Even that one is not forgotten by God.

"But even the hairs of your head have all been numbered." God knows you that closely. "Therefore do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows." Here are both sides of the fear of God. Fear Him, and you need not fear anything else, because He cares for you.

12:8-9 *Now I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man also will confess him before the angels of God; but the one who has denied Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.*

"Everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man also will confess him before the angels of God." To confess Jesus is to say openly that you belong to Him. When we own Him before people, He will own us before heaven.

"But the one who has denied Me before men will be denied before the angels of God." This speaks of a settled refusal to own Christ. Peter denied Jesus three times in a moment of fear, and Jesus restored him (22:61-62; John 21:15-19). That shows there is hope for the believer who fails and repents. But a life that never confesses Christ shows a heart that never belonged to Him.

12:10 *And everyone who will speak a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to the one who has blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.*

"Everyone who will speak a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to the one who has blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven." Blasphemy is speaking

against God, insulting or slandering Him. Many people misunderstood Jesus during His earthly life, even His own brothers (John 7:5), and could later repent.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is something else. In Matthew 12 and Mark 3, it is what the Pharisees did when they saw the Spirit's work through Jesus and called it Satan's work (11:15). It is a settled, knowing rejection of the Spirit's witness to Christ. Since the Spirit is the One who brings people to repentance, the person who finally rejects Him has shut the only door to forgiveness. Some teachers hold this sin could only be committed while Jesus was on earth doing miracles. Others say it describes any final, hardened unbelief. If you are worried that you have committed this sin, that very worry is good evidence that you have not. The person who has done it does not care.

12:11-12 *And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you should answer in defense, or what you should say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that same hour what you must say."*

"When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you should answer in defense." Jesus did not promise His followers an easy life. He told them they would be put on trial.

"For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that same hour what you must say." We see this again and again in Acts. Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8-13), Stephen (Acts 6:10), and Paul before kings (Acts 26) spoke with boldness and wisdom that astonished their enemies. This is not a promise that we never need to study God's word. It is a promise for the moment of trial, when we stand for Christ and do not know what to say. The Spirit will not leave us on our own.

12:13-14 *Then someone from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or divider over you?"*

"Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Rabbis were often asked to settle disputes about the law, including inheritance. Under the law, the oldest son got a double share (Deuteronomy 21:17). This man felt he was getting the short end of the stick.

Jesus said, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or divider over you?" Jesus did not come to sort out family property disputes. He came to deal with the heart. The man had just heard Jesus speak about eternal matters, and all he could think about was his money.

Old Testament links: Exodus 2:14 (alluded to)

12:15 *And He said to them, "Watch out and guard yourselves from covetousness, because even when anyone has abundance, his life is not from his possessions."*

"Watch out and guard yourselves from covetousness, because even when anyone has abundance, his life is not from his possessions." Covetousness is the craving for more. It is the desire to have what you do not have, and it never gets satisfied. Paul calls it idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

Jesus says real life does not come from what we own. Our culture tells us the opposite every day. Advertisements are built on the idea that the next purchase will make us happy. It never does. You can have plenty and still be empty.

12:16-17 *Then He spoke a parable to them, saying, "The land of a certain rich man produced abundantly. And he was reasoning within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, because I do not have* ***place*** *where I will store my fruits?'*

"The land of a certain rich man produced abundantly." There was nothing wrong with a good harvest. God sends the rain and the sun. The man did not get rich by stealing. But listen to how he talked: "What shall I do, because I do not have a place where I will store my fruits?"

Notice the words "I" and "my." In just a few verses the man says I, my and me over and over. He never mentions God. He never thinks about anyone else. His whole world is himself.

12:18-19 *And he said, 'This I will do: I will tear down my barns and build greater* ***ones****, and I will store there all my produce and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; rest, eat, drink, be merry."'*

"This I will do: I will tear down my barns and build greater ones." He had a plan for his wealth, and the plan was to keep it all. Then he talked to himself: "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; rest, eat, drink, be merry."

He thought he had many years ahead of him. He thought his soul could be satisfied with goods. He was wrong on both counts. James warns against making plans as if our lives were in our own hands (James 4:13-15).

12:20 *But God said to him, 'Fool! This night they are demanding your soul from you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'*

God spoke one word over him: "Fool!" In the Bible, a fool is not someone with a low IQ. He is someone who lives as if there is no God (Psalm 14:1). This man was a success by the world's standards and a fool by God's.

"This night they are demanding your soul from you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" The man's life was a loan, and the loan was being called in. He planned for many years. He had one night. Everything he stored up would go to someone else. You can't take it with you. Have you ever noticed that a hearse never pulls a trailer?

12:21 *So* ***is*** *the one who treasures up for himself and is not rich toward God."*

"So is the one who treasures up for himself and is not rich toward God." This is the point of the parable. The problem was not that he was rich. The problem was that he was rich only for himself, and poor toward God.

What does it mean to be rich toward God? To know Him, to trust Him, and to use what He gives us for His purposes, for His kingdom and for others. Paul told Timothy to instruct the rich not to

trust in their riches but in God, and to be rich in good works, generous and ready to share (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

12:22-23 *And He said to His disciples, "Because of this I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, what you will eat, nor for the body, what you will put on. The life is more than the food, and the body **more** than the clothing.*

"Because of this I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, what you will eat, nor for the body, what you will put on." Jesus turns from the rich man to His disciples, many of whom were poor. The rich man's problem was greed. The poor man's temptation is worry. Both come from the same root: putting our trust in things instead of God.

"The life is more than the food, and the body more than the clothing." God gave you life. Will He not also give you what you need to live?

12:24 *Consider the ravens, that they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than the birds!*

"Consider the ravens, that they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and God feeds them." Ravens were unclean birds under the law (Leviticus 11:15), not the kind of bird anyone would think much of. Unlike the rich man, they have no barns at all. Yet God feeds them (Psalm 147:9).

"How much more valuable are you than the birds!" This does not mean we should not work. The birds work hard to find their food. It means we should not worry. Do your work, and trust God with the outcome.

Old Testament links: Psalm 147:9 (alluded to)

12:25-26 *And which of you, being anxious, is able to add to his lifespan approximately 1.5 feet (one cubit)? If then you are not able **to do** even the least, why are you anxious about the rest?*

"Which of you, being anxious, is able to add to his lifespan approximately 1.5 feet (one cubit)?" A cubit was a measure of about a foot and a half, the length from the elbow to the fingertip. Here it pictures adding even a little bit of time to your life. Worry cannot do it.

"If then you are not able to do even the least, why are you anxious about the rest?" Worry changes nothing except us, and it changes us for the worse. It steals today's strength and does nothing about tomorrow's trouble.

12:27-28 *Consider the lilies, how they grow: they do not labor nor do they spin; but I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is **here** today and tomorrow is thrown into **the** furnace, how much more you, **you** of little faith!*

"Consider the lilies, how they grow: they do not labor nor do they spin." Spinning was making thread for cloth. The wildflowers of Galilee do nothing to make their beauty, yet "not even

Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these." Solomon was the richest king Israel ever had.

"If God so clothes the grass in the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace." In that day dry grass was used as fuel for ovens. If God dresses something that lasts only a day so beautifully, "how much more you, you of little faith!" Worry is really a faith problem. It forgets who our Father is.

12:29-30 *And you, do not seek what you will eat or what you will drink, and do not be unsettled. For the nations of the world seek all these things; and your Father knows that you need these things.*

"Do not seek what you will eat or what you will drink, and do not be unsettled." Unsettled pictures a ship tossed up and down on the waves. Worry keeps us anxious and uneasy, never at rest.

"For the nations of the world seek all these things; and your Father knows that you need these things." The nations here means the people who do not know God. It is natural for them to chase after food and clothes, since they have no Father in heaven to trust. But we do. He knows what we need before we ask (Matthew 6:8).

12:31 *But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you.*

"But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you." This is the answer to worry. Do not seek things. Seek God's rule in your life first. Put Him first in your choices, your time and your money, and He will take care of the rest.

This is not a promise of riches. It is a promise of provision. God may not give us everything we want, but He will give us everything we need to do His will.

12:32 *Do not fear, little flock, because your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.*

"Do not fear, little flock, because your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." What a tender verse. Jesus calls His followers a little flock, small and weak, like sheep. The world may not think much of them.

But the Father "has been pleased" to give them the kingdom. It was His joy to do it. If God has already promised you His kingdom, why would you worry about the price of groceries? The greater gift guarantees the lesser.

12:33-34 *Sell your possessions and give alms; make for yourselves purses that do not grow old, an unfailing treasure in the heavens, where a thief does not come near nor a moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart also will be.*

"Sell your possessions and give alms; make for yourselves purses that do not grow old, an unfailing treasure in the heavens." Does Jesus mean every believer must sell everything? He told one rich ruler to do just that (18:22), because his money was his god. The early church in

Jerusalem sold property to help those in need (Acts 2:44-45), but Peter said it was voluntary (Acts 5:4). The heart of the command is this: hold your things loosely, and be generous. Money given for God's work becomes treasure that no thief can steal and no moth can eat.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart also will be." Your heart follows your money. If you want to know what you love, look at your bank statement. And if you want to love God more, start putting your treasure into His work.

12:35-36 *Let your waists be girded and the lamps burning; and you **be** like men who are waiting for their master, when he will return from the wedding feasts, so that when he has come and knocked, they may immediately open to him.*

Now Jesus turns to readiness for His return. "Let your waists be girded and the lamps burning." Men in that day wore long robes. To work or travel, they tucked the robe up into a belt so it would not get in the way. That was girding the waist. Lamps burning means staying awake at night, ready.

"Be like men who are waiting for their master, when he will return from the wedding feasts, so that when he has come and knocked, they may immediately open to him." A wedding feast could last for days, and no one knew exactly when the master would get home. Good servants stayed up and kept watch so they could open the door the moment he knocked.

12:37-38 *Blessed **are** those slaves whom the master, having come, will find watching. Truly I say to you that he will gird himself and have them recline **at table**, and having come up, he will serve them. And if he comes in the second watch, and comes in the third watch, and finds **them** so, blessed are those slaves.*

"Blessed are those slaves whom the master, having come, will find watching." Then Jesus says something amazing. The master "will gird himself and have them recline at table, and having come up, he will serve them." No master in that day would serve his slaves. Yet Jesus, the Master, will do just that. He did it once already when He washed His disciples' feet (John 13:4-5). And He will reward His faithful servants beyond anything they could imagine.

"If he comes in the second watch, and comes in the third watch." The night was divided into watches. Counting four watches, as the Romans did, the second and third were the dead of night, from about nine at night to three in the morning. Even if He comes late, blessed are those He finds ready.

12:39-40 *But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief is coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You also therefore be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."*

"If the master of the house had known in what hour the thief is coming, he would have watched." No thief tells you when he is coming. That is the point. "You also therefore be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

What does "be ready" mean? It means being right with God and living faithfully for Him now, not planning to get serious later. In context, Jesus is speaking of His coming as the Son of Man to set up His kingdom. That will happen when He returns visibly to the earth at the end of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 19:11-16). But Scripture also teaches that before the Tribulation, He will come for His church, to take believers to be with Him (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). No signs have to come first, and no one knows the day. That gives us all the more reason to live ready. Paul calls it "the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). Are you ready to meet Him today?

12:41 *Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You speaking this parable to us, or also to all?"*

"Lord, are You speaking this parable to us, or also to all?" Peter wanted to know if Jesus meant this for the twelve, as leaders, or for everyone. Jesus does not answer directly. Instead He tells another parable that speaks to anyone given responsibility in God's house, especially leaders, while the call to be ready is for all.

12:42-44 *And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager whom the master will set over his household servants, to give **them** the measure of grain in season? Blessed **is** that slave whom his master, having come, will find doing so. In truth I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions.*

"Who then is the faithful and wise manager whom the master will set over his household servants, to give them the measure of grain in season?" A manager was a slave put in charge of the other slaves, making sure they got their food on time. The picture fits pastors and teachers who feed God's people with His word (1 Peter 5:2-4). But it fits every believer who has been given something to look after for God.

"Blessed is that slave whom his master, having come, will find doing so." The blessing goes to the one found doing his job when the master arrives. His reward: "he will set him over all his possessions." Faithfulness now leads to greater responsibility in His kingdom (19:17).

12:45-46 *But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master delays to come,' and begins to beat the male servants and the female servants, and to eat and to drink and to get drunk, the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in two and will assign his portion with the unfaithful.*

But suppose "that slave says in his heart," "My master delays to come." He begins to beat the other servants and to get drunk. Then "the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect." This slave decided the master was not coming soon, so he could do as he pleased. Peter warned of scoffers in the last days who would say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Peter 3:3-4).

"And will cut him in two and will assign his portion with the unfaithful." This is a terrible end. The phrase "cut him in two" is a picture of severe punishment. His place is with "the unfaithful," those who never truly believed. His behavior showed that he never belonged to the master at all.

12:47-48 *And that slave who knew the will of his master and did not prepare nor do according to his will, will be beaten **with** many **blows**; but the one who did not know, and did things worthy of blows, will be beaten **with** few. And everyone to whom much was given, much will be required from him; and to whom they entrusted much, they will ask of him all the more.*

"That slave who knew the will of his master and did not prepare nor do according to his will, will be beaten with many blows; but the one who did not know, and did things worthy of blows, will be beaten with few." This teaches that there are degrees of punishment. God is just. Those who knew more will be held more responsible.

"Everyone to whom much was given, much will be required from him." This is one of the most quoted verses in Luke, and it is a sobering one. Most of us reading this have Bibles in our homes, churches on our streets and teaching at our fingertips. Much has been given to us. What are we doing with it?

12:49-50 *I came to cast fire into the earth, and what do I wish, if it has already been kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized **with**, and how I am distressed until it is accomplished!*

"I came to cast fire into the earth, and what do I wish, if it has already been kindled?" Fire in the Bible often pictures judgment and purifying. John the Baptist said Jesus would baptize "with the Holy Spirit and fire" (3:16). Jesus' coming forces people to decide, and that decision divides and refines.

"But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am distressed until it is accomplished!" This baptism is His death. He would be plunged into suffering and God's judgment against sin on the cross (Mark 10:38). Jesus felt the weight of it as He walked toward Jerusalem. He was "distressed," pressed in, until it was done. He was not looking forward to the pain. He was looking forward to finishing the work.

12:51-53 *Do you think that I have come to give peace on the earth? No, I say to you, but rather division. For from now on there will be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."*

"Do you think that I have come to give peace on the earth? No, I say to you, but rather division." Doesn't the Bible call Jesus the Prince of Peace? Yes (Isaiah 9:6). He gives peace with God to those who trust Him (Romans 5:1), and He will bring peace to the earth when He reigns. But His first coming also divides people, because some receive Him and some reject Him.

That division can run right through a family. "Father will be divided against son and son against father." Jesus is echoing Micah 7:6. Many believers know this pain firsthand. When one person in a family comes to Christ, others may turn against them. Jesus does not want division for its own sake. But He is worth following even when it costs us our family's approval.

Old Testament links: Micah 7:6 (alluded to)

12:54-55 *And He was also saying to the crowds, "When you see the cloud rising from **the** west, immediately you say, 'A rainstorm is coming,' and so it happens. And when **you see** a south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens.*

Now Jesus speaks to the crowds. "When you see the cloud rising from the west, immediately you say," the rain is on its way, and you are right. The west of Israel is the Mediterranean Sea, so clouds from the west meant rain. When they felt a south wind, they would say, "There will be scorching heat." Wind from the south came off the desert and brought heat. They could read the weather well.

12:56-57 *Hypocrites! You know **how** to discern the appearance of the sky and of the earth, but how is it that you do not discern this time? And why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is righteous?*

"Hypocrites! You know how to discern the appearance of the sky and of the earth, but how is it that you do not discern this time?" They could predict the weather, but they could not see that the Messiah was standing in front of them. The signs were plain: the miracles, the fulfilled prophecies, the preaching of John and Jesus.

"And why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is righteous?" They did not need a rabbi to tell them. They could see for themselves what was right if they were willing. Many people today can tell you everything about sports, stocks or politics, but they will not think about their own souls.

12:58-59 *For as you are going with your adversary before a ruler, on the way give effort to be released from him, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. I say to you, you will certainly not come out from there until you have paid even the last lepton."*

"As you are going with your adversary before a ruler, on the way give effort to be released from him." If someone is taking you to court and you know you are in the wrong, settle it on the way, before you get to the judge. Otherwise the judge will "hand you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison."

"You will certainly not come out from there until you have paid even the last lepton." A lepton was the smallest copper coin, worth almost nothing. The point is that you would pay every last cent. In context, the picture is of our case before God. We are on the way to the judgment, and we are guilty. Now is the time to be reconciled to God, while we are still on the road. After death, it will be too late (Hebrews 9:27). Paul says, "now is a day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Chapter 12 Summary

With thousands crowding around Him, Jesus warns His disciples against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, since everything hidden will be revealed. He tells them not to fear men who can only kill the body, but to fear God, who also cares for every sparrow and numbers the hairs of their heads. He promises that the Son of Man will confess those who confess Him, warns against

blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and promises the Spirit's help before rulers. When a man asks Him to divide an inheritance, Jesus warns against covetousness and tells of a rich fool who built bigger barns and died that night, rich for himself and not toward God. He tells His disciples not to worry about food or clothing but to seek God's kingdom and store up treasure in heaven, because where their treasure is, their heart will be. He calls them to be like servants ready for their master's return, since the Son of Man comes at an unexpected hour, and He warns that much will be required from those given much. He says He came to bring fire and division, and He urges the crowds to read the times and be reconciled before they come before the Judge.

Chapter 12 Study Questions

1. What did Jesus call the leaven of the Pharisees, and why is it foolish? (12:1-3)

2. Whom did Jesus say we should fear, and why do we not need to fear anything else? (12:4-7)

3. What did the rich man plan to do with his harvest, and what did God call him? (12:16-20)

4. What does it mean to be "rich toward God"? (12:21)

5. What reasons does Jesus give for not being anxious about food and clothing? (12:22-30)

6. What should we seek instead of things, and what does Jesus promise? (12:31-34)

7. How should servants act while they wait for their master, and what will the master do for those he finds watching? (12:35-40)

8. What does "everyone to whom much was given, much will be required from him" mean for you? (12:48)

9. What worry do you need to hand over to your Father this week? (12:22-32)

10. If Jesus came today, would He find you ready and faithful in what He has given you to do? (12:40-43)

Chapter 13: Repent, the Narrow Door, and Jerusalem

Scripture

13:1-9 Now some were present at that very time, reporting to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And answering, Jesus said to them, "Do you think that these Galileans were sinners beyond all the Galileans, because they have suffered such things? No, I say to you; but unless you repent, you will all perish likewise. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that these were debtors beyond all the men who dwell in Jerusalem? No, I say to you; but unless you repent, you will all perish likewise." Then He was speaking this parable: "A certain ***man*** had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and did not find ***any***. Then he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, ***for*** three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and do not find ***any***. Cut it down; why does it even use up the ground?' And answering, he says to him, 'Sir, leave it this year also, until I dig around it and put in manure; and if indeed it bears fruit—but if not, in the future you will cut it down.'"

13:10-21 Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And look, ***there*** was a woman having a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and she was bent over and was not able to straighten up completely. And having seen her, Jesus called ***her*** to ***Him*** and said to her, "Woman, you have been released from your infirmity." And He laid ***His*** hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she was glorifying God. But answering, the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, was saying to the crowd, "There are six days in which ***one*** must work; therefore coming on these, be healed, and not on the day of the Sabbath." Then the Lord answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or ***his*** donkey from the stall, and having led ***it*** away, give ***it*** drink? And this ***woman***, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, look, ten and eight years, was it not necessary ***for her*** to be untied from this bond on the day of the Sabbath?" And as He was saying these things, all those who were opposed to Him were being put to shame; and all the crowd was rejoicing at all the glorious things that were being done by Him. Then He was saying, "To what is the kingdom of God like? And to what will I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard, which a man, having taken, cast into his own garden; and it grew and became a great tree, and the birds of the sky nested in its branches." And again He said, "To what will I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman, having taken, hid in approximately 21 quarts (three seahs) of flour until all was leavened."

13:22-35 And He was going through towns and villages, teaching and making ***His*** way toward Jerusalem. Then someone said to Him, "Lord, are those who are being saved few?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. From whenever the master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us,' and answering, he will say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' And he will say, 'I say to you, I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from me, all ***you*** workers of unrighteousness.' There will be the weeping and the gnashing of the teeth there, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all

the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast outside. And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline in the kingdom of God. And look, there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last." On that same day certain Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Go out and proceed from here, because Herod wants to kill You." And He said to them, "Having gone, say to this fox, 'Look, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and on the third ***day*** I am perfected.' But I must proceed today and tomorrow and the ***day*** following, because it is not possible for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the ***one*** killing the prophets and stoning those sent to her! How often I was willing to gather your children together, the way a hen ***gathers*** her own brood under ***her*** wings, and you were not willing! Look, your house is left to you desolate. And truly I say to you that you will by no means see Me until ***the time*** comes when you say, 'Blessed ***is*** the ***One*** coming in ***the*** name of ***the*** Lord.'"

Chapter 13 Preview

Chapter 13 opens with two pieces of bad news. Pilate has killed some Galileans while they were offering sacrifices, and a tower in Siloam has fallen and killed eighteen people. Were these people worse sinners than everyone else? Jesus says no, and He turns the question on His hearers: "unless you repent, you will all perish likewise." He tells of a fig tree that bears no fruit, given one more year before it is cut down. God is patient, but His patience has a limit.

On a Sabbath, Jesus heals a woman who has been bent over for eighteen years, and an angry synagogue ruler scolds the crowd for coming to be healed on that day. Jesus calls him a hypocrite and tells two short parables about the kingdom: the mustard seed and the leaven. As He makes His way toward Jerusalem, someone asks if only a few will be saved. Jesus tells them to strive to enter through the narrow gate before the master of the house shuts the door. The chapter ends with a warning about Herod and Jesus' sorrowful words over Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and would not be gathered under His wings.

Chapter 13 Study

13:1 *Now some were present at that very time, reporting to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.*

"Some were present at that very time, reporting to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices." Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from about A.D. 26 to 36. He was known for being harsh and for not caring about Jewish feelings. Some Galileans had come to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, and Pilate's soldiers killed them right there in the temple area, so that their blood mixed with the blood of their animals.

We do not know this event from any other ancient writer, but it fits what we know of Pilate. The people who told Jesus may have wanted Him to speak against Rome. Or they may have thought these Galileans must have done something terrible to die that way.

13:2-3 *And answering, Jesus said to them, "Do you think that these Galileans were sinners beyond all the Galileans, because they have suffered such things? No, I say to you; but unless you repent, you will all perish likewise.*

Jesus knew what they were thinking. "Do you think that these Galileans were sinners beyond all the Galileans, because they have suffered such things?" Many people in that day believed that if something terrible happened to you, it was because you had sinned in a big way. Job's friends thought that way (Job 4:7). So did the disciples when they saw a man born blind (John 9:2).

"No, I say to you; but unless you repent, you will all perish likewise." Jesus does not explain why the tragedy happened. He turns it into a warning. The question is not why they died. The question is whether you are ready to die. To repent means to change your mind about sin and God, and to turn from sin to Him. Without repentance, every one of us will perish, not maybe in the same way, but just as surely.

13:4-5 *Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that these were debtors beyond all the men who dwell in Jerusalem? No, I say to you; but unless you repent, you will all perish likewise."*

Jesus brings up another tragedy, this one an accident. "Those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them." Siloam was an area in the south part of Jerusalem with a pool of the same name (John 9:7). A tower there collapsed. "Do you think that these were debtors beyond all the men who dwell in Jerusalem?" Debtors here means sinners, people who owe God a debt.

Again He says, "No, I say to you; but unless you repent, you will all perish likewise." One tragedy was caused by a cruel ruler, the other by a falling building. In both cases the people who died were no worse than anyone else. We all live in a fallen world, and death can come without warning. When we hear about a disaster on the news, the right response is not to judge the victims. It is to examine our own hearts. Have you repented?

13:6-7 *Then He was speaking this parable: "A certain **man** had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and did not find **any**. Then he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, **for** three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and do not find **any**. Cut it down; why does it even use up the ground?'*

"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and did not find any." Fig trees were often planted in vineyards in Israel. In the Old Testament, both the vine and the fig tree picture the nation of Israel (Hosea 9:10; Isaiah 5:1-7).

The owner said, "Look, for three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and do not find any. Cut it down; why does it even use up the ground?" A fig tree took time to start bearing. But three years of nothing meant something was wrong. It was taking up space and soaking up nutrients and giving nothing back. Some note that Jesus' public ministry had gone on about three years by this time. Whether or not Jesus meant that, the point is clear. God had looked for the fruit of repentance in Israel and had not found it.

13:8-9 *And answering, he says to him, 'Sir, leave it this year also, until I dig around it and put in manure; and if indeed it bears fruit—but if not, in the future you will cut it down.'"*

"Sir, leave it this year also, until I dig around it and put in manure." The vinedresser, the man who took care of the vineyard, asked for one more year. He would loosen the soil and fertilize it. He would give it every chance.

"And if indeed it bears fruit," good. But if not, the vinedresser tells the owner, "in the future you will cut it down." This is a picture of God's patience and of its limit. He waits, He works, He gives us time to repent (2 Peter 3:9). But the time will not last forever. For Israel, judgment came in A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. For each of us, the day will come when it is too late. If God has been patient with you, do not mistake His patience for approval. Use the time He gives you.

13:10-11 *Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And look, **there** was a woman having a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and she was bent over and was not able to straighten up completely.*

"He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath." This is the last time Luke shows Jesus teaching in a synagogue. The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week, Saturday, the day of rest God gave Israel in the law (Exodus 20:8-11).

"There was a woman having a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and she was bent over and was not able to straighten up completely." Infirmity means weakness or disease. Luke the doctor tells us she could not stand up straight at all. For eighteen years she had looked at the ground. Luke also says her trouble came from "a spirit," and Jesus will say Satan had bound her (13:16). Not every illness comes from a demon, but in her case it did.

13:12-13 *And having seen her, Jesus called **her** to **Him** and said to her, "Woman, you have been released from your infirmity." And He laid **His** hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she was glorifying God.*

"Having seen her, Jesus called her to Him." She did not ask for help. Jesus noticed her and called her. "Woman, you have been released from your infirmity." Then "He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she was glorifying God."

Can you picture it? After eighteen years she stood up straight and looked people in the eye. The first thing she did was praise God. Jesus sees the people others overlook, the ones bent over by burdens no one else notices. He sees you too.

13:14 *But answering, the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, was saying to the crowd, "There are six days in which **one** must work; therefore coming on these, be healed, and not on the day of the Sabbath."*

"The ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath." The ruler of the synagogue was the man in charge of the services. He did not dare speak to Jesus directly, so he

scolded the crowd. "There are six days in which one must work; therefore coming on these, be healed, and not on the day of the Sabbath."

His thinking was that healing was work, and work was forbidden on the Sabbath. But the law of Moses never said healing was work. That came from the tradition of the rabbis. A woman had just been set free after eighteen years, and all he could see was a broken rule. When our religion makes us angry about someone else's blessing, something is badly wrong.

Old Testament links: Exodus 20:9 (alluded to)

13:15-16 *Then the Lord answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or* ***his*** *donkey from the stall, and having led* ***it*** *away, give* ***it*** *drink? And this* ***woman****, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, look, ten and eight years, was it not necessary* ***for her*** *to be untied from this bond on the day of the Sabbath?"*

"Hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall, and having led it away, give it drink?" Even the strict rabbis allowed a farmer to lead his animals to water on the Sabbath. They would not let an animal suffer even one day of thirst.

"And this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, look, ten and eight years, was it not necessary for her to be untied from this bond on the day of the Sabbath?" A daughter of Abraham means she was a Jewish woman, part of God's covenant people. If you can untie an animal on the Sabbath, how much more should a daughter of Abraham be untied from Satan's chains? The Sabbath was the perfect day for her freedom. God gave the Sabbath as a day of rest and blessing (Mark 2:27).

13:17 *And as He was saying these things, all those who were opposed to Him were being put to shame; and all the crowd was rejoicing at all the glorious things that were being done by Him.*

"All those who were opposed to Him were being put to shame." They had no answer. "And all the crowd was rejoicing at all the glorious things that were being done by Him." The leaders were embarrassed, and the ordinary people were glad. That happened again and again in Jesus' ministry. Those who had the most to lose by His coming opposed Him most, and those who had the most need received Him gladly.

13:18-19 *Then He was saying, "To what is the kingdom of God like? And to what will I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard, which a man, having taken, cast into his own garden; and it grew and became a great tree, and the birds of the sky nested in its branches."*

"To what is the kingdom of God like?" Jesus gives two short parables. The first: "It is like a grain of mustard, which a man, having taken, cast into his own garden; and it grew and became a great tree." The mustard seed was very small, yet the plant could grow to ten feet or more in a season. "And the birds of the sky nested in its branches."

The kingdom started small, with Jesus and a few followers in a corner of the Roman Empire. Yet it would grow far beyond what anyone could imagine. Bible teachers read the birds in two ways. Many see them as people from all nations finding shelter in the kingdom (compare Ezekiel 17:23; Daniel 4:12). Others note that birds earlier picture the evil one snatching away the word (8:5, 12), and they see the tree as Christendom that grew large and gave room to evil within it. The main point either way is the surprising growth from a tiny beginning.

Old Testament links: Daniel 4:12 (alluded to); Ezekiel 31:6 (alluded to)

13:20-21 *And again He said, "To what will I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman, having taken, hid in approximately 21 quarts (three seahs) of flour until all was leavened."*

"To what will I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman, having taken, hid in approximately 21 quarts (three seahs) of flour until all was leavened." Three seahs was a large amount of flour, enough to make bread for a hundred people or more. A small bit of leaven works its way through all of it.

Many see this as a picture of the gospel quietly working its way through the world and through a life, changing everything from the inside. Others point out that leaven nearly always pictures sin in Scripture, as in 12:1, "the leaven of the Pharisees," and they read this as a warning about false teaching spreading through the professing church. Good Bible teachers hold both views. What both agree on is that something small and hidden ends up affecting the whole.

13:22 *And He was going through towns and villages, teaching and making **His** way toward Jerusalem.*

"And He was going through towns and villages, teaching and making His way toward Jerusalem." Luke reminds us where Jesus is headed. This journey began in 9:51. Every step brought Him closer to the cross, and He used every stop to teach.

13:23-24 *Then someone said to Him, "Lord, are those who are being saved few?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.*

"Then someone said to Him, Lord, are those who are being saved few?" This was a common question among the rabbis. Many Jews of that day believed nearly all Israel would be saved simply because they were Abraham's children.

Jesus did not answer the question directly. He made it personal. "Strive to enter through the narrow gate." The word strive is the Greek agonizomai, from which we get our word agonize. It means to struggle hard, like an athlete in a contest. Does this mean we earn salvation by effort? No. Salvation is a free gift of grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). But we must seriously enter in, turning from sin and trusting Christ, and not assume we are fine. The gate is narrow because there is only one way, through Jesus (John 10:9; 14:6). "For many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able." Many want to get in on their own terms, or wait too long.

13:25 *From whenever the master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us,' and answering, he will say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,'*

"From whenever the master of the house has risen up and shut the door." There comes a moment when the door closes. Those outside will knock, crying, "Lord, Lord, open to us." The master will answer, "I do not know you, where you are from."

The door is open today. One day it will close. For each person, it closes at death. For the world, it closes when the Lord comes in judgment. The worst words anyone could ever hear are "I do not know you." It is not enough to know about Jesus. He must know you as one of His own (John 10:14).

13:26-27 *then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' And he will say, 'I say to you, I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from me, all* ***you*** *workers of unrighteousness.'*

"Then you will begin to say," and what they say is this: "We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets." They will claim they were close to Him. They saw Him. They heard Him teach. They may even have gone to church every Sunday. But being near Jesus is not the same as belonging to Him.

"I say to you, I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from me, all you workers of unrighteousness." These words echo Psalm 6:8. A lifetime of being around the things of God will not save a person who never truly turned to Him. Jesus said much the same in Matthew 7:21-23.

Old Testament links: Psalm 6:8 (quoted)

13:28 *There will be the weeping and the gnashing of the teeth there, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast outside.*

"There will be the weeping and the gnashing of the teeth there." Weeping is sorrow. Gnashing of teeth is anger and anguish. Jesus uses this phrase for the misery of those shut out of God's kingdom forever.

They will "see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast outside." Those who thought they would surely be in, because they were Abraham's children, will see Abraham inside and themselves outside. Being born into a religious family does not save anyone. John the Baptist warned of the same thing (3:8).

13:29 *And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline in the kingdom of God.*

"And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline in the kingdom of God." People will come from all over the world to the great feast in the kingdom. This points to Gentiles, people from every nation, coming to faith and sitting at the table with

Abraham. Isaiah foresaw it (Isaiah 49:6; 25:6-8). Luke loves to show that the gospel is for all people.

13:30 *And look, there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last."*

"And look, there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last." Some who seemed to be first, the religious leaders and the people of Israel who had every advantage, would end up last. Some who seemed last, Gentiles and sinners and outcasts, would end up first. God does not rank people the way we do. Pride keeps people out. Humble faith brings people in.

13:31 *On that same day certain Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Go out and proceed from here, because Herod wants to kill You."*

"On that same day certain Pharisees came, saying to Him, Go out and proceed from here, because Herod wants to kill You." Herod Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea, where Jesus was traveling. He had already killed John the Baptist.

Were these Pharisees trying to help Jesus? Maybe some were. Not all Pharisees were against Him (Acts 5:34; John 3:1-2). But others may have wanted Him to hurry out of their area, or toward Jerusalem where the leaders could deal with Him. Scripture doesn't tell us their motive.

13:32 *And He said to them, "Having gone, say to this fox, 'Look, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and on the third **day** I am perfected.'*

"Having gone, say to this fox." A fox in that day was a picture of a sly, crafty, destructive person, and sometimes of someone small and insignificant. Jesus was not afraid of Herod. "Look, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I am perfected."

Today, tomorrow and the third day here mean a short time with a set end. Jesus is saying, I have work to do, and I will finish it on My Father's schedule, not Herod's. "I am perfected" means I reach My goal. His goal was the cross and the resurrection. No king could stop it or speed it up.

13:33 *But I must proceed today and tomorrow and the **day** following, because it is not possible for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem.*

"But I must proceed today and tomorrow and the day following, because it is not possible for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem." These words carry a sad irony. Jerusalem, the holy city, was where God's prophets were most often rejected and killed. Herod would not kill Jesus in Galilee. Jesus would die in Jerusalem, as His Father had planned.

Notice the word "must." Jesus was not running from Herod. He was running toward Jerusalem, on purpose, for us.

13:34 *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the **one** killing the prophets and stoning those sent to her! How often I was willing to gather your children together, the way a hen **gathers** her own brood under **her** wings, and you were not willing!*

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one killing the prophets and stoning those sent to her!" Jesus repeats the name, as He did with Martha (10:41). It is a cry of grief. The history of Jerusalem was a history of rejecting God's messengers (2 Chronicles 36:15-16).

"How often I was willing to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her own brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" A mother hen spreads her wings over her chicks to protect them from danger. That is how Jesus wanted to shelter His people. Look at the two wills in this verse: "I was willing" and "you were not willing." God does not force anyone to come to Him. Jesus wept over Jerusalem (19:41). His heart breaks over those who refuse Him.

13:35 *Look, your house is left to you desolate. And truly I say to you that you will by no means see Me until **the time** comes when you say, 'Blessed **is** the **One** coming in **the** name of **the** Lord.'"*

"Look, your house is left to you desolate." Their house may mean the temple, or the city, or the nation. Desolate means abandoned, empty. Without the Messiah, all they had would be left empty. In A.D. 70 the Romans destroyed the temple and the city.

"And truly I say to you that you will by no means see Me until the time comes when you say," and then He quotes the words, "Blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord." These words come from Psalm 118:26. The crowds would shout them when Jesus rode into Jerusalem (19:38). But the deeper fulfillment is still future. One day the nation of Israel will turn to Jesus as their Messiah and welcome Him. Zechariah says they will look on the One they pierced and mourn for Him (Zechariah 12:10). Paul says "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26). God is not finished with Israel. The door is not closed forever on the Jewish people. Christ will return, and they will receive Him with joy.

Old Testament links: Psalm 118:26 (quoted)

Chapter 13 Summary

When some tell Jesus about Galileans killed by Pilate, and He Himself mentions eighteen killed by the tower in Siloam, He says these people were not worse sinners than others, and He warns, "unless you repent, you will all perish likewise." He tells of a barren fig tree given one more year before it is cut down, a picture of God's patience and its limit. On a Sabbath He heals a woman bent over for eighteen years, and when the synagogue ruler objects, Jesus calls him a hypocrite, since they would untie an animal on the Sabbath but object to freeing a daughter of Abraham bound by Satan. He compares the kingdom to a mustard seed and to leaven. Asked if few are saved, He tells His hearers to strive to enter through the narrow gate before the door is shut, warning that many who ate and drank in His presence will hear, "I do not know you," while people from every direction will recline in the kingdom of God. Told that Herod wants to kill Him, Jesus says He will finish His work and die in Jerusalem, and He grieves over the city that would

not be gathered under His wings, promising that they will not see Him until they say, "Blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord."

Chapter 13 Study Questions

1. What two tragedies are mentioned at the start of the chapter? (13:1-4)

2. What did Jesus say about the people who died, and what warning did He give? (13:2-5)

3. What does the parable of the fig tree teach about God's patience? (13:6-9)

4. Why was the synagogue ruler angry, and how did Jesus answer him? (13:14-16)

5. What do the mustard seed and the leaven teach about the kingdom of God? (13:18-21)

6. How did Jesus answer the question, "Are those who are being saved few?" (13:23-24)

7. Why will some who "ate and drank" in His presence be shut out? (13:25-27)

8. What do Jesus' words over Jerusalem show about His heart, and what future hope do they hold for Israel? (13:34-35)

9. When you hear of a tragedy, how can it become a reminder to examine your own heart before God? (13:3, 5)

10. Are you sure that you have entered through the narrow gate, and that Jesus knows you as His own? (13:24-27)

Chapter 14: The Great Banquet and the Cost of Following

Scripture

14:1-14 And it came to pass, when He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a Sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching Him closely. And look, a certain man with dropsy was before Him. And answering, Jesus spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" But they were silent. And having taken hold ***of him***, He healed him and released ***him***. And answering them, He said, "Which of you, ***whose*** donkey or ox falls into a pit, will not also immediately pull it up on the day of the Sabbath?" And they were not able to reply to Him regarding these things. Then He was speaking a parable to those who had been invited, noticing how they were choosing the first places, saying to them, "When you are invited by someone to wedding feasts, do not recline in the first place, lest someone more honored than you has been invited by him, and having come, the one who invited you and him will say to you, 'Give ***your*** place to this ***man***,' and then you will begin with shame to occupy the last place. But when you are invited, having gone, recline in the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, come up higher.' Then you will have glory before those who recline with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." And He was also saying to the one who had invited Him, "When you make a dinner or a supper, do not call your friends nor your brothers nor your relatives nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and it becomes a repayment to you. But when you make a reception, call ***the*** poor, ***the*** crippled, ***the*** lame, ***the*** blind; and you will be blessed, because they do not have ***anything*** to repay you; for it will be repaid to you in the resurrection of the righteous."

14:15-24 Then one of those reclining with ***Him***, having heard these things, said to Him, "Blessed ***is he*** who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" But He said to him, "A certain man made a great supper and invited many; and at the hour of the supper he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, because all things are now ready.' And they all began with one ***accord*** to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I have need to go out and see it; I ask you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them; I ask you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and because of this I am not able to come.' And having come, that slave reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, having become angry, said to his slave, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and crippled and lame and blind.' And the slave said, 'Master, it has been done as you commanded, and there is still room.' And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and hedges and compel ***them*** to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I say to you that not one of those men who were invited will taste my supper.'"

14:25-35 Now great crowds were going along with Him; and having turned, He said to them, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and yes, even his own life, he is not able to be My disciple. And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me is not able to be My disciple. For which of you, wanting to build a tower, does not first, having sat down, count the cost, whether he has the ***means*** for completion? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see ***it*** may

begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to engage another king in war, does not, having sat down, first consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet the one coming against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while he is still far away, having sent a delegation, he asks the ***terms*** for peace. So therefore everyone of you who does not renounce all his own possessions is not able to be My disciple. Salt ***is*** good; but if the salt becomes tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? It is fit neither for soil nor for ***the*** manure heap; they cast it out. The one who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Chapter 14 Preview

Most of chapter 14 takes place at a dinner. On a Sabbath, Jesus goes to eat at the house of a leading Pharisee, and the guests watch Him closely. A man with dropsy is there, and Jesus heals him, then asks the lawyers and Pharisees which of them would not pull an ox out of a pit on the Sabbath. They have no answer. Watching the guests scramble for the best seats, He teaches them to take the lowest place, because "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled." He tells the host to invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind, people who cannot pay him back.

When a guest says how blessed it will be to eat bread in the kingdom of God, Jesus tells the parable of the great supper. The invited guests all make excuses, so the master fills his house with the poor and the outcasts from the streets and the roads. Then, out on the road with great crowds following Him, Jesus turns and tells them the cost of being His disciple. They must love Him above everyone, carry their own cross, and count the cost like a man building a tower or a king going to war. Salt that loses its taste is good for nothing.

Chapter 14 Study

14:1 *And it came to pass, when He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a Sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching Him closely.*

"When He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a Sabbath to eat bread." A ruler of the Pharisees was a leading man among them, perhaps a member of the Sanhedrin. A Sabbath meal was a special occasion. It was cooked the day before, since no cooking was done on the Sabbath, and guests were often invited after the synagogue service.

"They were watching Him closely." This was not friendly interest. They were spying on Him, waiting to see if He would break one of their rules. Jesus knew it, and He went anyway. He never refused to eat with anyone, whether tax collectors or Pharisees. Each one needed what He came to give.

14:2 *And look, a certain man with dropsy was before Him.*

"And look, a certain man with dropsy was before Him." Dropsy is an old word for a swelling of the body caused by fluid building up in the tissues. Today we would call it edema. It is often a sign of something serious, like heart or kidney failure. Luke the doctor is the only Gospel writer to record this healing.

Why was this sick man at a Pharisee's dinner? It is possible he was planted there to trap Jesus. Scripture does not say. Either way, he was "before Him," right in front of Jesus.

14:3-4 *And answering, Jesus spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" But they were silent. And having taken hold* ***of him****, He healed him and released* ***him****.*

"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Jesus asked the question before they could accuse Him. Lawful means allowed by the law of God. The law of Moses said nothing against healing on the Sabbath. Their traditions did.

"But they were silent." If they said yes, they would go against their own rules. If they said no, they would look heartless in front of a suffering man. So they said nothing. "And having taken hold of him, He healed him and released him." Jesus did not wait for their permission. He touched the man, healed him and sent him home.

14:5-6 *And answering them, He said, "Which of you,* ***whose*** *donkey or ox falls into a pit, will not also immediately pull it up on the day of the Sabbath?" And they were not able to reply to Him regarding these things.*

"Which of you, whose donkey or ox falls into a pit, will not also immediately pull it up on the day of the Sabbath?" Jesus appeals to what they already did. A farmer would not leave his animal in a well or a ditch to die until sundown. He would pull it out right away.

"And they were not able to reply to Him regarding these things." They had no answer. If an animal is worth rescuing on the Sabbath, how much more a man made in God's image? Their rules had made them care more about their property than about people. We should ask whether our own church habits ever do the same thing.

14:7 *Then He was speaking a parable to those who had been invited, noticing how they were choosing the first places, saying to them,*

"He was speaking a parable to those who had been invited, noticing how they were choosing the first places." At a formal meal, guests reclined on couches around a low table. The places nearest the host were the places of honor. Jesus watched the guests pushing and maneuvering to get the best seats. While they were watching Him, He was watching them.

14:8-9 *"When you are invited by someone to wedding feasts, do not recline in the first place, lest someone more honored than you has been invited by him, and having come, the one who invited you and him will say to you, 'Give* ***your*** *place to this* ***man****,' and then you will begin with shame to occupy the last place.*

"When you are invited by someone to wedding feasts, do not recline in the first place, lest someone more honored than you has been invited by him." If you grab the best seat and someone more important arrives, the host will have to say, "Give your place to this man." By then the other good places would be taken, and you would "begin with shame to occupy the last place."

Picture the walk of shame from the head table to the back of the room, with everyone watching. Pride sets us up for humiliation. Proverbs 25:6-7 gives this same advice.

Old Testament links: Proverbs 25:6 (alluded to); Proverbs 25:7 (alluded to)

14:10 *But when you are invited, having gone, recline in the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, come up higher.' Then you will have glory before those who recline with you.*

"When you are invited, having gone, recline in the last place." Then the host may come and say, "Friend, come up higher." Take the low seat, and let the host move you up if he chooses. "Then you will have glory before those who recline with you."

Is Jesus giving us a clever strategy to get honor in the end? No. He is teaching humility. True humility does not take the low seat hoping to be moved up. It takes the low seat because it does not need the high one. It leaves the honor to God.

Old Testament links: Proverbs 25:6-7 (alluded to)

14:11 *For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*

"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." This is the main lesson, and Jesus says it more than once (18:14; Matthew 23:12). It is a law of God's kingdom. God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

Jesus Himself is the best example. He humbled Himself all the way to death on a cross, and God highly exalted Him (Philippians 2:8-9). If the Son of God took the lowest place, how can we fight over the best seats, in church or anywhere else?

14:12 *And He was also saying to the one who had invited Him, "When you make a dinner or a supper, do not call your friends nor your brothers nor your relatives nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and it becomes a repayment to you.*

Now Jesus speaks to the host. "When you make a dinner or a supper, do not call your friends nor your brothers nor your relatives nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and it becomes a repayment to you."

Jesus is not saying it is a sin to have family and friends over for dinner. He is using strong contrast to make a point, as He often did. He is speaking to the way the world works: I invite you, you invite me, and we all keep score. That kind of hospitality is really just trading favors. It is not love. It is business.

14:13-14 *But when you make a reception, call **the** poor, **the** crippled, **the** lame, **the** blind; and you will be blessed, because they do not have **anything** to repay you; for it will be repaid to you in the resurrection of the righteous."*

"But when you make a reception, call the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind." These were people who were often left out. Some religious groups of that day even kept the crippled and blind out of their meetings. Jesus says invite them in.

"And you will be blessed, because they do not have anything to repay you; for it will be repaid to you in the resurrection of the righteous." When we give to those who cannot pay us back, God Himself becomes the one who repays. The resurrection of the righteous is the raising of believers, when God rewards His people (John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:4-6). Kindness that seems wasted now is never wasted in God's eyes. Who could you invite to your table who cannot pay you back?

14:15 *Then one of those reclining with **Him**, having heard these things, said to Him, "Blessed **is he** who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"*

"Blessed is he who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" One of the guests said this, maybe to break the tension, maybe because Jesus' mention of the resurrection made him think of the great kingdom feast. The Jews looked forward to a great banquet when Messiah came (Isaiah 25:6).

It sounded pious. But the man seemed to assume he would be at that table. Jesus answers with a parable that asks, Will you really be there?

14:16-17 *But He said to him, "A certain man made a great supper and invited many; and at the hour of the supper he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, because all things are now ready.'*

"A certain man made a great supper and invited many." In that culture, a host sent out invitations ahead of time. Guests accepted. Then, when the meal was ready, he sent a servant to tell them, "Come, because all things are now ready."

The invited guests had already said yes. To refuse at the last minute was a serious insult. In the parable, the master is God. The first invited guests are the people of Israel, especially their leaders, who had been told for centuries by the prophets that the feast was coming. Now the Messiah had come, and everything was ready.

14:18 *And they all began with one **accord** to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I have need to go out and see it; I ask you, have me excused.'*

"And they all began with one accord to make excuses." The first said, "I have bought a field, and I have need to go out and see it; I ask you, have me excused." Who buys a field without looking at it first? And a field would still be there tomorrow. It was a weak excuse.

That is how excuses for not coming to God usually are. They sound reasonable, but they do not hold up. The real reason is that we do not want to come.

14:19 *And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them; I ask you, have me excused.'*

Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them; I ask you, have me excused." A yoke of oxen was a pair. Five pairs meant he was a wealthy man with a big farm. Again, who buys ten oxen without trying them first? And he could test them another day.

His business came first. Many people today will not come to Christ, or will not serve Him, because their work and their possessions fill up all their time and attention.

14:20 *And another said, 'I have married a wife, and because of this I am not able to come.'*

A third said, "I have married a wife, and because of this I am not able to come." The law of Moses gave a newly married man a year off from military service (Deuteronomy 24:5). But it said nothing about skipping a dinner. He did not even ask to be excused. He just said he could not come.

Marriage is a gift from God. But even good things become a problem when we let them keep us from God. Notice the three excuses: possessions, work and family. None of them are bad things. But none of them are worth missing the feast.

14:21 *And having come, that slave reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, having become angry, said to his slave, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and crippled and lame and blind.'*

The slave reported all this, and "the master of the house, having become angry," sent him out. "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and crippled and lame and blind."

These are the same people Jesus told the host to invite (14:13). In the setting of Jesus' ministry, they picture the outcasts of Israel, the tax collectors and sinners who were coming to Jesus while the religious leaders refused Him. The ones who thought they did not need the invitation missed it. The ones who knew they did not deserve it came in.

14:22-23 *And the slave said, 'Master, it has been done as you commanded, and there is still room.' And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and hedges and compel **them** to come in, so that my house may be filled.*

"Master, it has been done as you commanded, and there is still room." God's house is big. There is always room for one more.

"Go out into the roads and hedges and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled." The roads and hedges were outside the city, the country lanes where travelers and vagrants were found. Many see this as a picture of the Gentiles, the nations beyond Israel, being invited (Acts 13:46-48). "Compel" does not mean force. In that culture, a poor stranger would politely refuse an invitation from a rich man, assuming it could not be real. The servant had to urge him, insist, almost take him by the arm. Sadly, church leaders in past centuries misused this verse to

justify forcing people to convert. That twists its meaning. We compel people with love and urgency, never with force.

14:24 *For I say to you that not one of those men who were invited will taste my supper.'"*

"For I say to you that not one of those men who were invited will taste my supper." Those who refused the invitation will not get another chance at that table. This is a sobering end to the parable. God's invitation is gracious, but it is not endless. The guest who said "Blessed is he who will eat bread in the kingdom" needed to hear this. Being invited is not the same as coming. Have you accepted God's invitation, or are you still making excuses?

14:25 *Now great crowds were going along with Him; and having turned, He said to them,*

"Now great crowds were going along with Him; and having turned, He said to them." Jesus was popular. Many were following Him on the road. But Jesus was not impressed by numbers. He turned around and spoke words that would thin the crowd. He wanted followers who knew what they were getting into.

14:26 *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and yes, even his own life, he is not able to be My disciple.*

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and yes, even his own life, he is not able to be My disciple." This is one of the hardest sayings of Jesus. Does He really want us to hate our families?

No. The same Bible tells us to honor our parents (Exodus 20:12) and to love our wives as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). Jesus uses the word hate here as a strong way of saying love less by comparison. Matthew records a similar saying: whoever loves father or mother more than Jesus is not worthy of Him (Matthew 10:37). The Hebrew way of speaking used love and hate to show which comes first (Genesis 29:30-31). Jesus is saying that our love for Him must be so great that, by comparison, every other love looks like hate. When family and Christ pull in different directions, Christ wins. A disciple is a learner and follower, one who puts himself under a teacher and lives as he lives.

14:27 *And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me is not able to be My disciple.*

"And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me is not able to be My disciple." Jesus said something like this in 9:23. A man carrying a cross was walking to his death. To carry your cross is to die to your own way, your own plans and your own pride, and to follow Jesus, whatever it costs.

Notice it is "his cross." Each of us has our own. For some it is rejection by family. For some it is giving up a career or a habit. For some it may be prison or death. Jesus does not ask us to carry His cross. He carried that for us. He asks us to carry ours.

14:28-30 *For which of you, wanting to build a tower, does not first, having sat down, count the cost, whether he has the **means** for completion? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see **it** may begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'*

"For which of you, wanting to build a tower, does not first, having sat down, count the cost?" A tower might be a watchtower in a vineyard or a farm building. A wise man figures out whether he can afford to finish it before he starts.

"Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish," people will laugh at him: "This man began to build and was not able to finish." Many of us have seen a half-built house with weeds growing up around it. Jesus is saying, Don't start following Me lightly and then quit. Think it through. Count the cost. The Christian life is not a sprint. It is a lifetime of building.

14:31-32 *Or what king, going to engage another king in war, does not, having sat down, first consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet the one coming against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while he is still far away, having sent a delegation, he asks the **terms** for peace.*

"What king, going to engage another king in war, does not, having sat down, first consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet the one coming against him with twenty thousand?" A wise king does not rush into a battle he cannot win. If he sees he is outnumbered, he will send "a delegation" and ask "for peace."

Some see in this second picture a further lesson. We are like the smaller king, and God is the one coming against us with overwhelming power. The wise thing is to seek peace with Him while there is still time. Either way, both stories teach the same main point. Think carefully before you commit. Following Jesus will cost you everything, and it is worth it.

14:33 *So therefore everyone of you who does not renounce all his own possessions is not able to be My disciple.*

"So therefore everyone of you who does not renounce all his own possessions is not able to be My disciple." To renounce means to say goodbye to, to let go of. Does every Christian have to sell everything? Not always in an outward way. Jesus did not ask Zacchaeus to give away all his money (19:8-9). But every disciple must give up ownership of everything. It all belongs to Jesus now. We are only managers of what He lets us use.

This is the bottom line of the cost of discipleship. Jesus does not want a corner of your life. He wants all of it. Has there been a time when you handed everything over to Him?

14:34-35 *Salt **is** good; but if the salt becomes tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? It is fit neither for soil nor for **the** manure heap; they cast it out. The one who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

"Salt is good; but if the salt becomes tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?" Salt was used to flavor food and to keep meat from spoiling. The salt in Israel often came from the Dead Sea area

and was mixed with other minerals. If the real salt washed out, what was left looked like salt but did nothing.

"It is fit neither for soil nor for the manure heap; they cast it out." A disciple who will not pay the cost is like salt that has lost its taste. He looks like a follower, but he makes no difference. "The one who has ears to hear, let him hear." Jesus calls everyone listening to think carefully about what He has said. Are you salty? Is your life making any difference for Christ in the world around you?

Chapter 14 Summary

At a Sabbath meal in the house of a leading Pharisee, while the guests watch Him closely, Jesus heals a man with dropsy and silences His critics by asking who would not rescue an ox from a pit on the Sabbath. Seeing the guests choose the best seats, He teaches them to take the lowest place, since everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and the one who humbles himself will be exalted. He tells the host to invite the poor, crippled, lame and blind, who cannot repay, and promises a reward at the resurrection of the righteous. When a guest speaks of eating bread in the kingdom of God, Jesus tells of a great supper where the invited guests all make excuses about a field, oxen and a wife, so the master brings in the poor and outcasts from the city and then from the roads and hedges, and none of those first invited taste his supper. Turning to the great crowds, Jesus says that anyone who would be His disciple must love Him above family and even life, carry his own cross, count the cost like a builder or a king, and renounce all his possessions. Salt that has lost its taste is thrown out.

Chapter 14 Study Questions

1. Why were the Pharisees watching Jesus, and what question did He ask them? (14:1-6)

2. What did Jesus teach about where to sit at a wedding feast, and what principle lies behind it? (14:8-11)

3. Whom did Jesus tell the host to invite, and why? (14:12-14)

4. What three excuses did the invited guests give, and what do they have in common? (14:18-20)

5. Whom did the master bring in after the first guests refused? (14:21-23)

6. What does Jesus mean when He says a disciple must "hate" his family and his own life? (14:26)

7. What do the stories of the tower and the king teach about following Jesus? (14:28-32)

8. Why is salt that has lost its taste good for nothing? (14:34-35)

9. Is there anyone you could invite to your table who could never pay you back? (14:13-14)

10. Have you counted the cost of following Jesus, and is there anything you are holding back from Him? (14:28, 33)

Chapter 15: Lost and Found

Scripture

15:1-10 Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were drawing near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling, saying, "This ***man*** receives sinners and eats with them." Then He spoke this parable to them, saying, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep and having lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that has been lost until he finds it? And having found ***it***, he lays ***it*** on his shoulders, rejoicing. And having come into the house, he calls together the friends and the neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that had been lost!' I say to you that in the same way there will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, rather than over ninety-nine righteous ***ones*** who have no need of repentance. Or what woman, having ten drachmas, if she loses one drachma, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek carefully until she finds ***it***? And having found ***it***, she calls together the friends and the neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the drachma that I lost!' In the same way, I say to you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

15:11-24 Then He said, "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to the father, 'Father, give me the portion of the property that falls ***to me***.' And he divided the livelihood between them. And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered all together, went away into a distant country, and there he squandered his property, living recklessly. But when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose throughout that country, and he began to be in need. And having gone, he joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one was giving ***anything*** to him. But having come to himself, he said, 'How many hired servants of my father have an abundance of bread, but I am perishing with hunger! Having risen up, I will go to my father and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants."' And having risen up, he went to his own father. But while he was still far distant, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and having run, he fell on his neck and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Bring out the best robe and clothe him, and give a ring for his hand and sandals for ***his*** feet; and having brought the fattened calf, kill ***it***, and having eaten, let us be merry; because this son of mine was dead and came to life again, and he was lost and was found.' And they began to be merry.

15:25-32 Now his elder son was in a field; and as he was coming, he drew near to the house ***and*** heard music and dancing. And having called one of the servants to ***him***, he was inquiring what these things might be. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back in good health.' But he became angry and was not willing to go in. Therefore his father, having come out, was pleading with him. But answering, he said to the father, 'Look, so many years I have been serving you, and I never transgressed a commandment of yours, and to me you never gave a young goat, so that I might be merry with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with prostitutes, you

killed the fattened calf for him.' And he said to him, 'Child, you are always with me, and all that ***is*** mine is yours. But it was necessary to be merry and to rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and came to life again, and was lost and was found.'"

Chapter 15 Preview

Chapter 15 may be the best-loved chapter in Luke. It begins with a complaint. Tax collectors and sinners are coming to hear Jesus, and the Pharisees and scribes grumble, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." Jesus answers with three stories, all about something lost and then found. A shepherd leaves ninety-nine sheep to find the one that wandered off. A woman sweeps her whole house to find one lost coin. And a father waits and watches for a son who has wasted everything in a far country.

Each story ends with a party. The shepherd, the woman and the father all call their friends to rejoice with them, and Jesus says there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. But the last story has a twist. The older brother, who never left home, refuses to come in to the celebration. The chapter ends with the father pleading with him, and we are never told if he went in. That open ending is aimed straight at the grumbling Pharisees, and at anyone today who thinks he is too good to need grace.

Chapter 15 Study

15:1 *Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were drawing near to Him to hear Him.*

"Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were drawing near to Him to hear Him." Tax collectors were Jews who collected taxes for Rome. They were known for charging more than they should and keeping the extra (3:12-13). Most Jews saw them as traitors and thieves. "Sinners" was a label for people who lived openly immoral lives or who did not keep the religious rules of the Pharisees.

These people were coming close to Jesus. Why? Because He did not look down on them. He told them the truth about their sin, but He also told them about God's love and forgiveness. They wanted to hear Him. Jesus had just said, "The one who has ears to hear, let him hear" (14:35). These were the ones with ears to hear.

15:2 *And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling, saying, "This **man** receives sinners and eats with them."*

"And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling, saying, This man receives sinners and eats with them." To grumble is to complain under your breath. It is the same word used of Israel grumbling in the wilderness (Exodus 16:2). They did not say His name. They said "this man," with contempt.

To receive someone and eat with them was a sign of acceptance and friendship. The Pharisees would not even touch a sinner, let alone share a meal. They meant it as an insult. But they spoke the gospel without knowing it. Jesus does receive sinners. If He did not, none of us would have any hope.

15:3 *Then He spoke this parable to them, saying,*

"Then He spoke this parable to them." Notice "this parable," singular, even though three stories follow. The three stories work together as one lesson. Each one builds on the last. The lost sheep is one out of a hundred. The lost coin is one out of ten. The lost son is one out of two. The stakes get higher each time. And all three answer the complaint in verse 2: why does Jesus receive sinners? Because God loves to find the lost.

15:4 *"What man of you, having a hundred sheep and having lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that has been lost until he finds it?*

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep and having lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that has been lost until he finds it?" Jesus speaks to the Pharisees as if they were shepherds. Sheep tend to wander off. They have no sense of direction, and a lost sheep is in real danger from wild animals and cliffs.

A hundred sheep was a good-sized flock for one man. Losing one might not seem like much. But a good shepherd does not shrug and settle for the ninety-nine he has left. He goes after the one. Notice the words "until he finds it." He does not give up. In the Old Testament, God is pictured as the Shepherd who seeks His lost sheep (Ezekiel 34:11-16). Jesus is that Shepherd (John 10:11).

Old Testament links: Ezekiel 34:16 (alluded to)

15:5 *And having found **it**, he lays **it** on his shoulders, rejoicing.*

"And having found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing." He does not scold the sheep or make it walk home. He carries it. A frightened, exhausted sheep would often lie down and refuse to move. The shepherd lifts it up and puts it across his shoulders.

That is what Jesus does for us. We cannot find our own way back to God. He comes to where we are, lifts us up, and carries us home. And He does it with joy, not with a sigh.

15:6 *And having come into the house, he calls together the friends and the neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that had been lost!'*

"Having come into the house, he calls together the friends and the neighbors." He tells them, "Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that had been lost!" His joy is too big to keep to himself. He throws a party.

Notice he calls it "my sheep." Even when it was lost, it still belonged to him. That is a picture of God's heart for those He seeks.

15:7 *I say to you that in the same way there will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, rather than over ninety-nine righteous **ones** who have no need of repentance.*

"I say to you that in the same way there will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, rather than over ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance." Here is the point. Heaven throws a party when a sinner repents.

Who are the "ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance"? Scripture is clear that no one is truly righteous on his own (Romans 3:10, 23). Jesus is speaking with gentle irony about the Pharisees, who thought of themselves as righteous and saw no need to repent (18:9). There is no joy in heaven over people who think they are fine without God. There is great joy over one sinner who turns to Him.

15:8 *Or what woman, having ten drachmas, if she loses one drachma, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek carefully until she finds **it**?*

"Or what woman, having ten drachmas, if she loses one drachma, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek carefully until she finds it?" A drachma was a Greek silver coin worth about a day's wage, like the Roman denarius. For a poor woman, ten drachmas could be her life savings. Some think the coins may have been part of a headdress, given at marriage, which would make them even more precious.

Houses in that day often had no windows and dirt floors. A small coin could easily get lost in the dust and straw. So she lights a lamp, sweeps every corner, and searches "carefully until she finds it." Luke often sets a story about a man beside a story about a woman. Here the God who seeks the lost is pictured by a woman searching her house.

15:9-10 *And having found **it**, she calls together the friends and the neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the drachma that I lost!' In the same way, I say to you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

"Having found it, she calls together the friends and the neighbors." She says, "Rejoice with me, because I have found the drachma that I lost!" Like the shepherd, she cannot keep her joy to herself.

"In the same way, I say to you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Notice it says "joy before the angels," joy in their presence. Many take this to mean that God Himself rejoices, with the angels watching. The angels surely rejoice too. But the One whose joy fills heaven is God. Think about that. When you came to Christ, the God of the universe rejoiced over you.

15:11-12 *Then He said, "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to the father, 'Father, give me the portion of the property that falls **to me**.' And he divided the livelihood between them.*

"A certain man had two sons." This third story is often called the parable of the prodigal son. Prodigal means wasteful. But the story is really about a father and two sons, and the father is the main character.

The younger son said, "Father, give me the portion of the property that falls to me." Under the law, the older son would get a double share (Deuteronomy 21:17), so the younger son's part would be one third. Normally a son received his inheritance when his father died. To ask for it now was like telling his father he wished he were dead, that he wanted his money and not him. It was a shocking insult. Yet the father "divided the livelihood between them." He let his son go.

God does the same. He does not force anyone to love Him. He lets us choose our own way, even when He knows it will hurt us.

15:13 *And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered all together, went away into a distant country, and there he squandered his property, living recklessly.*

"Not many days after, the younger son, having gathered all together, went away into a distant country." He sold off his share, turned it into cash, and left. He wanted to get as far away from his father as he could.

"And there he squandered his property, living recklessly." To squander is to waste, to scatter like seed thrown to the wind. Living recklessly means a wild, out of control life with no thought for tomorrow. His brother later says it was "with prostitutes" (15:30). Sin always promises freedom. It never tells you the bill comes due.

15:14 *But when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose throughout that country, and he began to be in need.*

"When he had spent everything, a severe famine arose throughout that country, and he began to be in need." His money ran out at the worst possible time. The friends who helped him spend it were gone. Now he was alone, broke, and hungry in a foreign land.

God sometimes lets us hit bottom. Not because He is cruel, but because sometimes it is the only way we will look up.

15:15-16 *And having gone, he joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one was giving* ***anything*** *to him.*

"He joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed pigs." For a Jew, this was as low as he could go. Pigs were unclean animals under the law (Leviticus 11:7). This was a Gentile country, and he was working for a Gentile, feeding unclean animals.

"He was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one was giving anything to him." These pods were likely the seed pods of the carob tree, used as animal feed. He was so hungry he envied the pigs. The son who wanted his freedom had become a slave. That is what sin does. It takes you further than you wanted to go, keeps you longer than you wanted to stay, and costs you more than you wanted to pay.

15:17 *But having come to himself, he said, 'How many hired servants of my father have an abundance of bread, but I am perishing with hunger!*

"But having come to himself." I love this phrase. It is as if he had been out of his mind and suddenly woke up. Sin is a kind of insanity. Repentance is coming to your senses.

"How many hired servants of my father have an abundance of bread, but I am perishing with hunger!" Hired servants were day laborers, the lowest workers on the farm. Even they had more than enough in his father's house. He began to remember what kind of man his father was.

15:18-19 *Having risen up, I will go to my father and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants."'*

"Having risen up, I will go to my father and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you." Heaven here is a reverent way to say God. He admits his sin was first against God, and also against his father. There are no excuses. He does not blame the famine or his friends or his brother.

"I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants." He planned to work off his debt. He thought the best he could hope for was a job. That is how many people think about coming back to God. They think they have to earn their way back. They do not yet know the father's heart.

15:20 *And having risen up, he went to his own father. But while he was still far distant, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and having run, he fell on his neck and kissed him.*

"And having risen up, he went to his own father." Repentance is not just feeling bad. It is getting up and going home. He turned his feelings into action.

"But while he was still far distant, his father saw him." How did the father see him so far away? Because he was looking. He had been watching the road, day after day. "And was moved with compassion, and having run, he fell on his neck and kissed him." In that culture, an older man of standing did not run. He would have to pick up his long robe and show his legs, which was thought to be undignified. This father did not care. He ran. He threw his arms around his son's neck and kissed him over and over, before the son could say a word.

This is the heart of God. He is not waiting with crossed arms for us to clean ourselves up. He runs to meet us.

15:21 *Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'*

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son." The son begins the speech he practiced. But notice what is missing. He never gets to the part about making him a hired servant. The father does not let him finish.

Confession is necessary. The son had to own his sin. But the father's love was greater than the son's plan. When we come to God honestly confessing our sin, He forgives us and cleanses us (1 John 1:9). We do not come back as hired hands. We come back as sons and daughters.

15:22 *But the father said to his slaves, 'Bring out the best robe and clothe him, and give a ring for his hand and sandals for **his** feet;*

"Bring out the best robe and clothe him, and give a ring for his hand and sandals for his feet." Each gift means something. The best robe was likely the father's own, a robe of honor. It covered the rags of the far country. The ring may have been a signet ring, which carried the family's authority. Sandals marked a free man. Slaves went barefoot.

The son came home smelling like pigs, and the father dressed him as an honored son. That is grace, God's undeserved favor. When we trust Christ, God clothes us in His righteousness (Isaiah 61:10; 2 Corinthians 5:21). He does not just forgive us. He restores us to the family.

15:23-24 *and having brought the fattened calf, kill **it**, and having eaten, let us be merry; because this son of mine was dead and came to life again, and he was lost and was found.' And they began to be merry.*

"Having brought the fattened calf, kill it, and having eaten, let us be merry." A fattened calf was saved for the biggest celebration. This would feed the whole village. The father wanted everyone to know his son was home and welcome.

"Because this son of mine was dead and came to life again, and he was lost and was found." Dead and alive, lost and found. This is the language of salvation. Paul says we were dead in our sins, and God made us alive with Christ (Ephesians 2:1, 4-5). "And they began to be merry." Here is the party again, as with the sheep and the coin. Notice the word "began." The story is not over yet.

15:25-26 *Now his elder son was in a field; and as he was coming, he drew near to the house **and** heard music and dancing. And having called one of the servants to **him**, he was inquiring what these things might be.*

"Now his elder son was in a field." The older son had been working, as he always did. As he came near the house, he "heard music and dancing." He called one of the servants and asked "what these things might be."

He did not go straight in to see. He stood outside and asked a servant. That already tells us something about his heart. He was a stranger in his own father's house.

15:27 *And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back in good health.'*

"Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back in good health." The servant says "your brother." Not your father's son, not the one who left, but "your brother." The servant's words were simple good news. Your brother is home and safe.

15:28 *But he became angry and was not willing to go in. Therefore his father, having come out, was pleading with him.*

"But he became angry and was not willing to go in." Here is the point of the whole chapter. The older brother is the Pharisees and scribes of verse 2. They were angry that Jesus welcomed sinners. They would not join the celebration.

"Therefore his father, having come out, was pleading with him." The father went out to the younger son on the road, and now he goes out to the older son in the yard. He loves both sons. He pleads with this one too. God is as patient with proud religious people as He is with wild sinners. Both need to come in.

15:29 *But answering, he said to the father, 'Look, so many years I have been serving you, and I never transgressed a commandment of yours, and to me you never gave a young goat, so that I might be merry with my friends;*

"Look, so many years I have been serving you, and I never transgressed a commandment of yours." Listen to how he sees his relationship with his father. The word for serving here is the word for working as a slave. He saw himself as a slave earning his keep, not as a son enjoying his father's love. "I never transgressed a commandment" is just what the Pharisees thought about themselves.

"And to me you never gave a young goat, so that I might be merry with my friends." A young goat was worth far less than a fattened calf. He felt cheated. Notice too that he wanted to celebrate "with my friends," not with his father. He was as far from his father's heart as his brother had been, even though he never left the farm.

15:30 *but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.'*

"But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him." He will not call him "my brother." He says "this son of yours." He brings up the worst sin he can think of, the prostitutes, something no one had mentioned before. Was he guessing? Had he heard? Either way, he wanted his brother's sin out in the open.

This is what self-righteousness sounds like. It keeps score. It remembers other people's sins in detail. It is angry when grace is given to someone who does not deserve it, forgetting that grace is never deserved.

15:31 *And he said to him, 'Child, you are always with me, and all that **is** mine is yours.*

"Child, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours." The father answers gently. He calls him "child," a word of affection. He does not scold him. He reminds him of what he has had all along: his father's presence and everything his father owns.

The older son never had to earn anything. It was his already. He could have had a party any day he wanted. He did not know what he had. Many people in church are like this. They have served for years, but they have never really enjoyed God as a loving Father.

15:32 *But it was necessary to be merry and to rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and came to life again, and was lost and was found.'"*

"But it was necessary to be merry and to rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and came to life again, and was lost and was found." The father uses the word "brother." He gently corrects him. This is not just "my son." He is "this brother of yours."

And then the story ends. We are never told whether the older brother went in. Jesus leaves the story open on purpose, because the Pharisees and scribes were standing right there. Would they come in and rejoice that God receives sinners? Or would they stay outside, angry, with their good works and their hard hearts? The story asks the same of us. Which son are you? Maybe you have been in the far country, and you need to come home. Maybe you have been in the father's house your whole life, and you need to come in to the joy. Either way, the Father is waiting, and He is pleading with you to come.

Chapter 15 Summary

When the Pharisees and scribes grumble that Jesus receives sinners and eats with them, He tells three stories of the lost being found. A shepherd leaves ninety-nine sheep to find the one that was lost and carries it home rejoicing, and there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. A woman lights a lamp and sweeps her house until she finds a lost coin, and there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. A younger son takes his inheritance, wastes it in a far country, and ends up feeding pigs; coming to himself, he goes home to confess, and his father runs to him, embraces him, and restores him with the best robe, a ring, sandals and a feast, because the son who was dead is alive and the lost is found. But the older son, who stayed home and served, is angry and will not go in, and the father comes out and pleads with him, reminding him that all he has is his and that it is right to rejoice over his brother. The story ends without telling us whether the older brother went in.

I have been the younger son. On May 29, 2020, my wife took me to my first 12-step meeting. She waited in the truck, and I went in drunk and sat there weeping, full of shame and brokenness. I could not pretend I had it under control anymore. Coming home starts the moment you stop hiding and let the Father run to you (Luke 15:20).

Chapter 15 Study Questions

1. Who was coming to Jesus, and what did the Pharisees and scribes complain about? (15:1-2)

2. What does the shepherd do when he loses one sheep, and how does he feel when he finds it? (15:4-6)

3. What does Jesus say happens in heaven when one sinner repents? (15:7, 10)

4. What did the younger son ask for, and what did he do with it? (15:12-13)

5. What brought the younger son to his senses, and what did he plan to say? (15:14-19)

6. How did the father respond when he saw his son coming home, and what did each gift mean? (15:20-24)

7. Why was the older son angry, and how did he describe his relationship with his father? (15:28-30)

8. Why do you think Jesus ended the story without telling us whether the older brother went in? (15:31-32)

9. Have you ever been like the younger son, or like the older son? Which one is closer to your heart today? (15:11-32)

10. Is there someone you have looked down on whom God may be welcoming home? How can you share the Father's joy? (15:2, 32)

Chapter 16: Faithful With Money: The Rich Man and Lazarus

Scripture

16:1-13 And He was also saying to His disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a manager, and this ***man*** was accused to him as squandering his possessions. And having called him, he said to him, 'What ***is*** this I hear about you? Give the account of your management, for you will not be able to manage any longer.' Then the manager said within himself, 'What shall I do, because my master is taking away the management from me? I am not able to dig; I am ashamed to beg. I know what I will do, so that when I have been removed from the management, they may receive me into their houses.' And having called to ***him*** each one of the debtors of his own master, he was saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' And he said, 'Approximately 600 gallons (a hundred baths) of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and having sat down quickly, write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And you, how much do you owe?' And he said, 'Approximately 600 bushels (a hundred kors) of wheat.' And he says to him, 'Take your bill and write eighty.' And the master praised the manager of unrighteousness because he had acted shrewdly; because the sons of this age are more shrewd than the sons of the light in their own generation. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when you fail, they may receive you into the eternal tents. The one ***who is*** faithful in very little is faithful also in much; and the one ***who is*** unrighteous in very little is unrighteous also in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true ***riches***? And if you have not been faithful in that which ***is*** another's, who will give you that which ***is*** your own? No household servant is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You are not able to serve God and wealth."

16:14-31 Now the Pharisees also, being lovers of money, were hearing all these things, and they were ridiculing Him. And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; because that which ***is*** exalted among men is an abomination before God. The law and the prophets ***were*** until John; from that time the kingdom of God is announced as good news, and everyone forces his way into it. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of the law to fall. Everyone who sends away his wife and marries another commits adultery; and everyone who marries her who has been sent away from a husband commits adultery. Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, making merry in splendor every day. And there was a certain poor man named Lazarus, who had been laid at his gate, covered with sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that were falling from the table of the rich man; but even the dogs, coming, were licking his sores. And it came to pass that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels into the bosom of Abraham; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades, having lifted up his eyes, being in torments, he sees Abraham from afar, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he, having called out, said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you received your good things in your lifetime, and Lazarus likewise the bad things; but now

he is comforted, and you are in anguish. And besides all these things, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to cross over from here to you may not be able, nor may those from there pass over to us.' And he said, 'Then I ask you, father, that you send him to the house of my father— for I have five brothers—so that he may testify thoroughly to them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' Abraham says to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from ***the*** dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from ***the*** dead.'"

Chapter 16 Preview

Chapter 16 is about money and what it shows about the heart. Jesus tells His disciples one of His most puzzling parables. A manager is about to be fired for wasting his master's goods, so he quickly cuts the bills of his master's debtors to make friends who will take him in. The master praises him, not for being dishonest, but for being shrewd. Jesus says the people of this world are often wiser about their future than God's people are about theirs. We should use money now in a way that counts for eternity, be faithful in little things, and remember that no one can serve God and wealth.

The Pharisees, who loved money, laugh at Him. Jesus tells them that God knows their hearts, that the law still stands, and that divorce and remarriage break God's design for marriage. Then He tells of a rich man who lived in luxury every day and a poor beggar named Lazarus who lay at his gate. Both die. Lazarus is carried by angels to Abraham's side, and the rich man is in torment in Hades. A great chasm is fixed between them, and no one can cross. The rich man begs for someone to warn his five brothers, but Abraham answers that they have Moses and the prophets. If they will not hear them, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.

Chapter 16 Study

16:1 *And He was also saying to His disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a manager, and this **man** was accused to him as squandering his possessions.*

"There was a certain rich man who had a manager." A manager, sometimes called a steward, was a trusted servant who ran his master's business affairs. He handled the money, collected the rents and made deals in his master's name. Wealthy landowners often lived far away and left everything in a manager's hands.

"And this man was accused to him as squandering his possessions." Squandering is the same word used of the younger son in 15:13. This manager was wasting his master's goods, through carelessness or dishonesty. The story right after the prodigal son is about another man who wasted what was not his.

16:2 *And having called him, he said to him, 'What **is** this I hear about you? Give the account of your management, for you will not be able to manage any longer.'*

"What is this I hear about you? Give the account of your management, for you will not be able to manage any longer." The master called him in and fired him on the spot. He had to turn in the books.

Every one of us is a manager in this sense. Our time, our money, our talents and our very lives belong to God. One day each of us will give an account to Him (Romans 14:12). The question is not whether we will be called in, but whether we will be ready when we are.

16:3-4 *Then the manager said within himself, 'What shall I do, because my master is taking away the management from me? I am not able to dig; I am ashamed to beg. I know what I will do, so that when I have been removed from the management, they may receive me into their houses.'*

The manager thought hard. "What shall I do, because my master is taking away the management from me? I am not able to dig; I am ashamed to beg." He was not strong enough for hard labor, and he was too proud to beg. He needed a plan, fast.

"I know what I will do, so that when I have been removed from the management, they may receive me into their houses." He would use the little time he had left in the job to make friends who would owe him a favor. He was thinking ahead. That is the one thing about him Jesus will point to.

16:5-7 *And having called to **him** each one of the debtors of his own master, he was saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' And he said, 'Approximately 600 gallons (a hundred baths) of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and having sat down quickly, write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And you, how much do you owe?' And he said, 'Approximately 600 bushels (a hundred kors) of wheat.' And he says to him, 'Take your bill and write eighty.'*

He called in his master's debtors one at a time. The first owed "a hundred baths" of oil. The SLB tells us this was about six hundred gallons, roughly the oil from a large olive grove. The manager said, "Take your bill, and having sat down quickly, write fifty." He cut the bill in half.

The next owed "a hundred kors" of wheat, about six hundred bushels, a large amount of grain. The manager said, "Take your bill and write eighty." Each debtor would be grateful and would owe the manager a favor. Scripture does not say whether he was cutting out his own commission, or the interest, or simply cheating his master. Bible teachers have suggested all three. Jesus calls him "the manager of unrighteousness" (16:8), so he was not an honest man either way.

16:8 *And the master praised the manager of unrighteousness because he had acted shrewdly; because the sons of this age are more shrewd than the sons of the light in their own generation.*

"And the master praised the manager of unrighteousness because he had acted shrewdly." This is the verse that puzzles people. Why would the master praise him? He did not praise his dishonesty. He praised his shrewdness. Shrewd means wise, sharp, thinking ahead about what

was coming. The master could not help but admire how cleverly the man had looked out for his future.

"Because the sons of this age are more shrewd than the sons of the light in their own generation." Sons of this age are people who live only for this world. Sons of the light are God's people (Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5). Jesus' point is sobering. Worldly people often plan more carefully for their next few years than believers do for eternity. Think of how hard people work at retirement plans, careers and investments. How much thought do we give to what will last forever?

16:9 *And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when you fail, they may receive you into the eternal tents.*

"And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when you fail, they may receive you into the eternal tents." The "wealth of unrighteousness" is money. Jesus calls it that because money belongs to this fallen world, and it so easily leads to sin. It is not evil in itself, but it is dangerous.

"When you fail" means when you die and your money can no longer help you. Jesus says to use money now to make friends for eternity. How? By giving to God's work and to people in need, so that people come to Christ and are helped in His name. Then, when we arrive in heaven, the eternal tents, there will be people there to welcome us, people we helped reach. We do not buy our way into heaven. That is by grace through faith alone. But we can use what we have now to make an eternal difference.

16:10 *The one **who is** faithful in very little is faithful also in much; and the one **who is** unrighteous in very little is unrighteous also in much.*

"The one who is faithful in very little is faithful also in much; and the one who is unrighteous in very little is unrighteous also in much." Character shows up in small things. A man who cheats on small things will cheat on big things when he gets the chance. A woman who is faithful with a little will be faithful with a lot.

How do you handle the change the cashier gave you by mistake? The hours on your time card? Your tax return? God watches the small things, because they show who we really are.

16:11-12 *If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true **riches**? And if you have not been faithful in that which **is** another's, who will give you that which **is** your own?*

"If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?" Money is the least of what God gives us. The true riches are spiritual: knowing God, serving Him, eternal reward. If we cannot be trusted with money, why would God trust us with more?

"And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" Everything we have on earth belongs to God. We are only borrowing it. If we are faithful

with what is His, He will give us what will be ours forever, our inheritance in His kingdom (1 Peter 1:4).

16:13 *No household servant is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You are not able to serve God and wealth."*

"No household servant is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other." A slave could not belong to two owners at the same time. Each would demand his full time and loyalty.

"You are not able to serve God and wealth." Some older Bibles use the word mammon here, from an Aramaic word for wealth or property. Money can become a master. It can tell us what to do, where to go and what to love. Jesus says you must choose. You can use money to serve God, but you cannot serve money and God. Which one is your master? Look at where your time, thoughts and worries go, and you will know.

16:14 *Now the Pharisees also, being lovers of money, were hearing all these things, and they were ridiculing Him.*

"Now the Pharisees also, being lovers of money, were hearing all these things, and they were ridiculing Him." The word ridiculing means to turn up the nose, to sneer. Many people in that day believed that wealth was a sign of God's blessing and approval. If you were rich, God must be pleased with you. So they laughed at Jesus' teaching about money.

Paul says the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10). Notice it is the love of money, not money itself. The Pharisees looked very religious, but their hearts were set on wealth. That is a warning for us. We can be faithful in church and still be in love with money.

16:15 *And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; because that which **is** exalted among men is an abomination before God.*

"You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts." They worked hard to look righteous in front of people. They could fool people. They could not fool God (1 Samuel 16:7).

"Because that which is exalted among men is an abomination before God." An abomination is something God finds disgusting. What the world praises, wealth, pride, status and self-made success, God often hates, because it comes from a heart that does not need Him. That should make us careful about what we admire and chase.

16:16 *The law and the prophets **were** until John; from that time the kingdom of God is announced as good news, and everyone forces his way into it.*

"The law and the prophets were until John; from that time the kingdom of God is announced as good news." The law and the prophets means the Old Testament. It looked ahead to the coming King. John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets, the one who pointed to Jesus and said, Here He is. Since then, the good news of the kingdom has been preached.

"And everyone forces his way into it." Bible teachers read this phrase in different ways. Some see it as people pressing eagerly into the kingdom, like the tax collectors and sinners who came to Jesus while the religious leaders stood back. Others see it as people trying to take the kingdom by force on their own terms, which no one can do. Both readings have support. Either way, the kingdom calls for wholehearted response, not casual interest.

16:17 *But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of the law to fall.*

"But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of the law to fall." A stroke is a tiny mark in a Hebrew letter, the little hook that tells one letter from another. Jesus is saying that the coming of the kingdom does not throw out God's law. Every word of it will stand until it is all fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-18).

The Pharisees thought Jesus was loose with the law. He was not. He was stricter than they were, because He went to the heart of it. The next verse is an example.

16:18 *Everyone who sends away his wife and marries another commits adultery; and everyone who marries her who has been sent away from a husband commits adultery.*

"Everyone who sends away his wife and marries another commits adultery; and everyone who marries her who has been sent away from a husband commits adultery." To send away a wife means to divorce her. In Jesus' day, some rabbis taught that a man could divorce his wife for almost any reason. Jesus says that marriage is a lifelong bond, and that divorcing one spouse to marry another breaks God's law.

Why does this verse appear here, in a chapter about money? Perhaps because the Pharisees, who claimed to keep the law, were breaking it by their easy divorces, just as they broke it by their love of money. They justified themselves before men, but God knew their hearts. Luke gives this one verse with no exception, as Mark does (Mark 10:11-12). Matthew records an exception "for sexual immorality" (Matthew 5:32; 19:9), and Paul speaks of an unbelieving spouse who leaves (1 Corinthians 7:15). Good Bible teachers read these passages in different ways. Many believe the innocent spouse may divorce and remarry after sexual unfaithfulness or desertion. Others believe separation may be allowed but not remarriage while the former spouse lives. Others limit Matthew's exception to the betrothal period or to marriages the law forbade. I will not settle that debate here. What all agree on is that God's plan is one man and one woman for life, and that divorce is never something to take lightly.

And let me add a pastoral word. If you have been through divorce, this verse is not meant to crush you. Divorce is not the unforgivable sin. There is forgiveness and a new start in Christ for anyone who comes to Him. Seek godly counsel from your pastor and walk forward in obedience from here.

16:19 *Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, making merry in splendor every day.*

"Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, making merry in splendor every day." Purple dye was very expensive, made from shellfish, and worn by kings and

the very wealthy. Fine linen was used for the best undergarments. This man dressed like royalty and partied every day. He is not named. Some traditions call him Dives, which is simply the Latin word for rich man.

Jesus has just told the Pharisees, who loved money, that God knows their hearts. Now He shows them where a life lived for money ends up.

16:20-21 *And there was a certain poor man named Lazarus, who had been laid at his gate, covered with sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that were falling from the table of the rich man; but even the dogs, coming, were licking his sores.*

"And there was a certain poor man named Lazarus, who had been laid at his gate, covered with sores." He was "laid" there, which suggests he could not walk. Someone carried him to the rich man's gate every day, hoping for help. Lazarus is the only person in any of Jesus' stories to be given a name. It comes from the Hebrew name Eleazar, which means God helps. He is not the Lazarus of John 11.

He was "desiring to be fed with the crumbs that were falling from the table of the rich man." In that day, wealthy people wiped their hands on pieces of bread and tossed them under the table. Lazarus would have been glad for those scraps. "But even the dogs, coming, were licking his sores." These were not pets. They were wild street dogs, unclean animals. The dogs paid more attention to Lazarus than the rich man did.

The rich man's sin was not that he was rich. It was that he lived every day in luxury with a dying man at his door, and did nothing. He did not even see him.

16:22 *And it came to pass that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels into the bosom of Abraham; and the rich man also died and was buried.*

"It came to pass that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels into the bosom of Abraham." Lazarus probably had no funeral. Nobody cared about him in this life. But angels came for him. God cared.

"The bosom of Abraham" means Abraham's side, the place of honor next to him at a feast, like John reclining next to Jesus (John 13:23). The Jews used this phrase for the place of rest and comfort for the righteous dead. Was Lazarus saved because he was poor? No. No one is saved by being poor, any more than anyone is lost by being rich. Abraham himself was very rich. Lazarus' name, God helps, may point to the fact that he trusted God when no one else would help him.

"And the rich man also died and was buried." He likely had a grand funeral. But that is all Jesus says. His wealth could not go with him.

16:23 *And in Hades, having lifted up his eyes, being in torments, he sees Abraham from afar, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

"And in Hades, having lifted up his eyes, being in torments, he sees Abraham from afar, and Lazarus in his bosom." Hades is the Greek word for the place of the dead, like the Hebrew word Sheol in the Old Testament. Here it is a place of torment for the rich man.

Many Bible teachers believe that before the cross, Hades had two parts: a place of comfort for the righteous, called Abraham's bosom or paradise (23:43), and a place of torment for the wicked, with a great gulf between them. They teach that when Christ rose and ascended, He brought the righteous dead into heaven (Ephesians 4:8-10), so that today believers who die go straight to be with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23). Others read the passage more simply: Lazarus is with God in heaven, and the rich man is in the place of punishment, seen across a great distance. Scripture does not give us a map. What is clear is that the rich man is in torment, and Lazarus is comforted.

16:24 *And he, having called out, said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this flame.'*

"Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this flame." The rich man still thinks of Lazarus as a servant to be sent on errands. He never asked for help when Lazarus was at his gate. Now he begs for a single drop of water.

He calls Abraham father. He was a Jew, a descendant of Abraham. But being born into God's people did not save him. John the Baptist warned of this very thing (3:8). Notice too what he feels. He can see, he can speak, he can remember, he can feel pain. "I am in anguish in this flame." This is not a picture of sleep or of being wiped out. It is real, conscious suffering.

16:25 *But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you received your good things in your lifetime, and Lazarus likewise the bad things; but now he is comforted, and you are in anguish.*

"Child, remember that you received your good things in your lifetime, and Lazarus likewise the bad things; but now he is comforted, and you are in anguish." Abraham calls him child. There is no cruelty in his voice. But the answer is no.

"Remember." Memory goes with us after death. The rich man would remember every chance he had and every day he walked past Lazarus. He had chosen to have his good things in this life. He lived for himself and for now. Now the tables are turned. Jesus said something like this in the Sermon on the Plain: woe to the rich, for they have already received their comfort (6:24).

16:26 *And besides all these things, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to cross over from here to you may not be able, nor may those from there pass over to us.'*

"And besides all these things, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to cross over from here to you may not be able, nor may those from there pass over to us." The word fixed means set in place, permanent. No one can cross from one side to the other.

This is one of the clearest teachings in the passage. After death, there is no second chance. Each person's destiny is settled, and it cannot be changed. There is no purgatory where we can work our way up, and no visits from the other side. The book of Hebrews says it plainly: it is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Now is the time to be sure.

16:27-28 *And he said, 'Then I ask you, father, that you send him to the house of my father— for I have five brothers—so that he may testify thoroughly to them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'*

"Then I ask you, father, that you send him to the house of my father." The rich man thinks of his family. "For I have five brothers." He wants Lazarus sent "so that he may testify thoroughly to them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

It is good that he cared about his brothers. But there may be a hint of blame in his request, as if to say, If someone had warned me, I would not be here. He still wanted Lazarus to be his errand boy. And he still thought something more than God's word was needed.

16:29 *Abraham says to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'*

"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Moses and the prophets means the Old Testament Scriptures. They were enough to warn his brothers. The law of Moses commanded care for the poor (Deuteronomy 15:7-11). The prophets thundered against the rich who ignored the needy (Amos 6:4-7). The brothers had all they needed. They just needed to listen.

We have even more. We have the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments. God's word is enough to lead us to salvation (2 Timothy 3:15).

16:30 *And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from* ***the*** *dead, they will repent.'*

"No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." The rich man argues with Abraham. He thinks a miracle would do what Scripture could not. Surely a visit from the dead would shock them into changing their ways.

Many people today think the same way. If God would just show me a sign, then I would believe. But faith does not come from spectacular signs. It comes from hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17).

16:31 *But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from **the** dead.'"*

"If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead." This is the final word of the story, and it came true. Jesus would soon rise from the dead, and most of the leaders still would not believe. In fact, when Jesus raised a real man named Lazarus from the dead, the chief priests planned to kill Lazarus too (John 12:9-11). The problem is not a lack of evidence. It is a heart that will not listen.

Is this story a parable or a true account? Good Bible teachers hold both views. Many say it is a parable, since Luke has been giving parables all through this section, and it begins much like the parable in 16:1 with "a certain rich man." Others say it is a true account, because Jesus gives a real name, Lazarus, which He never does in a parable, and He speaks of Abraham, a real person. Either way, Jesus does not teach false things about life after death, even in a story. What this passage teaches is clear. We go on existing after we die, fully aware. There are only two destinies, comfort with God or torment apart from Him. Those destinies are fixed at death and cannot be changed. And God's word is enough to warn us. The question for each of us is the same as it was for the five brothers: will you listen to God's word while you still have time?

Chapter 16 Summary

Jesus tells His disciples of a dishonest manager who, about to lose his job, cuts the bills of his master's debtors to make friends for his future, and the master praises him for acting shrewdly. Jesus teaches that the people of this world often plan for the future better than the people of light, and He tells His followers to use money to make friends for eternity, to be faithful in little things, and to remember that no one can serve God and wealth. When the money-loving Pharisees sneer, He tells them God knows their hearts, that the law will not fail, and that divorcing one spouse to marry another is adultery. Then He tells of a rich man who lived in luxury while Lazarus, a poor man covered with sores, lay at his gate. Lazarus dies and is carried by angels to Abraham's side; the rich man dies and is in torment in Hades. Abraham tells him that a great chasm is fixed between them, and that his five brothers have Moses and the prophets. If they will not hear them, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.

Chapter 16 Study Questions

1. What was the manager accused of, and what did he do when he learned he was losing his job? (16:1-7)

2. Why did the master praise the dishonest manager? (16:8)

3. What does Jesus mean by making friends "by the wealth of unrighteousness"? (16:9)

4. What does Jesus say about being faithful in very little? (16:10-12)

5. Why can no one serve God and wealth? (16:13-14)

6. How did the rich man and Lazarus live, and where did each one go after death? (16:19-23)

7. What does this passage teach about life after death and whether a person can cross over after death? (16:24-26)

8. Why did Abraham refuse to send Lazarus to warn the five brothers? (16:29-31)

9. Who is at your gate, someone in need you may be walking past without seeing? (16:20-21)

10. Is money your servant or your master? What is one way you can use it this month to make an eternal difference? (16:9, 13)

Chapter 17: Faith, Thanks, and the Coming Kingdom

Scripture

17:1-10 And He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that the stumbling blocks should not come, but woe ***to him*** through whom they come! It is better for him if a donkey's millstone is hung around his neck and he has been thrown into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble. Take heed to yourselves. Now if your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in the day, and seven times in the day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you will forgive him." And the apostles said to the Lord, "Add faith to us!" And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. Now which of you, having a slave plowing or shepherding, who will say to him when he has come in out of the field, 'Having come immediately, recline ***at table***'? But will he not say to him, 'Prepare what I may dine on, and having girded yourself, serve me until I eat and drink; and after these things you will eat and drink'? Does he have thanks for that slave because he did the things commanded him? I think not. So you also, when you have done all the things commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves, for we have done what we were obligated to do.'"

17:11-19 And it came to pass, in His going to Jerusalem, that He was passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as He was entering into a certain village, ten leprous men met Him, who stood far off. And they lifted up ***their*** voice, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" And having seen ***them***, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And it came to pass, in their going, they were cleansed. And one of them, having seen that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on ***his*** face at His feet, giving thanks to Him; and he was a Samaritan. And answering, Jesus said, "Were not the ten cleansed? But the nine, where ***are they***? Were none found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Rise up and go; your faith has saved you."

17:20-37 Now having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God is coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with careful observation; nor will they say, 'Look, here!' or, 'Look, there!' For look, the kingdom of God is within you." And He said to the disciples, "Days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see ***it***. And they will say to you, 'Look, here!' or, 'Look, there!' Do not go away, nor pursue ***them***. For just as the lightning that flashes out of the ***one part*** under heaven shines to the ***other part*** under heaven, so also will the Son of Man be in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And just as it came to pass in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed all. Likewise also, as it came to pass in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven and destroyed all. According to these things it will be in the day the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, the one who will be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and the one in the field likewise, let him not turn back to the things behind. Remember the wife of

Lot. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses it will preserve it alive. I say to you, in this night there will be two ***men*** on one bed: the one will be taken, and the other will be left. Two ***women*** will be grinding at the same ***place***: the one will be taken, and the other will be left. Two ***men*** will be in the field: the one will be taken, and the other will be left." And answering, they say to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body ***is***, there the vultures will be gathered together."

Chapter 17 Preview

Jesus is still on the road to Jerusalem, and in this chapter He teaches His disciples how to live with one another and with God. He warns them about causing others to stumble, tells them to forgive a brother who repents, even seven times in a day, and answers their cry, "Add faith to us!" with a lesson about a mustard seed and a mulberry tree. Then He reminds them that servants who do their duty have not earned special praise. They have only done what they owed.

On the border between Samaria and Galilee, ten lepers cry out for mercy, and all ten are cleansed. Only one comes back to thank Him, and he is a Samaritan. Then the Pharisees ask when the kingdom of God is coming, and Jesus tells His disciples about the days of the Son of Man. His coming will be as plain as lightning and as sudden as the flood in Noah's day and the fire on Sodom. People will be going about their normal lives, and then it will be too late. "Remember the wife of Lot."

Chapter 17 Study

17:1-2 *And He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that the stumbling blocks should not come, but woe **to him** through whom they come! It is better for him if a donkey's millstone is hung around his neck and he has been thrown into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble.*

"It is impossible that the stumbling blocks should not come." A stumbling block is anything that trips a person up and makes him fall into sin or turn away from God. In a fallen world, people will be tripped up. Jesus says that is certain. "But woe to him through whom they come!" Woe is a word of sorrow and judgment together.

"It is better for him if a donkey's millstone is hung around his neck and he has been thrown into the sea." A donkey's millstone was the big upper stone of a grinding mill, so heavy that an animal had to turn it. Jesus says drowning with one of those around your neck would be better than what waits for the one who causes "one of these little ones to stumble."

Who are the little ones? It may mean children, but in context it also means new or weak believers, the tax collectors and sinners who had been coming to Jesus (15:1-2). Leading someone young in the faith into sin, or pushing them away from Christ by our example, is a serious thing. God takes it personally.

17:3 *Take heed to yourselves. Now if your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.*

"Take heed to yourselves." Before we worry about what others do, we need to watch ourselves.

Then Jesus speaks to a hard situation. "Now if your brother sins against you, rebuke him." To rebuke means to tell him plainly that what he did was wrong. Jesus does not tell us to ignore sin or to stew about it in silence. Going to the person is part of love (Matthew 18:15).

"And if he repents, forgive him." To repent means to change your mind about your sin and turn from it. When a brother owns what he did and turns from it, we must forgive. We are not to hold it over him or keep a record of it. That is how God treats us when we confess (1 John 1:9).

17:4 *And if he sins against you seven times in the day, and seven times in the day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you will forgive him."*

"And if he sins against you seven times in the day, and seven times in the day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you will forgive him."

Seven times in one day! By the fourth time, most of us would be ready to say that he does not really mean it. But Jesus says to keep forgiving. The number seven here is not a limit. It is a way of saying, every time. Peter later asked about forgiving seven times, and Jesus said seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21-22).

Why should we forgive like that? Because we have been forgiven far more. Each of us has come back to God again and again over the same sins, and He has not turned us away. Forgiving does not mean we trust a person with everything right away, and it does not mean there are no consequences. It means we let go of the debt and do not take revenge.

17:5 *And the apostles said to the Lord, "Add faith to us!"*

The apostles said to the Lord, "Add faith to us!" An apostle is one sent out with a message, and here Luke means the twelve. Notice what made them ask. It was not a hard miracle. It was the command to forgive. They knew they could not do that on their own.

That is an honest prayer. When God's commands look too big for us, the answer is not to lower the commands. It is to ask Him for more faith.

17:6 *And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.*

"If you had faith like a grain of mustard." The mustard seed was the smallest seed farmers in Israel planted (13:19). Jesus' point is that the size of your faith is not the main thing. The size of your God is.

"You would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you." The mulberry tree had deep roots and was known for being very hard to dig out. A tree growing in the sea is something no one has ever seen. Jesus uses a picture of the impossible on

purpose. Faith, even small faith, in a great God can do what looks impossible. And in this setting, one of the deep-rooted things that needs pulling up is the bitterness in our own hearts toward someone who wronged us.

This verse is not a promise that we can order nature around for our own wishes. Faith trusts God and does His will. When God commands something, faith in Him can do it.

17:7-9 *Now which of you, having a slave plowing or shepherding, who will say to him when he has come in out of the field, 'Having come immediately, recline* ***at table****'? But will he not say to him, 'Prepare what I may dine on, and having girded yourself, serve me until I eat and drink; and after these things you will eat and drink'? Does he have thanks for that slave because he did the things commanded him? I think not.*

Jesus tells a short parable about a slave. In that day, a slave on a small farm might plow in the field all day and then come in and cook for his master. Would the master say, "Having come immediately, recline at table"? No. He would say, "Prepare what I may dine on," and serve me first, "and after these things you will eat and drink."

"Does he have thanks for that slave because he did the things commanded him? I think not." The slave was only doing his job. He did not earn a special reward by doing it.

This sounds harsh to modern ears, but Jesus is not telling us how masters should treat workers. He is using the way things worked in that day to teach a lesson about our relationship to God.

17:10 *So you also, when you have done all the things commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves, for we have done what we were obligated to do.'"*

"So you also, when you have done all the things commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves, for we have done what we were obligated to do.'"

Here is the point. The apostles had just asked for more faith. Maybe they were thinking that if they could do great things by faith, God would owe them something. Jesus says no. Even our best obedience does not put God in our debt. We owe Him everything already.

This guards us against pride. It is easy to start thinking about all we have done for God. But obedience is simply what a servant owes his Lord. And here is the wonder of grace: this same Lord, in another parable, says that when He comes back He will gird Himself and serve His faithful servants at His own table (12:37). We do not earn it. He gives it.

17:11 *And it came to pass, in His going to Jerusalem, that He was passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.*

"And it came to pass, in His going to Jerusalem, that He was passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee." Luke reminds us again that Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem, where He will die (9:51).

He was traveling along the border between Samaria and Galilee. Galilee was the northern region where Jesus grew up, and Samaria lay just south of it. The Jews and Samaritans had hated each

other for centuries. The Samaritans were descended from Israelites who had mixed with foreign peoples after the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom (2 Kings 17:24-41), and they worshiped on their own mountain instead of in Jerusalem (John 4:20). A border road was a place where both kinds of people might be found.

17:12-13 *And as He was entering into a certain village, ten leprous men met Him, who stood far off. And they lifted up **their** voice, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"*

"As He was entering into a certain village, ten leprous men met Him, who stood far off." Leprosy in the Bible covered a range of serious skin diseases. The Law of Moses said a person with leprosy was unclean and had to live outside the camp, cry out "Unclean!" and keep away from others (Leviticus 13:45-46). These ten "stood far off" because they had to.

Notice that sickness had broken down the wall between Jews and Samaritans. These men were together because no one else would have them.

They lifted up their voice, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" They called Him by name, and they called Him Master, a word for someone in charge. They did not ask for money, which is what most beggars asked for. They asked for mercy. That is the right prayer for every sinner too.

17:14 *And having seen **them**, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And it came to pass, in their going, they were cleansed.*

Having seen them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." Under the Law, a priest was the one who examined a leper and declared him clean if he had been healed (Leviticus 14:1-32). Jesus sent them before anything had happened. Their skin was still sick when they started walking.

"And it came to pass, in their going, they were cleansed." Their faith was shown in obedience. They took Jesus at His word and started for the priests, and on the way they were healed. Sometimes God asks us to step out in obedience before we can see the answer.

Old Testament links: Leviticus 14:2 (alluded to)

17:15-16 *And one of them, having seen that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on **his** face at His feet, giving thanks to Him; and he was a Samaritan.*

"And one of them, having seen that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice." The same loud voice that had cried for mercy now shouted praise.

"He fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him." He did not just say thank you from a distance. He came close, now that he could, and bowed down at Jesus' feet. Then Luke adds the surprise: "and he was a Samaritan."

The one man the Jews would have looked down on was the only one who came back. Luke loves to show this. The outsider often sees what the insider misses (10:33).

17:17-18 *And answering, Jesus said, "Were not the ten cleansed? But the nine, where **are they**? Were none found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?"*

"Were not the ten cleansed? But the nine, where are they?" Jesus asks three questions in a row, and you can hear the sorrow in them. All ten were healed. Nine went on their way.

Maybe they were eager to see the priests and get their lives back. Maybe they meant to come back later. Scripture does not tell us. But they never returned to give thanks.

"Were none found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" A foreigner is someone from another people. The man Israel would have called an outsider was the one who gave God glory.

Let me ask you: how often are we like the nine? We pray hard when we are in trouble. God answers. And then we forget to come back and thank Him. Thankfulness is not a small thing to God. Romans 1:21 says one mark of a heart turning away from God is that people did not give thanks.

17:19 *And He said to him, "Rise up and go; your faith has saved you."*

"Rise up and go; your faith has saved you." All ten were cleansed in body. But to this one man Jesus said something more. The word for saved can mean made well, and it also means rescued and saved. Jesus uses the same words for the sinful woman whose sins He forgave (7:50).

Many Bible teachers believe this Samaritan received more than healing. He came back to the Healer Himself, and he received a right relationship with God. The nine got a gift. The one got the Giver.

17:20 *Now having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God is coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with careful observation;*

"Now having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God is coming." The Pharisees were a strict religious group who were careful about keeping the Law of Moses and the traditions of their elders. Like most Jews of the day, they were looking for God's kingdom to come with a Messiah who would defeat Rome and rule the world from Jerusalem. So they asked Jesus when.

"The kingdom of God does not come with careful observation." The phrase means watching closely for signs, the way someone watches the sky to set a calendar. Jesus says the kingdom was not going to arrive the way they were expecting, with signs they could chart and predict.

17:21 *nor will they say, 'Look, here!' or, 'Look, there!' For look, the kingdom of God is within you."*

"Nor will they say, 'Look, here!' or, 'Look, there!' For look, the kingdom of God is within you."

What does Jesus mean? The Greek word entos can mean within or inside, and it can also mean among or in the midst of. Bible teachers read this verse in two main ways.

Some take it as the SLB prints it: the kingdom is within you, in the heart. God's rule begins inside a person when he submits to the King. Others point out that Jesus was speaking to Pharisees who had rejected Him, and the kingdom was hardly in their hearts. They read it to mean that the kingdom of God was in their midst. The King Himself was standing right in front of them, doing the works of the kingdom (11:20), and they did not see Him.

Either way, the lesson is the same. They were scanning the horizon for the kingdom and missing the King. That is a danger for us too. It is possible to study prophecy charts and never bow the knee to Jesus.

This verse does not mean the kingdom is only spiritual and will never come on earth. In the very next verses Jesus turns to His disciples and talks about a day still to come, when He will be revealed in glory.

17:22 *And He said to the disciples, "Days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see **it**.*

He said to the disciples, "Days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it." Son of Man was Jesus' favorite title for Himself. It comes from Daniel 7:13-14, where one like a son of man comes with the clouds of heaven and receives an everlasting kingdom.

Jesus was with them now. But He was going away. Hard days would come when they would long to have Him back, even for one day. That is the cry of every believer who suffers. We long for Him to come.

17:23 *And they will say to you, 'Look, here!' or, 'Look, there!' Do not go away, nor pursue **them**.*

"And they will say to you, 'Look, here!' or, 'Look, there!' Do not go away, nor pursue them."

When people long for something badly, they are easy to fool. False teachers will come saying Christ has appeared in some secret place. Jesus says do not chase them. Do not run off to see. Through history, many have claimed to be Christ returned or to know where He is hiding. Jesus warned us ahead of time.

17:24 *For just as the lightning that flashes out of the **one part** under heaven shines to the **other part** under heaven, so also will the Son of Man be in His day.*

"For just as the lightning that flashes out of the one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also will the Son of Man be in His day."

Here is why you do not need to chase rumors. When Jesus comes back to the earth in glory, no one will need to be told. Lightning does not happen in a back room. It lights up the whole sky from one side to the other. His coming will be sudden, visible, and impossible to miss.

17:25 *But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.*

"But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation." Before the glory comes the cross. Jesus said it plainly before (9:22), and He says it again. The Son of Man would not set up His kingdom in glory on this trip to Jerusalem. He was going there to suffer and die.

That word "must" is important. The cross was not an accident. It was the plan of God. There is no crown without the cross, for Him or for His people.

17:26-27 *And just as it came to pass in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed all.*

"And just as it came to pass in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage."

There is nothing wrong with eating, drinking and marrying. The problem was that people lived as if that was all there was. Noah warned them for many years (2 Peter 2:5), and they went on with life as usual, "until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed all."

Jesus treats Noah and the flood as real history. So should we. And He says the world before His coming will be the same: busy, comfortable, and careless about God.

Old Testament links: Genesis 7:7 (alluded to); Genesis 7:23 (alluded to)

17:28-29 *Likewise also, as it came to pass in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven and destroyed all.*

"Likewise also, as it came to pass in the days of Lot." Lot lived in Sodom, a city known for its wickedness (Genesis 18-19). Notice what Jesus lists: "they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building." Business was good. The economy was strong. Building projects were going up.

"But on the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven and destroyed all." Sulfur, also called brimstone, burns with great heat. The judgment came the very day Lot left. God waited until His man was out, and then the fire fell.

Old Testament links: Genesis 19:24 (alluded to); Genesis 19:25 (alluded to)

17:30 *According to these things it will be in the day the Son of Man is revealed.*

"According to these things it will be in the day the Son of Man is revealed." Revealed means unveiled, made visible to all. In both examples, God's people were removed or kept safe, and then judgment came suddenly on a world that was not ready.

I believe Scripture teaches that Christ will come for His church before the seven-year Tribulation, the time of trouble described in Daniel 9:27 and Revelation 6-19 (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17;

John 14:1-3). Then, at the end of the Tribulation, He will come back to the earth in power and glory to judge and to reign (Revelation 19:11-16). The day Jesus describes in this passage, when "the Son of Man is revealed" like lightning across the sky, is that visible return to the earth. But the warning fits every person in every age. God's patience is real, but it has an end.

17:31 *In that day, the one who will be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and the one in the field likewise, let him not turn back to the things behind.*

"In that day, the one who will be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away." Houses in Israel had flat roofs, reached by an outside stairway, and people worked and rested up there. Jesus says when that day comes, do not even go inside for your things. "And the one in the field likewise, let him not turn back to the things behind."

In Matthew 24:17-18, Jesus uses the same words about fleeing when the abomination of desolation is set up in the holy place. Here in Luke the point is about where our heart is. When the Lord comes, the things we own will not matter. A heart that is tied to stuff will want to turn back.

Old Testament links: Genesis 19:17 (alluded to)

17:32 *Remember the wife of Lot.*

"Remember the wife of Lot." This is one of the shortest verses in the Bible, and one of the most serious. Lot's wife was led out of Sodom by the hand of an angel. She was told not to look back. But she looked back, and she became a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:16, 26).

Why did she look back? Her heart was still in Sodom. She was out of the city, but the city was not out of her. Jesus says, remember her. It is possible to be very close to rescue and still be lost because you love the world more than God.

Old Testament links: Genesis 19:26 (alluded to)

17:33 *Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses it will preserve it alive.*

"Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses it will preserve it alive." Jesus said something like this before (9:24). The person who clings to this life, holding on to his comfort and his things and his own way, will lose everything in the end. The one who lets go and gives his life to Christ will keep it forever.

Lot's wife tried to hold on to her old life, and she lost it. The question for each of us is what we are holding on to.

17:34-35 *I say to you, in this night there will be two **men** on one bed: the one will be taken, and the other will be left. Two **women** will be grinding at the same **place**: the one will be taken, and the other will be left.*

"I say to you, in this night there will be two men on one bed: the one will be taken, and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding at the same place: the one will be taken, and the other will be left."

Notice that it is night in one place and work time in another. Grinding grain was done in the early morning. When the Lord comes, it will be night on one side of the world and day on the other. His coming will be worldwide and at one moment.

Many people read these verses as the rapture, with believers taken and unbelievers left behind. I understand why, and some pre-tribulation teachers read it that way. But look at the context. In Noah's day, the flood "destroyed all" (17:27). In Lot's day, the fire "destroyed all" (17:29). Those taken were taken in judgment. Those left, Noah and his family, Lot and his daughters, went on to live. And in verse 37 the disciples ask where they are taken, and Jesus answers with a picture of vultures over a dead body. So I believe these verses describe the Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation. Those taken are taken away in judgment, and those left remain to enter Christ's kingdom on earth.

Two people can share the same bed or the same work, and one is ready while the other is not. Being close to a believer does not make you one. Each person must come to Christ for himself.

17:36 *Two **men** will be in the field: the one will be taken, and the other will be left."*

"Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken, and the other will be left." This saying carries the same lesson as the two before it. Men working side by side in the field will be separated in a moment.

This verse is one of the places where the SLB follows the Received Greek Text, the Greek text used for the King James Bible. Most of the older Greek copies of Luke do not have these words here, and many modern Bibles put them in brackets or a footnote. The same words appear in Matthew 24:40, so we know Jesus said them. No teaching of the faith rests on this verse alone.

17:37 *And answering, they say to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body **is**, there the vultures will be gathered together."*

The disciples asked Him, "Where, Lord?" The disciples wanted to know where those who were taken would be taken.

"Where the body is, there the vultures will be gathered together." Vultures circle in the sky over a dead body in the desert. Anyone who sees them knows what is below. Jesus' answer is grim on purpose. Those taken are taken to death and judgment. Revelation 19:17-21 describes the birds of the sky gathered to eat the flesh of the armies who fight against Christ at His return.

It also means that judgment will fall wherever it is deserved, as surely as vultures find a carcass. No one will hide from it. The only safe place is in Christ, before that day comes.

Chapter 17 Summary

Jesus warns His disciples that stumbling blocks will come, but woe to the one who causes a little one to stumble. He tells them to rebuke a brother who sins and to forgive him every time he repents, even seven times in a day. When the apostles ask for more faith, He says that faith like a mustard seed can uproot a mulberry tree, and He reminds them that servants who do what they are told have only done their duty. On the border of Samaria and Galilee, ten lepers cry out for mercy and are cleansed on their way to the priests, but only one, a Samaritan, returns to give thanks, and Jesus tells him his faith has saved him. When the Pharisees ask when the kingdom of God is coming, Jesus says it does not come with signs they can chart, for the kingdom is within them. Then He tells His disciples that the Son of Man must first suffer, but His day will come as plainly as lightning and as suddenly as the flood and the fire on Sodom. People will be living as usual, and one will be taken in judgment while another is left. He warns them to remember Lot's wife and not to cling to this life.

"Remember the wife of Lot" tells me to look ahead, not behind. The past is in the past. The future is what God is giving me. Looking back too long can cost us what He has ahead.

Chapter 17 Study Questions

1. What did Jesus say about the person who causes one of the little ones to stumble? (17:1-2)

2. How many times did Jesus say we should forgive a brother who repents? (17:3-4)

3. What made the apostles ask for more faith, and how did Jesus answer? (17:5-6)

4. What does the parable of the unworthy slaves teach about our service to God? (17:7-10)

5. When were the ten lepers cleansed, and who came back to give thanks? (17:14-16)

6. What did the Pharisees ask, and what did Jesus answer? (17:20-21)

7. How did Jesus compare His coming to the days of Noah and the days of Lot? (17:26-30)

8. What does "Remember the wife of Lot" mean for you? (17:32-33)

9. Is there someone you need to forgive this week, even if they have hurt you more than once? (17:3-4)

10. Like the nine lepers, are there answered prayers you have never come back to thank God for? (17:15-18)

Chapter 18: Persistent Prayer and a Humble Heart

Scripture

18:1-8 And He was also speaking a parable to them about its being necessary always to pray and not to lose heart, saying, "There was a certain judge in a certain city, not fearing God and not respecting man. Now there was a widow in that city, and she was coming to him, saying, 'Avenge me of my adversary.' And he was not willing for a time; but after these things he said within himself, 'Even if I do not fear God and do not respect man, yet because this widow causes me trouble, I will avenge her, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the judge of unrighteousness says. And will God by no means execute the avenging of His elect, those crying out to Him day and night, and being patient toward them? I say to you that He will execute the avenging of them with speed. Nevertheless, the Son of Man, having come, will He find the faith on the earth?"

18:9-17 And He also spoke this parable to some who had trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and were despising the rest: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, having stood, was praying these things to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like the rest of men, swindlers, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice in the week; I tithe all things, as many as I acquire.' And the tax collector, having stood far off, was not willing to lift up even ***his*** eyes to heaven, but was striking his breast, saying, 'God, be propitious to me, the sinner!' I say to you, this one went down to his house justified rather than that one; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." And they were also bringing the infants to Him, that He might touch them; but having seen ***it***, the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus, having called them to ***Himself***, said, "Permit the little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter into it."

18:18-30 And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, having done what will I inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one ***is*** good except One, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" And he said, "All these I have kept from my youth." And having heard these things, Jesus said to him, "Yet one thing is lacking to you: sell all things, as many as you have, and distribute to ***the*** poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." And having heard these things, he became very sorrowful, for he was extremely rich. And having seen him become very sorrowful, Jesus said, "With what difficulty those having riches will enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." And those who heard said, "And who is able to be saved?" But He said, "The things impossible with men are possible with God." And Peter said, "Look, we have left all and followed You." And He said to them, "Truly I say to you that there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive back many times more in this time, and in the age that is coming, eternal life."

18:31-43 And having taken the twelve aside, He said to them, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all the things written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered up to the Gentiles, and will be mocked, and will be insulted, and will be spit upon, and having flogged ***Him***, they will kill Him; and on the third day He will rise again." And they understood none of these things, and this declaration was hidden from them, and they were not knowing the things being said. And it came to pass, in His drawing near to Jericho, a certain blind man was sitting beside the road, begging. And having heard a crowd passing through, he was inquiring what this might be. And they told him that Jesus the Nazarene is passing by. And he called out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those going before were rebuking him, that he should be silent; but he was crying out much more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And having stopped, Jesus commanded him to be brought to Him; and when he had drawn near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And he said, "Lord, that I may receive sight." And Jesus said to him, "Receive sight; your faith has saved you." And immediately he received sight, and was following Him, glorifying God. And all the people, having seen ***it***, gave praise to God.

Chapter 18 Preview

Jesus has just spoken about the days of the Son of Man, when the world will be caught off guard. Now He tells His disciples how to live while they wait. He gives two parables about prayer. In the first, a widow keeps coming to an unjust judge until he finally gives her justice. If even a judge like that will act, how much more will God answer His own people who cry to Him day and night? In the second, a proud Pharisee and a humble tax collector go up to the temple to pray. The one who trusted in his own goodness went home without God's approval. The one who beat his breast and asked for mercy went home justified.

Then the disciples try to keep little children away, and Jesus welcomes them, saying the kingdom belongs to such as these. A rich ruler asks what he must do to inherit eternal life, but when Jesus tells him to sell everything and follow Him, he goes away very sorrowful. Jesus says it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom, but what is impossible with men is possible with God. For the third time, Jesus tells the twelve that He will be handed over, mocked, killed and raised on the third day, and they do not understand. The chapter ends near Jericho, where a blind beggar cries out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" and receives his sight.

Chapter 18 Study

18:1 *And He was also speaking a parable to them about its being necessary always to pray and not to lose heart,*

"And He was also speaking a parable to them about its being necessary always to pray and not to lose heart." Luke tells us the point of the parable before Jesus tells it. That helps us read it rightly.

To lose heart means to give up, to grow tired and quit. When we pray and the answer does not come quickly, we are tempted to stop. Jesus says we must keep on praying. The word "always"

does not mean we must be saying words every minute. It means prayer is to be a constant habit of life, not something we try once and drop (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

This comes right after Jesus' words about His coming (17:22-37). Waiting for the Lord can be hard, especially when we suffer. Prayer keeps us from giving up while we wait.

18:2 *saying, "There was a certain judge in a certain city, not fearing God and not respecting man.*

"There was a certain judge in a certain city, not fearing God and not respecting man." In Israel, a judge was supposed to fear God and judge fairly (Deuteronomy 16:18-20; 2 Chronicles 19:6-7). This man did neither. He did not care what God thought, and he did not care what people thought. He could not be moved by conscience or by shame.

18:3 *Now there was a widow in that city, and she was coming to him, saying, 'Avenge me of my adversary.'*

Now there was a widow in that city, and she was coming to him, saying, "Avenge me of my adversary." In that culture a widow had almost no power. She had no husband to speak for her, and often no money for a bribe. The Old Testament speaks again and again of God's care for the widow and His anger at those who take advantage of her (Exodus 22:22-24; Psalm 68:5).

An adversary is an opponent, someone against you, likely in a legal matter. Maybe someone was trying to take her land or her little bit of money. She was asking the judge to give her justice, to rule in her favor and protect her.

18:4-5 *And he was not willing for a time; but after these things he said within himself, 'Even if I do not fear God and do not respect man, yet because this widow causes me trouble, I will avenge her, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'"*

"And he was not willing for a time." He ignored her. But she kept coming. Finally he said to himself, "Even if I do not fear God and do not respect man, yet because this widow causes me trouble, I will avenge her, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming."

The words "wear me out" come from a word that means to hit under the eye, to give someone a black eye. The judge is half joking, but he is worn down. He does not act out of kindness. He acts to get rid of her.

18:6-7 *And the Lord said, "Hear what the judge of unrighteousness says. And will God by no means execute the avenging of His elect, those crying out to Him day and night, and being patient toward them?*

And the Lord said, "Hear what the judge of unrighteousness says." Jesus says, listen to what that crooked judge said. Then He makes the point by comparing God to the judge.

"And will God by no means execute the avenging of His elect, those crying out to Him day and night, and being patient toward them?"

This is not saying God is like that judge. It is saying God is the opposite of him. If a wicked judge who cares nothing for a widow will finally give her justice, how much more will God, who loves His people, do what is right for them? The widow was a stranger to the judge. We are His elect, His chosen ones. She had no access to the judge. We can come to God any time, "day and night."

"Being patient toward them" can be read in two ways. It may mean God is patient with His people while they wait, or that He seems slow to act. Either way, His delay is never because He does not care.

18:8 *I say to you that He will execute the avenging of them with speed. Nevertheless, the Son of Man, having come, will He find the faith on the earth?"*

"I say to you that He will execute the avenging of them with speed." When God's time comes, He will act quickly. Sometimes He answers our prayers right away. Sometimes He waits. But He will set all things right, and when He acts, the wrong will be put right suddenly and completely. The prayers of God's people for justice will be answered fully when Christ returns to judge the world (Revelation 6:9-11; 19:1-2).

Then Jesus asks a searching question: "Nevertheless, the Son of Man, having come, will He find the faith on the earth?" When He comes back, will He find people still trusting Him and still praying? Notice it says "the faith." Jesus is asking whether this kind of persistent, trusting faith will still be found. The question is meant for us. Are we praying and holding on, or have we lost heart?

18:9 *And He also spoke this parable to some who had trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and were despising the rest:*

"And He also spoke this parable to some who had trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and were despising the rest." Again Luke tells us the point first. This parable is for people who think they are good enough for God on their own and look down on everyone else.

Righteous means right with God, meeting His standard. These people trusted in themselves for that. That is the problem. You cannot trust in yourself and trust in God's mercy at the same time.

18:10 *"Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.*

"Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector." The temple was in Jerusalem, up on a hill, so people always "went up" to it. There were set times of prayer at the temple each day.

Jesus' first listeners would have been shocked by the two men He chose. The Pharisee was the model of religion. The Pharisees were a strict group who tried hard to keep every part of the Law of Moses and their own traditions besides. A tax collector was the opposite. Tax collectors worked for Rome and collected taxes from their own people, and many collected more than was owed and kept the rest. People saw them as traitors and thieves. Everyone listening would have expected the Pharisee to be the hero of the story.

18:11 *The Pharisee, having stood, was praying these things to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like the rest of men, swindlers, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.*

"The Pharisee, having stood, was praying these things to himself." Standing was a normal way to pray. But notice the words "to himself." His prayer was really about himself and maybe even to himself. It did not go much higher than the ceiling.

"God, I thank You that I am not like the rest of men, swindlers, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector." A swindler is someone who cheats and robs people. The Pharisee thanks God, but he does not ask God for anything. He does not confess anything. He compares himself with the worst people he can think of, and then he looks over at the tax collector and points him out.

It is easy to feel good about ourselves when we compare ourselves with others. But God does not grade on a curve. The standard is His holiness, not the person next to us.

18:12 *I fast twice in the week; I tithe all things, as many as I acquire.'*

"I fast twice in the week; I tithe all things, as many as I acquire." To fast is to go without food for a time to seek God. The Law required only one fast a year, on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-31). Many strict Pharisees fasted every Monday and Thursday. To tithe is to give a tenth. The Law required a tenth of crops and flocks, and this man gave a tenth of everything he got, even small things.

These were not bad things. Fasting and giving are good. But he was using them as his ticket to God. He was listing his good works like a man showing his bank balance. He went far beyond what the Law required, and he still did not know he needed mercy.

18:13 *And the tax collector, having stood far off, was not willing to lift up even **his** eyes to heaven, but was striking his breast, saying, 'God, be propitious to me, the sinner!'*

"And the tax collector, having stood far off, was not willing to lift up even his eyes to heaven." He stood at a distance, maybe at the edge of the court. He felt unworthy to come close. He would not even look up.

"But was striking his breast." Beating the chest was a sign of deep grief and sorrow over sin. He did not compare himself to anyone. He knew what he was.

"God, be propitious to me, the sinner!" To be propitious means to be merciful because the wrath against sin has been satisfied. The word is tied to propitiation, the sacrifice that turns away God's anger against sin. At the temple, the blood of sacrifices was sprinkled on the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:14-15). This man was asking God to deal with his sin through sacrifice and be merciful to him. And notice he says "the sinner," not just "a sinner." He was not thinking about anyone else's sin. Only his own.

Today we know how God answered that prayer. Jesus is "a propitiation through faith in His blood" (Romans 3:25). He is the sacrifice that turned away God's wrath for everyone who trusts in Him (1 John 2:2).

18:14 *I say to you, this one went down to his house justified rather than that one; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*

"I say to you, this one went down to his house justified rather than that one." Justified means declared righteous by God, counted right with Him, not because of what we have done but because God forgives us. This is the heart of the gospel. The man who brought nothing but his sin went home right with God. The man who brought a long list of good works went home without it.

Paul would later explain this in detail: "we reckon a man to be justified by faith apart from works of law" (Romans 3:28). We are not saved by being better than others. We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." Jesus said this same thing at a dinner table (14:11). God turns things upside down. Pride keeps us from God. Humility is the door to Him.

Let me ask you plainly: which of these two men do you sound like when you pray? If we are honest, most of us have a little Pharisee in us. The cure is to see ourselves as God sees us, and to come to Him with nothing but a cry for mercy.

18:15 *And they were also bringing the infants to Him, that He might touch them; but having seen **it**, the disciples rebuked them.*

"And they were also bringing the infants to Him, that He might touch them." People brought their babies and little ones to Jesus for Him to bless them. It was common for parents to ask a respected teacher to lay hands on their children and pray for them.

"But having seen it, the disciples rebuked them." The disciples thought Jesus was too busy and too important for babies. They saw these children as an interruption.

Notice how this fits what came just before. The Pharisee looked down on the tax collector. Now the disciples look down on little children. Pride shows up in many ways.

18:16 *But Jesus, having called them to **Himself**, said, "Permit the little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.*

But Jesus, having called them to Himself, said, "Permit the little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God." Mark 10:14 tells us Jesus was indignant with His disciples over this.

Jesus called the children to come to Him. He had time for them. In a world where children had little value or rights, Jesus welcomed them. No one is too small or too unimportant to come to Him.

"For of such is the kingdom of God." The kingdom belongs to those who are like children. What does Jesus mean? Little children are not sinless. But they are dependent. They cannot earn anything, and they do not try. They simply receive what they are given.

18:17 *Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter into it."*

"Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter into it." A child receives a gift with open hands. He does not try to pay for it. That is how we must come to God. The Pharisee in the temple tried to come as a successful adult with a list of achievements. The tax collector came empty-handed, like a child. That is the only way in.

This verse also tells parents and churches something. Children matter to Jesus. Teaching them about Him is one of the most important things we can do (2 Timothy 3:15).

18:18 *And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, having done what will I inherit eternal life?"*

And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, having done what will I inherit eternal life?" Matthew tells us he was young (Matthew 19:20), and Luke tells us he was a ruler, likely a leader in a synagogue or a member of a local council. A synagogue was a Jewish meeting place for prayer and the reading of Scripture.

He asked a great question. Eternal life is life with God that never ends, and it starts now for those who know Him (John 17:3). But notice how he asked it: "having done what." He thought eternal life was something he could earn by doing the right thing. He wanted to know what was left on his list.

18:19 *And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one **is** good except One, God.*

"Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One, God."

Jesus is not denying that He is good or that He is God. He is asking the man to think about what he just said. If only God is truly good, and you call Me good, do you know who you are talking to? Either Jesus is good, and so He is God, or the man was using the word too lightly.

It also corrects the man's idea of goodness. If only God is good, then no man can be good enough to earn eternal life. That includes this ruler.

18:20-21 *You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" And he said, "All these I have kept from my youth."*

"You know the commandments." Jesus lists five of the Ten Commandments, the ones about how we treat other people (Exodus 20:12-16). "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not bear false witness," "Honor your father and your mother."

And he said, "All these I have kept from my youth." He meant it. He had lived a clean, respectable life. But notice that Jesus did not list the commandment against coveting, wanting what belongs to someone else (Exodus 20:17). And He did not list the first commandment, to have no other gods. Jesus was about to show him where his heart really was.

Old Testament links: Exodus 20:12-16 (quoted); Deuteronomy 5:16-20 (quoted)

18:22 *And having heard these things, Jesus said to him, "Yet one thing is lacking to you: sell all things, as many as you have, and distribute to* ***the*** *poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."*

"Yet one thing is lacking to you." To a man who thought he had done it all, Jesus said there was one thing missing. "Sell all things, as many as you have, and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

Is Jesus saying that everyone must sell everything to be saved? No. Zacchaeus in the next chapter gave half, and Jesus said salvation had come to his house (19:8-9). Jesus put His finger on the one thing that ruled this man's heart. His money was his god. He could not follow Jesus while he was holding on to it.

The heart of the call is the last part: "come, follow Me." Eternal life is not found by doing more things. It is found in following Jesus. Each of us must ask what we are holding on to that keeps us from following Him with everything.

18:23 *And having heard these things, he became very sorrowful, for he was extremely rich.*

"And having heard these things, he became very sorrowful, for he was extremely rich." He was sad, but he did not change. Mark 10:21 tells us that Jesus looked at him and loved him. It must have broken His heart to watch the man walk away.

This is one of the saddest scenes in the Gospels. He came running to the right Person with the right question, and he went away without eternal life because he loved his money more.

18:24-25 *And having seen him become very sorrowful, Jesus said, "With what difficulty those having riches will enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."*

"With what difficulty those having riches will enter into the kingdom of God!" Jesus said this as He watched the man leave.

"For it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The camel was the largest animal in the land. The eye of a needle was the smallest opening anyone could picture. Jesus is using a picture of something impossible on purpose. Some have said there was a small gate in Jerusalem called the Needle's Eye that a camel could squeeze through on its knees, but there is no good evidence for that, and it misses Jesus' point. Jesus means it cannot be done by human effort.

Why is it so hard for the rich? Riches make people feel safe and in control. They can make a person think he does not need God (1 Timothy 6:17).

18:26-27 *And those who heard said, "And who is able to be saved?" But He said, "The things impossible with men are possible with God."*

And those who heard said, "And who is able to be saved?" They were stunned. In their day, many saw wealth as a sign of God's blessing. If the rich cannot be saved, who can?

But He said, "The things impossible with men are possible with God." This is the answer for everyone, rich or poor. No one can save himself. Salvation is impossible with men. But God can change a heart. He can open a rich man's hand and a proud man's eyes. In the very next chapter, a rich tax collector named Zacchaeus is saved (19:1-10). What God commands, He also makes possible by His grace.

18:28 *And Peter said, "Look, we have left all and followed You."*

And Peter said, "Look, we have left all and followed You." Peter is comparing the disciples to the rich ruler. The ruler would not leave his things. They had left their boats, their nets, and their tax booth (5:11, 28). Peter was really asking, what will we get?

18:29-30 *And He said to them, "Truly I say to you that there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive back many times more in this time, and in the age that is coming, eternal life."*

"Truly I say to you that there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive back many times more in this time, and in the age that is coming, eternal life."

Jesus does not scold Peter. He promises that no sacrifice for Him is wasted. Those who leave family or home for Him will receive "many times more in this time." That does not mean more money. It means a new family, the family of God, brothers and sisters and mothers in the faith all over the world (Mark 10:30). Many missionaries who left everything can tell you that this promise is true.

And "in the age that is coming, eternal life." The age to come is the time after Christ returns. What we give up is small next to what He gives.

18:31 *And having taken the twelve aside, He said to them, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all the things written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished.*

And having taken the Twelve aside, He said to them, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all the things written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished."

This is the third time in Luke that Jesus told them plainly about His death (9:22, 44). He took them aside to tell them privately. And He said all of it had been written "through the prophets." Psalm

22, Isaiah 53, Daniel 9:26 and Zechariah 12:10 are some of the passages that spoke of the Messiah's suffering. The cross was not a surprise to God. It was the plan written long before.

18:32-33 *For He will be delivered up to the Gentiles, and will be mocked, and will be insulted, and will be spit upon, and having flogged* ***Him****, they will kill Him; and on the third day He will rise again."*

"For He will be delivered up to the Gentiles." The Gentiles are the non-Jewish peoples, here the Romans. Jesus would be handed over to Pontius Pilate and his soldiers. Then He gives the details: He "will be mocked, and will be insulted, and will be spit upon, and having flogged Him, they will kill Him; and on the third day He will rise again."

To flog was to whip with a Roman scourge, a whip of leather straps with bits of bone or metal tied in. It was so cruel that some men died from it. Every one of these things happened exactly as Jesus said (22:63-65; 23:11, 36; John 19:1).

But notice how He ends. "On the third day He will rise again." Jesus never spoke of His death without speaking of His resurrection.

18:34 *And they understood none of these things, and this declaration was hidden from them, and they were not knowing the things being said.*

"And they understood none of these things, and this declaration was hidden from them, and they were not knowing the things being said." Luke says it three ways to make sure we notice. They did not understand. It was hidden from them. They did not know.

Why not? They still expected the Messiah to defeat Rome and set up His kingdom right away. A suffering, dying Messiah did not fit their plans. It was so far from what they expected that they could not take it in. Only after the resurrection did their eyes open (24:25-27, 45).

Sometimes our own ideas about God keep us from hearing what He plainly says. We need to let His Word correct us.

18:35 *And it came to pass, in His drawing near to Jericho, a certain blind man was sitting beside the road, begging.*

"And it came to pass, in His drawing near to Jericho, a certain blind man was sitting beside the road, begging." Jericho was a city about fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem, down in the Jordan Valley. Travelers from Galilee going up to Jerusalem for Passover often came through it. A blind man had no way to earn a living, so he sat by the road where the crowds would pass and begged.

Mark 10:46 names him Bartimaeus and says it happened as Jesus was leaving Jericho. Matthew 20:29-30 says there were two blind men. How do these fit together? In Jesus' day there were two Jerichos, the old city and the newer Roman city Herod had built nearby. Jesus could have been leaving one and coming to the other. Matthew mentions both men, while Mark and Luke focus on the one who was better known. The accounts are told from different angles, and they do not contradict each other.

18:36-37 *And having heard a crowd passing through, he was inquiring what this might be. And they told him that Jesus **the** Nazarene is passing by.*

"And having heard a crowd passing through, he was inquiring what this might be." He could not see, but he could hear the noise of the crowd. "And they told him that Jesus the Nazarene is passing by." Nazarene means from Nazareth, the town where Jesus grew up.

Jesus was passing by. This was his one chance. Jesus would never come through Jericho again.

18:38 *And he called out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

And he called out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" The crowd called Him Jesus the Nazarene. The blind man called Him "Son of David." That was a title for the Messiah. God had promised that a son of David would sit on David's throne forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 9:6-7). This blind beggar saw what the twelve were struggling to see. Jesus is the promised King.

And he asked for "mercy," just like the ten lepers (17:13), and much as the tax collector in the temple asked God to be propitious to him (18:13).

18:39 *And those going before were rebuking him, that he should be silent; but he was crying out much more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

"And those going before were rebuking him, that he should be silent." The people at the front of the crowd told him to be quiet. A blind beggar should not be making a scene and bothering the Teacher.

But he was crying out much more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" He would not be stopped. This is persistent prayer, like the widow in 18:1-8. He knew what he needed and who could give it, and he refused to give up.

18:40-41 *And having stopped, Jesus commanded him to be brought to Him; and when he had drawn near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And he said, "Lord, that I may receive sight."*

"And having stopped, Jesus commanded him to be brought to Him." The crowd wanted the man quiet. Jesus stopped everything for him. The One heading to Jerusalem to die had time for one blind beggar.

"What do you want Me to do for you?" Jesus knew what the man needed. But He asked him to say it. God wants us to bring our needs to Him plainly. And he said, "Lord, that I may receive sight." He called Him Lord. He had no doubt that Jesus could do it.

18:42 *And Jesus said to him, "Receive sight; your faith has saved you."*

And Jesus said to him, "Receive sight; your faith has saved you." Jesus said the same words to the Samaritan leper (17:19) and to the woman who touched His garment (8:48). The man's faith did not heal him by its own power. His faith reached out to Jesus, and Jesus healed him.

Isaiah had foretold that when the Messiah came, "the eyes of the blind will be opened" (Isaiah 35:5). The blind man called Jesus the Son of David, and Jesus proved it by opening his eyes.

18:43 *And immediately he received sight, and was following Him, glorifying God. And all the people, having seen* ***it****, gave praise to God.*

"And immediately he received sight, and was following Him, glorifying God." The first thing he saw was the face of Jesus. And the first thing he did with his new sight was follow Him. He joined the crowd going up to Jerusalem.

Compare him with the rich ruler earlier in this chapter. The rich man had everything and went away sad. The blind beggar had nothing, and he followed Jesus, praising God. "And all the people, having seen it, gave praise to God." When God changes one life, it gives others a reason to praise Him too.

Chapter 18 Summary

Jesus tells His disciples to pray always and not lose heart, using a parable of a widow who kept coming to an unjust judge until he gave her justice. If even that judge acted, God will surely give justice to His elect who cry out to Him, though Jesus asks whether the Son of Man will find faith on the earth when He comes. To those who trusted in their own righteousness, He tells of a Pharisee who prayed about his own goodness and a tax collector who beat his breast and asked God to be propitious to him, and it was the tax collector who went home justified. Jesus welcomes little children and says the kingdom must be received as a child receives it. A rich ruler who has kept the commandments goes away sorrowful when told to sell all and follow Jesus, and Jesus teaches that what is impossible with men is possible with God, promising rich reward to those who leave all for Him. For the third time Jesus foretells His death and resurrection, and the twelve do not understand. Near Jericho, a blind beggar cries out to the Son of David for mercy, receives his sight, and follows Jesus, glorifying God.

Chapter 18 Study Questions

1. Why did Jesus tell the parable of the widow and the unjust judge? (18:1)

2. How is God different from the unjust judge? (18:6-8)

3. What did the Pharisee pray, and what did the tax collector pray? (18:11-13)

4. Which man went home justified, and why? (18:14)

5. What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God as a little child? (18:16-17)

6. What was the "one thing" the rich ruler lacked, and how did he respond? (18:22-23)

7. What did Jesus tell the twelve would happen to Him in Jerusalem, and why did they not understand? (18:31-34)

8. What did the blind man call Jesus, and what did he do after he was healed? (18:38-43)

9. Is there a prayer you have stopped praying because the answer has not come yet? (18:1-8)

10. Is there anything in your life, like the ruler's riches, that is keeping you from following Jesus with everything? (18:22-25)

Chapter 19: Zacchaeus and the King Who Wept

Scripture

19:1-10 And having entered, He was passing through Jericho. And look, ***there was*** a man called by name Zacchaeus; and he was a chief tax collector, and this ***one*** was rich. And he was seeking to see Jesus, who He is, and he was not able because of the crowd, because he was small in stature. And having run ahead in front, he went up into a sycamore-fig tree so that he might see Him, for He was about to pass through by that ***way***. And as He came to the place, Jesus, having looked up, saw him and said to him, "Zacchaeus, having hurried, come down; for today I must stay in your house." And having hurried, he came down and received Him, rejoicing. And having seen ***it***, all were grumbling, saying, "He has gone in to lodge with a sinful man." And Zacchaeus, having stood, said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, the half of my possessions I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which has been lost."

19:11-27 Now while they were hearing these things, having added, He spoke a parable, because of His being near Jerusalem, and because they were thinking that the kingdom of God was about to appear immediately. Therefore He said, "A certain man of noble birth went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. And having called ten of his own slaves, he gave them approximately 12.5 pounds (ten minas) and said to them, 'Do business until I come.' But his citizens were hating him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this ***man*** to reign over us.' And it came to pass, in his returning, having received the kingdom, that he said for these slaves to whom he gave the money to be called to him, so that he might know who had gained what by doing business. And the first came up, saying, 'Master, your mina has gained ten minas more.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave! Because you were faithful in a very little, be ***one*** having authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has made five minas.' And he said also to this one, 'And you, be over five cities.' And another came, saying, 'Master, look, your mina, which I was keeping laid away in a cloth; for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man: you take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow.' And he says to him, 'Out of your mouth I will judge you, evil slave. You knew that I am a harsh man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow. And why did you not give my money to the bank, and I, having come, would have collected it with interest?' And he said to those standing by, 'Take the mina from him and give ***it*** to the one having the ten minas.' And they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas!' 'For I say to you that to everyone who has, ***more*** will be given; but from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. But those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring ***them*** here and slay ***them*** before me.'"

19:28-40 And having said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, as He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, toward the mount that is called ***the Mount*** of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, saying, "Go into the village opposite, in which, entering, you will find a colt tied, on which no one of men has ever yet sat; having untied it, bring ***it***. And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying ***it***?' thus you will say to him, 'Because the Lord

has need of it.'" And having departed, those who had been sent found ***it*** just as He had said to them. And as they were untying the colt, its masters said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" And they said, "The Lord has need of it." And they led it to Jesus, and having cast their own garments on the colt, they put Jesus on ***it***. And as He was going, they were spreading their garments on the road. And as He was drawing near, already at the descent of the Mount of Olives, all the multitude of the disciples began, rejoicing, to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed ***is*** the King coming in ***the*** name of ***the*** Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in ***the*** highest!" And some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." And answering, He said to them, "I say to you that if these should be silent, the stones will cry out."

19:41-48 And as He drew near, having seen the city, He wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, indeed in this your day, the things for your peace! But now they were hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you, and your enemies will cast up a barricade around you, and will surround you, and will hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground, and your children within you; and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation." And having entered into the temple, He began to cast out those selling in it and buying, saying to them, "It has been written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers." And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes were seeking to destroy Him, and the foremost of the people, and they were not finding what they might do, for all the people were hanging on Him, listening.

Chapter 19 Preview

In Jericho, a rich chief tax collector named Zacchaeus wants to see Jesus so badly that he climbs a tree. Jesus stops, calls him by name, and invites Himself to his house. The crowd grumbles that Jesus is staying with a sinner, but Zacchaeus is changed. He gives half his goods to the poor and pays back four times what he took by fraud. Jesus says salvation has come to his house and gives the key verse of Luke's Gospel: "the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which has been lost."

Because the people think the kingdom is about to appear immediately, Jesus tells a parable of a nobleman who goes to a far country to receive a kingdom and then returns. His servants are to do business with his money until he comes back, and when he returns he rewards the faithful and judges his enemies. Then Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a colt while the crowd of disciples praises God: "Blessed is the King coming in the name of the Lord!" But when He sees the city, He weeps over it, because it did not know the time of its visitation and its enemies would level it to the ground. He enters the temple, drives out the sellers, and teaches there every day while the leaders look for a way to destroy Him.

Chapter 19 Study

19:1-2 *And having entered, He was passing through Jericho. And look, **there was** a man called by name Zacchaeus; and he was a chief tax collector, and this **one** was rich.*

"And having entered, He was passing through Jericho." Jesus had just healed a blind man near the city (18:35-43). Jericho was a rich city in the Jordan Valley, with palm trees and balsam groves, and it sat on a major trade road. That made it a good place to collect taxes.

"And look, there was a man called by name Zacchaeus; and he was a chief tax collector, and this one was rich." His name means pure or righteous, which was not how anyone would have described him. A chief tax collector was over the other tax collectors in the area. Rome sold the right to collect taxes, and the collectors added their own fees on top. A chief tax collector took a cut from the men under him too. Zacchaeus was rich because he had cheated his own people. They saw him as a traitor working for Rome.

19:3 *And he was seeking to see Jesus, who He is, and he was not able because of the crowd, because he was small in stature.*

"And he was seeking to see Jesus, who He is." Why did a rich, hated man want to see Jesus? Maybe he had heard that Jesus ate with tax collectors (5:29-30; 15:1-2). Maybe he had heard about Levi, the tax collector who left his booth to follow Jesus (5:27-28). Scripture does not tell us all that was in his heart. But he wanted to know who Jesus was.

"And he was not able because of the crowd, because he was small in stature." He was a short man, and the crowd would not let him through. No one was going to make room for Zacchaeus.

19:4 *And having run ahead in front, he went up into a sycamore-fig tree so that he might see Him, for He was about to pass through by that **way**.*

"And having run ahead in front, he went up into a sycamore-fig tree so that he might see Him." A sycamore-fig is a sturdy tree with low, wide branches, easy to climb. It was a strange sight: a rich, important man running ahead and climbing a tree like a boy. In that culture, grown men of rank did not run, and they surely did not climb trees in public. Zacchaeus did not care what anyone thought. He wanted to see Jesus.

"For He was about to pass through by that way." He found the right spot and waited. He went to where Jesus would be.

19:5 *And as He came to the place, Jesus, having looked up, saw him and said to him, "Zacchaeus, having hurried, come down; for today I must stay in your house."*

"And as He came to the place, Jesus, having looked up, saw him." Zacchaeus was looking for Jesus, but Jesus was looking for Zacchaeus. Jesus stopped right under that tree. Then He said, "Zacchaeus, having hurried, come down; for today I must stay in your house."

Jesus called him by name. No one had to tell Him who that man was. And He said "I must." It was part of His Father's plan. Out of all the people in Jericho, Jesus chose to stay with the most hated man in town.

19:6 *And having hurried, he came down and received Him, rejoicing.*

"And having hurried, he came down and received Him, rejoicing." He did not wait or make excuses. He came down quickly and welcomed Jesus into his home. And he was full of joy. Luke loves to show joy when lost people are found (15:7, 10, 32).

19:7 *And having seen **it**, all were grumbling, saying, "He has gone in to lodge with a sinful man."*

And having seen it, all were grumbling, saying, "He has gone in to lodge with a sinful man." The crowd that had been cheering Jesus a moment before now complained. To eat and stay in a man's home meant you accepted him. How could a holy teacher be the guest of a man like that?

The Pharisees had grumbled the same way before (15:2). The crowd saw a sinner. Jesus saw a man He came to save. Are we more like Jesus or more like that crowd when we see people who are far from God?

19:8 *And Zacchaeus, having stood, said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, the half of my possessions I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore fourfold."*

And Zacchaeus, having stood, said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, the half of my possessions I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore fourfold."

No one told him to say this. Jesus did not give him a list of rules first. Zacchaeus had met Jesus, and his heart was changed. To defraud means to cheat someone out of what is theirs. The Law of Moses said a man who confessed to taking something by fraud should pay it back plus a fifth (Leviticus 6:1-5; Numbers 5:6-7). Paying back fourfold was the penalty for stealing a sheep (Exodus 22:1). Zacchaeus went far beyond what the Law asked. He treated his cheating like the worst kind of theft.

Here is the opposite of the rich ruler in chapter 18. That man held on to his money and walked away from Jesus. Zacchaeus opened his hands. What is impossible with men is possible with God (18:27).

Notice too that Zacchaeus did not do these things to be saved. He did them because Jesus had already come to him. Real faith shows itself in a changed life. When Jesus comes into a house, the money changes too.

Old Testament links: Exodus 22:1 (alluded to)

19:9 *And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham;*

And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham." "Today." Salvation was not something Zacchaeus had to wait for or work toward. It came the day he received Jesus.

"He also is a son of Abraham." Zacchaeus was a Jew by birth, but the crowd had written him off. Jesus says he is a true son of Abraham, not only by blood but by faith. Paul tells us that the true children of Abraham are those who believe as Abraham did (Galatians 3:7). The man everyone had thrown away belonged to God's family.

19:10 *for the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which has been lost."*

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which has been lost." This is the key verse of Luke's Gospel. It tells us why Jesus came.

"To seek." Jesus does not wait for lost people to find their way to Him. He goes looking for them, like the shepherd who goes after the one lost sheep and the woman who sweeps the house for her lost coin (15:4-10). He stopped under a tree in Jericho for one man.

"And to save." He does not only find lost people. He rescues them. He would do that by giving His life on the cross a few days later in Jerusalem.

"That which has been lost." Who is lost? Every one of us, until Christ finds us (Romans 3:23). The good news is that no one is too lost for Jesus to find. If He could save Zacchaeus, He can save you.

Old Testament links: Ezekiel 34:16 (alluded to)

19:11 *Now while they were hearing these things, having added, He spoke a parable, because of His being near Jerusalem, and because they were thinking that the kingdom of God was about to appear immediately.*

"Now while they were hearing these things, having added, He spoke a parable, because of His being near Jerusalem, and because they were thinking that the kingdom of God was about to appear immediately."

Luke tells us why Jesus told this parable. Jerusalem was only about fifteen miles away. The crowds, and even the disciples, expected that when Jesus got there He would take the throne of David and set up God's kingdom right away. Jesus told this story to correct that. The kingdom would come, but not immediately. First the King would go away, and later He would return.

19:12 *Therefore He said, "A certain man of noble birth went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.*

"A certain man of noble birth went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return."

Jesus' listeners would have known exactly what this looked like. In those days, a man who wanted to rule a part of the Roman world had to travel to Rome and receive his kingdom from the emperor. After Herod the Great died, his son Archelaus went to Rome to be confirmed as king over Judea, and a group of Jews sent a delegation after him to protest. The Jewish historian Josephus tells of this. Archelaus had a palace in Jericho, the very city where Jesus was speaking.

In the parable, the nobleman is Jesus. The "distant country" is heaven. Jesus would go away to the Father after His death and resurrection, and He will come back to reign (Acts 1:9-11; Daniel 7:13-14).

19:13 *And having called ten of his own slaves, he gave them approximately 12.5 pounds (ten minas) and said to them, 'Do business until I come.'*

And having called ten of his own slaves, he gave them ten minas and said to them, "Do business until I come." A mina was a sum of money worth about a hundred days' wages, roughly three or four months' work. Each slave got one mina. That was a fair amount, but not a fortune.

"Do business until I come." That is our job too, while our Lord is away. Each of us has been given something to use for Him: the gospel, our time, our gifts, our lives. We are not to sit and wait. We are to put what He has given us to work until He returns.

This parable is like the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, but the two are not the same story. In Matthew, the servants get different amounts. Here, each gets the same amount, and the faithful earn different results.

19:14 *But his citizens were hating him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this* ***man*** *to reign over us.'*

But his citizens were hating him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We do not want this man to reign over us." A delegation is a group sent to speak for others. The people of his own country sent men after him to say they did not want him as king.

This is a picture of the nation's leaders rejecting Jesus. A few days later they would shout, "We have no king except Caesar" (John 19:15). It is also a picture of every person who refuses to let Jesus rule over his life. Many people are glad to have Jesus as a helper. Far fewer want Him as King.

19:15 *And it came to pass, in his returning, having received the kingdom, that he said for these slaves to whom he gave the money to be called to him, so that he might know who had gained what by doing business.*

"And it came to pass, in his returning, having received the kingdom, that he said for these slaves to whom he gave the money to be called to him, so that he might know who had gained what by doing business."

The king comes back. That is certain. And when He returns, He calls His servants to account. Every believer will one day give an account to Christ of how we used what He gave us. Paul calls

this the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). It is not about whether we are saved. That was settled at the cross. It is about rewards for faithful service.

19:16-17 *And the first came up, saying, 'Master, your mina has gained ten minas more.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave! Because you were faithful in a very little, be **one** having authority over ten cities.'*

And the first came up, saying, "Master, your mina has gained ten minas more." Notice he says "your mina." He knew the money was not his. He was only managing it. It gained ten times what it started with.

"Well done, good slave! Because you were faithful in a very little, be one having authority over ten cities." The master calls one mina "a very little." What we have now is small next to what He will give. And the reward for faithfulness is more responsibility. In Christ's coming kingdom, His faithful servants will reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 20:4-6). What we do with little things now matters.

19:18-19 *And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has made five minas.' And he said also to this one, 'And you, be over five cities.'*

And the second came, saying, "Master, your mina has made five minas." This servant was faithful too, but he gained less. And he said also to this one, "And you, be over five cities."

The master does not scold the second slave. He rewards him in proportion to what he did. Reward in the kingdom is real, and it is not the same for everyone. But every faithful servant is rewarded.

19:20-21 *And another came, saying, 'Master, look, your mina, which I was keeping laid away in a cloth; for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man: you take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow.'*

And another came, saying, "Master, look, your mina, which I was keeping laid away in a cloth." He wrapped it up and hid it. He did nothing with it. Then he made an excuse: "for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man: you take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow."

He blamed the master. He said the master was hard and unfair, so he was too afraid to try. But his words showed what he really thought of his master. He did not know him, and he did not love him.

19:22-23 *And he says to him, 'Out of your mouth I will judge you, evil slave. You knew that I am a harsh man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow. And why did you not give my money to the bank, and I, having come, would have collected it with interest?'*

"Out of your mouth I will judge you, evil slave." The master takes him at his own word. "You knew that I am a harsh man." If you really believed that, you should have worked even harder. "And why did you not give my money to the bank, and I, having come, would have collected it with interest?" Even the least effort would have brought something back.

This slave was not faithful in a very little. He was faithful in nothing. His problem was not lack of ability. It was lack of love and trust in his master. Many Bible teachers believe this slave pictures someone who claims to belong to the King but has never truly known Him.

19:24-25 *And he said to those standing by, 'Take the mina from him and give **it** to the one having the ten minas.' And they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas!'*

And he said to those standing by, "Take the mina from him and give it to the one having the ten minas." The people standing by were surprised. "Master, he has ten minas!" It did not seem fair to them. Why give more to the one who already had the most?

19:26 *'For I say to you that to everyone who has, **more** will be given; but from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.*

"For I say to you that to everyone who has, more will be given; but from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

This is a law of God's kingdom. The one who uses what God gives will be given more. The one who will not use it will lose even that. It is true of our gifts, of our chances to serve, and of the truth we hear. Jesus said the same about hearing God's Word (8:18). Use it or lose it.

19:27 *But those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring **them** here and slay **them** before me.'"*

"But those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them before me."

The parable ends with judgment on the citizens who rejected the king. This is serious. When Christ returns to reign, those who refused Him will face His judgment (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 19:15). Jesus is not only the Savior who seeks the lost. He is also the King who will judge His enemies.

So the parable answers the crowd's question. The kingdom was not going to appear immediately. The King would go away. His servants would work while He was gone. And then He would come back, reward His faithful servants, and judge those who rejected Him. We are living in that time of waiting right now.

19:28 *And having said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.*

"And having said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem." Jesus led the way. Mark 10:32 says the disciples were amazed and afraid as they followed. The road from Jericho to Jerusalem climbs steeply, about 3,300 feet in fifteen miles or so, through dry and rocky hills. Jesus knew what was waiting at the top, and He went on ahead anyway.

19:29-31 *And it came to pass, as He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, toward the mount that is called* ***the Mount*** *of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, saying, "Go into the village opposite, in which, entering, you will find a colt tied, on which no one of men has ever yet sat; having untied it, bring* ***it****. And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying* ***it****?' thus you will say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.'"*

"As He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, toward the mount that is called the Mount of Olives." Bethany was a village about two miles east of Jerusalem, where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived (John 11:1, 18). Bethphage was close by. The Mount of Olives is a ridge just east of the city, across the Kidron Valley from the temple.

He sent two disciples into the village, saying they would find "a colt tied, on which no one of men has ever yet sat." A colt is a young animal, and Matthew tells us it was the colt of a donkey (Matthew 21:2-5). An animal never ridden was set apart for a holy use (Numbers 19:2; 1 Samuel 6:7).

If anyone asked why they were untying it, they were to say, "Because the Lord has need of it." Jesus knew where the colt was, and He knew what would be said. He was not being swept along by events. He was planning every detail.

19:32-34 *And having departed, those who had been sent found* ***it*** *just as He had said to them. And as they were untying the colt, its masters said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" And they said, "The Lord has need of it."*

"And having departed, those who had been sent found it just as He had said to them." Everything happened exactly as Jesus said. The owners asked, "Why are you untying the colt?" and the disciples answered, "The Lord has need of it." And that was enough.

Maybe the owners were followers of Jesus who knew Him. Either way, they let the colt go. When the Lord has need of something we have, the right answer is to let it go.

19:35-36 *And they led it to Jesus, and having cast their own garments on the colt, they put Jesus on* ***it****. And as He was going, they were spreading their garments on the road.*

"And they led it to Jesus, and having cast their own garments on the colt, they put Jesus on it." The disciples used their cloaks as a saddle. "And as He was going, they were spreading their garments on the road." Spreading cloaks on the road was how people welcomed a king (2 Kings 9:13).

Why a donkey's colt? Zechariah had prophesied it more than five hundred years before: your King comes to you, lowly and riding on a donkey, and on a colt (Zechariah 9:9). Kings going to war rode horses. A king coming in peace might ride a donkey. Jesus was declaring that He was the promised King, and that He came in humility and peace.

Old Testament links: Zechariah 9:9 (fulfilled)

19:37-38 *And as He was drawing near, already at the descent of the Mount of Olives, all the multitude of the disciples began, rejoicing, to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed **is** the King coming in **the** name of **the** Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in **the** highest!"*

"As He was drawing near, already at the descent of the Mount of Olives." From the top of the Mount of Olives, the whole city comes into view, with the temple shining in the sun. "All the multitude of the disciples began, rejoicing, to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen."

They shouted, "Blessed is the King coming in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!" These words come from Psalm 118:26, a psalm sung at the feasts. Notice that Luke includes the word King. They were saying openly that Jesus was the Messiah, the King of Israel. Their words "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" sound like the angels' song at His birth (2:14).

This is the day many call the Triumphal Entry. Jesus had often told people to keep quiet about who He was. Now He let them shout it.

Old Testament links: Psalm 118:26 (quoted)

19:39-40 *And some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." And answering, He said to them, "I say to you that if these should be silent, the stones will cry out."*

And some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." They were upset that the crowd was calling Jesus King. Maybe they were afraid the Romans would see it as a rebellion. Maybe they simply did not believe it.

And answering, He said to them, "I say to you that if these should be silent, the stones will cry out." Jesus would not stop them. The praise was right, because it was true. If people kept silent, creation itself would shout it. The King had come, and God would make sure He was praised.

Old Testament links: Habakkuk 2:11 (alluded to)

19:41 *And as He drew near, having seen the city, He wept over it,*

"And as He drew near, having seen the city, He wept over it." This is a turning point. The crowd was cheering. Jesus was crying.

The word Luke uses means to weep out loud, to sob. It is a stronger word than the one used when Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb (John 11:35). He looked at the city of David, the city of the temple, and He sobbed over it.

Why? Because He knew what was coming. The cheering would not last. In a few days the city would reject Him, and in about forty years the city would be destroyed. Jesus does not take pleasure in judgment. God has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezekiel 33:11). Jesus' tears show us the heart of God toward those who turn Him away.

19:42 *saying, "If you had known, even you, indeed in this your day, the things for your peace! But now they were hidden from your eyes.*

"If you had known, even you, indeed in this your day, the things for your peace!" The name Jerusalem has often been tied to the word for peace, shalom. Yet the city of peace did not know the things that would bring it peace. Peace was riding into the city on a colt, and they did not recognize Him.

"But now they were hidden from your eyes." Because they had rejected Him again and again, their eyes were closed. There comes a point when a person or a nation that keeps refusing God's truth can no longer see it (John 12:37-40). That is a fearful thing.

19:43-44 *For days will come upon you, and your enemies will cast up a barricade around you, and will surround you, and will hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground, and your children within you; and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."*

"For days will come upon you, and your enemies will cast up a barricade around you, and will surround you, and will hem you in on every side." A barricade was a wall of earth and wooden stakes built around a city during a siege, so no one could get in or out. "And will level you to the ground, and your children within you; and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you."

This is exactly what happened in A.D. 70. The Roman army under Titus surrounded Jerusalem, built a siege wall around it, and starved the city. When they broke in, they killed many thousands of people, burned the temple, and tore down much of the city. Josephus, a Jewish historian who was there with the Romans, wrote about it in his history of the Jewish war. Jesus foretold it about forty years before it happened.

"Because you did not know the time of your visitation." A visitation is a time when God comes near, either to bless or to judge. God had come to His people in the person of His Son. He walked their streets, healed their sick, and taught in their temple, and they did not recognize Him (John 1:11).

This does not mean God was finished with Israel. Paul says that "a hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in," and then "so all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:25-26). One day the nation will look on the One they pierced and mourn for Him (Zechariah 12:10). But on this day, the King wept.

Let me ask: is God visiting you right now? Is He speaking to your heart through His Word? Do not let the time pass. "Now is a day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

19:45-46 *And having entered into the temple, He began to cast out those selling in it and buying, saying to them, "It has been written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers."*

"And having entered into the temple, He began to cast out those selling in it and buying." In the outer court of the temple, called the Court of the Gentiles, merchants sold animals for sacrifices

and changed money. Worshipers coming from far away needed animals, and the temple tax had to be paid in a certain coin. But the leaders had turned the one place where Gentiles could come to pray into a noisy, crooked market.

"It has been written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers." Jesus joins two Scriptures. Isaiah 56:7 says God's house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples. Jeremiah 7:11 warned that the people had made the temple a den of robbers. A den is a robbers' hideout. They were cheating people and then hiding behind religion, as if the temple would protect them.

John 2:13-17 tells of a temple cleansing at the start of Jesus' ministry. Most Bible teachers believe Jesus cleansed the temple twice, once at the beginning and once at the end.

What would Jesus find if He walked into our churches today? Or into our own lives, since a believer's body is now a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)?

Old Testament links: Isaiah 56:7 (quoted); Jeremiah 7:11 (quoted)

19:47-48 *And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes were seeking to destroy Him, and the foremost of the people, and they were not finding what they might do, for all the people were hanging on Him, listening.*

"And He was teaching daily in the temple." For the last days of that week, Jesus taught openly in the temple courts every day.

"But the chief priests and the scribes were seeking to destroy Him, and the foremost of the people." The chief priests were the leading priests, many of them from the families of the high priest. Scribes were experts who copied and taught the Law of Moses. These men, with the leading men of the city, wanted Jesus dead.

"And they were not finding what they might do, for all the people were hanging on Him, listening." The crowds were hanging on every word, like someone hanging on to a rope. The leaders were afraid of the people, so they could not arrest Him in the open. They would have to find another way, and in chapter 22 they will find it in Judas.

Chapter 19 Summary

In Jericho, Zacchaeus, a rich chief tax collector, climbs a sycamore-fig tree to see Jesus. Jesus calls him by name and stays at his house, though the crowd grumbles. Zacchaeus is changed, gives half his goods to the poor, and repays fourfold anyone he cheated, and Jesus says salvation has come to his house, for the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Because the people think the kingdom will appear immediately, Jesus tells of a nobleman who goes to a distant country to receive a kingdom and return. His slaves are to do business with his minas until he comes, and when he returns he rewards the faithful with authority over cities, takes the mina from the slave who hid it, and judges the citizens who did not want him to reign. Jesus then rides a colt down the Mount of Olives while His disciples praise God and call Him the King, and He says the stones would cry out if they were silent. Seeing Jerusalem, He weeps over it, foretelling the siege and

destruction that came in A.D. 70 because the city did not know the time of its visitation. He drives the sellers out of the temple and teaches there daily, while the leaders look for a way to destroy Him.

Chapter 19 Study Questions

1. Who was Zacchaeus, and what did he do to see Jesus? (19:2-4)

2. What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus, and how did the crowd respond? (19:5-7)

3. What did Zacchaeus promise to do, and what did Jesus say about him? (19:8-9)

4. What does 19:10 tell us about why Jesus came?

5. Why did Jesus tell the parable of the minas? (19:11)

6. How did the master reward the faithful slaves, and what happened to the one who hid his mina? (19:16-26)

7. How did Jesus fulfill Zechariah 9:9 as He came to Jerusalem? (19:29-38)

8. Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem, and what did He foretell? (19:41-44)

9. What has the Lord given you to "do business" with until He comes, and how are you using it? (19:13)

10. Like Zacchaeus, is there anything Jesus would change in how you handle money or treat others if He came to your house today? (19:8)

Chapter 20: Questions in the Temple

Scripture

20:1-8 And it came to pass on one of those days, as He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up, and they spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority do You do these things? Or who is the one who gave You this authority?" And answering, He said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and tell Me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John is a prophet." And they answered that they did not know from where ***it was***. And Jesus said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

20:9-19 And He began to speak this parable to the people: "A certain man planted a vineyard, and leased it to farmers, and went abroad for a long time. And in season he sent a slave to the farmers, that they should give him from the fruit of the vineyard; but the farmers, having beaten him, sent him away empty. And he proceeded to send another slave; but they, having beaten that one also and having dishonored ***him***, sent ***him*** away empty. And he proceeded to send a third; and they, having wounded this one also, cast ***him*** out. And the master of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, the beloved; perhaps having seen him, they will respect ***him***.' But having seen him, the farmers were reasoning among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, so that the inheritance may become ours.' And having cast him out outside the vineyard, they killed ***him***. What therefore will the master of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy these farmers, and will give the vineyard to others." And having heard ***it***, they said, "May it not be!" But having looked at them, He said, "What then is this that is written: 'The stone which the builders rejected, this has become ***the*** head of ***the*** corner'? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will crush him to powder." And the chief priests and the scribes sought to lay ***their*** hands on Him in that hour, and they feared the people; for they perceived that He had spoken this parable against them.

20:20-26 And having watched ***Him***, they sent spies, pretending themselves to be righteous, that they might take hold of His word, so as to deliver Him to the rule and to the authority of the governor. And they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You speak and teach rightly, and You do not show partiality, but You teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" But having perceived their craftiness, He said to them, "Why are you testing Me? Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?" And answering, they said, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Then give back the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God." And they were not able to take hold of His declaration before the people; and having marveled at His answer, they became silent.

20:27-40 And some of the Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, having approached, questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if anyone's brother dies having a wife, and he dies childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up seed for his brother. Therefore there were seven brothers; and the first, having taken a wife, died childless.

And the second took the wife, and this one died childless. And the third took her, and likewise also the seven; and they did not leave children, and they died. And last of all the woman also died. Therefore in the resurrection, of which of them does she become wife? For the seven had her as wife." And answering, Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who have been considered worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection from ***the*** dead neither marry nor are given in marriage; for neither are they able to die any more, for they are like angels, and they are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calls ***the*** Lord 'the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' Now He is not God of ***the*** dead, but of ***the*** living; for all live to Him." And answering, some of the scribes said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." And they no longer dared to question Him ***about*** anything.

20:41-47 And He said to them, "How do they say the Christ is the son of David? And David himself says in ***the*** book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right ***hand***, until I place Your enemies ***as*** a footstool of Your feet."' Therefore David calls Him Lord, and how is He his son?" And while all the people were listening, He said to His disciples, "Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and first seats in the synagogues and first places at the banquets, who devour the houses of widows, and for a pretense pray at length. These will receive greater judgment."

Chapter 20 Preview

Jesus is teaching in the temple during His last week, and the leaders of Israel come at Him one group after another with questions meant to trap Him. The chief priests, scribes and elders demand to know by what authority He does these things. He answers with a question about John the Baptist that they are afraid to answer. Then He tells a parable about tenant farmers who beat the owner's slaves and kill his beloved son, and the leaders know He is talking about them.

Next, spies ask whether it is lawful to pay tribute to Caesar. Jesus asks for a denarius and says to give Caesar's things to Caesar and God's things to God. The Sadducees, who deny the resurrection, try to make the resurrection look foolish with a story about a woman married to seven brothers. Jesus answers from Moses that God is the God of the living. Then Jesus asks His own question: how can the Christ be David's son if David calls Him Lord? No one can answer. The chapter closes with a warning against scribes who love honor and rob widows.

Chapter 20 Study

20:1-2 *And it came to pass on one of those days, as He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up, and they spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority do You do these things? Or who is the one who gave You this authority?"*

"And it came to pass on one of those days, as He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel." This was the last week before the cross. The day before, Jesus had driven the sellers out of the temple (19:45-46). Now He was back, teaching openly.

"The chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up." These three groups made up the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews in Jerusalem. The chief priests led the temple. The scribes were experts in the Law of Moses. The elders were leading men of the nation. This was an official challenge.

"Tell us, by what authority do You do these things? Or who is the one who gave You this authority?" They meant clearing the temple, teaching, healing, and letting crowds call Him King. Jesus had no license from them. He had not trained under their rabbis. In their eyes, He had no right to do any of it.

20:3-4 *And answering, He said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and tell Me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?"*

"I also will ask you one thing, and tell Me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" This was not a way to dodge the question. It was the answer, if they were honest. John the Baptist had pointed to Jesus as the One coming after him (3:16). If John's ministry came from God, then John's witness about Jesus was true, and they had their answer about His authority.

"From heaven" was a common Jewish way of saying from God.

20:5-6 *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John is a prophet."*

"And they reasoned among themselves." They went into a huddle. Notice that they did not ask what was true. They asked what was safe to say.

If they said from heaven, Jesus would say, "Why then did you not believe him?" They had not believed John or repented at his preaching (7:30). But if they said from men, "all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John is a prophet." John was dead, but the people still honored him. The leaders were trapped between the truth they would not accept and the crowd they feared.

20:7-8 *And they answered that they did not know from where **it was**. And Jesus said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."*

"And they answered that they did not know from where it was." The religious leaders of Israel, the men whose job was to judge true and false prophets, said they did not know. That was not honest. It was a cop-out.

And Jesus said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things." Jesus would not play their game. People who refuse the light they have will not be given more. If they would not be honest about John, they would not be honest about Jesus either.

Let me ask: do we ever avoid the truth because of what it would cost us? It is possible to say I don't know when the real problem is I won't.

20:9 *And He began to speak this parable to the people: "A certain man planted a vineyard, and leased it to farmers, and went abroad for a long time.*

He began to speak this parable to the people: "A certain man planted a vineyard, and leased it to farmers, and went abroad for a long time."

Jesus' listeners would have thought right away of Isaiah 5:1-7, where Israel is God's vineyard. God planted it, cared for it, and looked for good fruit, but it gave only wild grapes. In Jesus' parable, the owner of the vineyard is God. The vineyard is Israel. The farmers are the leaders of the nation who were supposed to tend it. Renting land out to tenant farmers who paid the owner with part of the harvest was common in that day.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 5:1-2 (alluded to)

20:10-12 *And in season he sent a slave to the farmers, that they should give him from the fruit of the vineyard; but the farmers, having beaten him, sent him away empty. And he proceeded to send another slave; but they, having beaten that one also and having dishonored* ***him****, sent* ***him*** *away empty. And he proceeded to send a third; and they, having wounded this one also, cast* ***him*** *out.*

"And in season he sent a slave to the farmers, that they should give him from the fruit of the vineyard." At harvest time, the owner sent a servant to collect his share. "But the farmers, having beaten him, sent him away empty." He sent another, and they beat and shamed him. He sent a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.

The slaves stand for the prophets God sent to Israel again and again. Many of them were mocked, beaten, put in prison, or killed (2 Chronicles 36:15-16; Nehemiah 9:26; Hebrews 11:36-38). Jeremiah was thrown into a pit. Zechariah was stoned in the temple court. God was patient, sending one messenger after another.

20:13 *And the master of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, the beloved; perhaps having seen him, they will respect* ***him****.'*

And the master of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my son, the beloved; perhaps having seen him, they will respect him."

"My son, the beloved." These are nearly the words the Father spoke from heaven at Jesus' baptism: "You are My Son, the beloved" (3:22). Jesus is telling the leaders who He is. He is not one more servant. He is the Son of the owner.

The owner's patience is amazing. After all they had done, he still sent the one he loved most. That is the love of God. "God so loved the world, that He gave His Son, the only begotten" (John 3:16).

20:14 *But having seen him, the farmers were reasoning among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, so that the inheritance may become ours.'*

But having seen him, the farmers were reasoning among themselves, saying, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, so that the inheritance may become ours." An heir is the one who will

receive the property. The farmers knew who he was. They killed him not by mistake but because of who he was.

That is what the leaders were already planning (19:47). They knew enough to know that Jesus' claims threatened their power. They wanted to keep the nation for themselves.

20:15 *And having cast him out outside the vineyard, they killed **him**. What therefore will the master of the vineyard do to them?*

"And having cast him out outside the vineyard, they killed him." Jesus was crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem (John 19:17; Hebrews 13:12). He is describing His own death a few days before it happened.

"What therefore will the master of the vineyard do to them?"

20:16 *He will come and destroy these farmers, and will give the vineyard to others." And having heard **it**, they said, "May it not be!"*

"He will come and destroy these farmers, and will give the vineyard to others." The leaders who killed the Son would be judged. That happened in A.D. 70, when Jerusalem fell and the temple was destroyed, and the priestly rulers lost their place.

And having heard it, they said, "May it not be!" The people were horrified at the thought. They understood that Jesus was speaking about the nation's leaders losing the vineyard.

Who are the others? In context, the judgment falls on the wicked tenant farmers, the leaders, not on the vineyard itself. God took the care of His work from those leaders and gave it to the apostles, who were Jews, and to the church that grew from their preaching. This does not mean God has thrown away Israel or that the church has replaced Israel in His promises. Paul says plainly, "God did not reject His people whom He foreknew" (Romans 11:2), and he looks ahead to the day when "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26).

20:17 *But having looked at them, He said, "What then is this that is written: 'The stone which the builders rejected, this has become **the** head of **the** corner'?*

Having looked at them, He said, "What then is this that is written," and He quoted, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner." Jesus looked them in the eye.

He quotes Psalm 118:22, from the same psalm the crowd had sung as He rode into the city (19:38). The builders were the leaders of Israel. They looked at Jesus and said, this stone does not fit our building. They threw Him away. But God made the rejected stone "the head of the corner," the main stone that holds the building together and sets every line straight. Peter preached this same verse to the Sanhedrin after the resurrection (Acts 4:11).

Old Testament links: Psalm 118:22 (quoted)

20:18 *Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will crush him to powder."*

"Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will crush him to powder."

There are two ways to meet this stone. You can fall on it, which means stumbling over Christ and being broken. Isaiah 8:14-15 calls Him a stone of stumbling. Some take this falling as a person coming to Christ broken in humility and repentance. Or the stone can fall on you, which is final judgment. Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45 tells of a stone cut without hands that strikes the statue of the world's kingdoms and crushes it to powder, and then becomes a mountain that fills the whole earth. That is Christ at His return, judging the kingdoms of this world and setting up His own.

No one can stay neutral about this stone. We will either be broken before Him now or crushed by Him later.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 8:14-15 (alluded to); Daniel 2:34 (alluded to); Daniel 2:35 (alluded to)

20:19 *And the chief priests and the scribes sought to lay **their** hands on Him in that hour, and they feared the people; for they perceived that He had spoken this parable against them.*

"And the chief priests and the scribes sought to lay their hands on Him in that hour, and they feared the people; for they perceived that He had spoken this parable against them." They got the message. They knew they were the farmers. But instead of repenting, they wanted to arrest Him on the spot, which was exactly what the farmers in the story did. Only their fear of the crowd held them back.

20:20 *And having watched **Him**, they sent spies, pretending themselves to be righteous, that they might take hold of His word, so as to deliver Him to the rule and to the authority of the governor.*

"And having watched Him, they sent spies, pretending themselves to be righteous." These men acted like honest people with a sincere question. Their goal was to "take hold of His word, so as to deliver Him to the rule and to the authority of the governor." The governor was Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. If they could get Jesus to say something against Rome, Pilate would deal with Him.

20:21-22 *And they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You speak and teach rightly, and You do not show partiality, but You teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?"*

"Teacher, we know that You speak and teach rightly, and You do not show partiality, but You teach the way of God in truth." It was flattery. Everything they said was true, but they did not mean a word of it. Flattery is praise with a hook in it.

Then the trap: "Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" Tribute was the tax every person in Judea had to pay directly to Rome. Caesar was the title of the Roman emperor. If Jesus

said yes, pay it, many Jews would see Him as a friend of Rome and a traitor. If He said no, the leaders could report Him to Pilate as a rebel. It looked like there was no safe answer.

20:23-24 *But having perceived their craftiness, He said to them, "Why are you testing Me? Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?" And answering, they said, "Caesar's."*

But having perceived their craftiness, He said to them, "Why are you testing Me?" Jesus saw right through them.

"Show Me a denarius." A denarius was a Roman silver coin worth about a day's wage for a laborer. It was the coin used to pay the tribute. "Whose image and inscription does it have?" The coin had a picture of the emperor's head on it, and words calling him the son of the divine Augustus. They answered, "Caesar's."

Notice that Jesus had to ask them for one. They were carrying Caesar's coin in their own pockets, in the temple.

20:25 *And He said to them, "Then give back the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God."*

"Then give back the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God." The coin had Caesar's image on it, so it belonged to him. Give it back. Believers should pay their taxes and respect the government (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17).

But Jesus did not stop there. "And the things of God to God." What has God's image on it? We do. Man was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Caesar can have his coins. God wants you, all of you. Government has a real but limited place. God's claim is over everything, including Caesar.

20:26 *And they were not able to take hold of His declaration before the people; and having marveled at His answer, they became silent.*

"And they were not able to take hold of His declaration before the people; and having marveled at His answer, they became silent." The trap failed in front of everyone. They had nothing to report to Pilate. Even so, a few days later they would lie and tell Pilate that Jesus forbade giving tribute to Caesar (23:2).

20:27 *And some of the Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, having approached, questioned Him,*

"And some of the Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, having approached, questioned Him." The Sadducees were a priestly party, many of them wealthy, who controlled the temple. They accepted the books of Moses as their main authority, and they did not believe in a resurrection of the body, in angels, or in spirits (Acts 23:8). This is the only time the Sadducees appear in Luke's Gospel.

20:28 *saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if anyone's brother dies having a wife, and he dies childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up seed for his brother.*

"Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if anyone's brother dies having a wife, and he dies childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up seed for his brother." This was the law in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. If a man died with no son, his brother was to marry the widow, and the first son would carry on the dead brother's name and inheritance. Ruth and Boaz are an example of this kind of care in the family (Ruth 4:5-10).

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 25:5-6 (alluded to); Genesis 38:8 (alluded to)

20:29-33 *Therefore there were seven brothers; and the first, having taken a wife, died childless. And the second took the wife, and this one died childless. And the third took her, and likewise also the seven; and they did not leave children, and they died. And last of all the woman also died. Therefore in the resurrection, of which of them does she become wife? For the seven had her as wife."*

They told a story about seven brothers. The first married a woman and died childless. "And the second took the wife, and this one died childless." The third did the same, and so on through all seven. "And last of all the woman also died."

Then came their question: "Therefore in the resurrection, of which of them does she become wife? For the seven had her as wife."

The story was made up to make the resurrection look silly. They had probably used it to win arguments with Pharisees for years. If there is a resurrection, they meant, heaven would be a mess.

20:34-35 *And answering, Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who have been considered worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection from **the** dead neither marry nor are given in marriage;*

"The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage." Marriage belongs to this age, the present world. It is God's good gift, but it is for this life.

"But those who have been considered worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage." "That age" is the age to come, after the resurrection. In it, people will not marry.

The Sadducees' mistake was to think the next life would be just like this one. It will not be. Scripture does not give us all the details. But those who love each other in Christ will know each other and be together with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Still, the life to come is not just this life continued.

20:36 *for neither are they able to die any more, for they are like angels, and they are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.*

"For neither are they able to die any more." Here is why there is no marriage. In this life, marriage carries on the human race, because people die. In the resurrection, no one dies, so there is no need to carry on families.

"For they are like angels." Jesus did not say people become angels. People never turn into angels. He said they are like angels in this way: they do not die and they do not marry. That also answered the Sadducees, who did not believe in angels.

"And they are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." To be a son of the resurrection means to share in it. The resurrection body is a body that will never die (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 53-54).

20:37-38 *But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calls **the** Lord 'the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' Now He is not God of **the** dead, but of **the** living; for all live to Him."*

"But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush." Jesus answered the Sadducees from Moses, the part of Scripture they valued most. At the burning bush, God called Himself "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6). God said this to Moses hundreds of years after those three men had died.

"Now He is not God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to Him." God did not say, I was their God. He said, I am. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still alive to God. And since God's covenant was with them as whole people, body and soul, God would also raise their bodies. Death does not end a person's relationship with God.

This is a great comfort for every believer who has lost someone who knew the Lord. They are not gone. They are alive to God.

Old Testament links: Exodus 3:6 (quoted); Exodus 3:15 (quoted)

20:39-40 *And answering, some of the scribes said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." And they no longer dared to question Him **about** anything.*

And answering, some of the scribes said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." These scribes were likely Pharisees, who did believe in the resurrection, and they were glad to see the Sadducees silenced.

"And they no longer dared to question Him about anything." Every trap had failed. The leaders gave up trying to beat Jesus in argument. From here on, they would use force.

20:41 *And He said to them, "How do they say the Christ is the son of David?*

And He said to them, "How do they say the Christ is the son of David?" Now Jesus asks the question. Christ means anointed one, the same as Messiah in Hebrew. Everyone agreed that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David. The blind man near Jericho had called Jesus "Son

of David" (18:38). Jesus does not deny it. He wants them to see that the Messiah is more than David's son.

20:42-43 *And David himself says in **the** book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right **hand**, until I place Your enemies **as** a footstool of Your feet."'*

And David himself says in the book of Psalms, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, until I place Your enemies as a footstool of Your feet."

This is Psalm 110:1, the Old Testament verse quoted most often in the New Testament. In Hebrew, the first "Lord" is the name of God, Yahweh. The second is adoni, which means my lord or my master. So David is saying, God said to my Master, sit at My right hand. The right hand was the place of honor and power next to a king. A footstool was the place for a king's feet, and conquered enemies were sometimes made to bow under a king's feet. God promised David's Lord that every enemy would be put under Him.

Old Testament links: Psalm 110:1 (quoted)

20:44 *Therefore David calls Him Lord, and how is He his son?"*

"Therefore David calls Him Lord, and how is He his son?" In that culture, a father did not call his son lord. The son honored the father. So why would King David call his own descendant Lord?

The answer is that the Messiah is both. He is David's son by human birth (Romans 1:3), and He is David's Lord because He is the eternal Son of God. Only Jesus fits. After His resurrection, He sat down at the right hand of God (Acts 2:34-36; Hebrews 1:13), and He waits there until His enemies are made His footstool. One day He will come back and reign.

20:45-46 *And while all the people were listening, He said to His disciples, "Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and first seats in the synagogues and first places at the banquets,*

And while all the people were listening, He said to His disciples, "Beware of the scribes." He spoke to the disciples, but loud enough for everyone to hear.

What were the scribes like? They "desire to walk around in long robes," clothes that showed how important they were. They "love greetings in the marketplaces," when people would bow and call them Rabbi. They wanted "first seats in the synagogues," the seats up front facing the people, "and first places at the banquets," the seats of honor next to the host.

Every one of these is about being seen and honored. Jesus is not against good clothes or being greeted. He is against a heart that lives for the praise of people.

20:47 *who devour the houses of widows, and for a pretense pray at length. These will receive greater judgment."*

"Who devour the houses of widows." To devour means to eat up greedily. Some scribes took advantage of widows, maybe by charging them for legal help, managing their property for themselves, or living off their gifts. They used their position to rob the most helpless people.

"And for a pretense pray at length." A pretense is a show. Their long prayers were a cover for their greed.

"These will receive greater judgment." The more you know and the more you claim to serve God, the more you will answer for. James says teachers will receive a stricter judgment (James 3:1). Religious hypocrisy that hurts the weak is something God will judge severely.

This should make everyone who leads in the church stop and think. Are we serving people or using them? Are we praying to be heard by God or to be seen by men?

Chapter 20 Summary

While Jesus teaches in the temple during His last week, the chief priests, scribes and elders demand to know by what authority He acts, and He answers with a question about John's baptism that they refuse to answer. He tells a parable of farmers who beat the vineyard owner's slaves and kill his beloved son, warning that the owner will destroy them and give the vineyard to others, and He quotes Psalm 118:22 about the rejected stone becoming the head of the corner. Spies ask whether it is lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, and Jesus tells them to give Caesar's things to Caesar and God's things to God. The Sadducees, who deny the resurrection, ask about a woman married to seven brothers, and Jesus answers that those raised do not marry or die, and that God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is God of the living. Jesus then asks how the Christ can be David's son when David calls Him Lord in Psalm 110:1. He ends by warning against scribes who love honor, rob widows and pray long prayers for show.

Chapter 20 Study Questions

1. What question did the leaders ask Jesus, and what question did He ask them? (20:1-4)

2. Why would the leaders not answer His question about John? (20:5-7)

3. In the parable of the vineyard, who do the owner, the slaves, the son and the farmers stand for? (20:9-15)

4. What is the stone the builders rejected, and what did it become? (20:17-18)

5. How did Jesus answer the question about tribute to Caesar? (20:22-25)

6. What did the Sadducees believe, and how did Jesus answer them from Moses? (20:27-38)

7. How can the Christ be both David's son and David's Lord? (20:41-44)

8. What did Jesus warn about the scribes? (20:45-47)

9. What would it look like for you to give to God the things that are God's? (20:25)

10. Is there any part of your service to God that is more about being seen by people than about pleasing Him? (20:46-47)

Chapter 21: The Widow's Gift and the Signs of the End

Scripture

21:1-9 And having looked up, He saw the ones casting their gifts into the treasury, rich ***men***. And He saw also a certain poor widow casting in there two lepta. And He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has cast in more than all; for all these out of what was abounding to them cast into the gifts of God, but she out of her poverty cast in all the livelihood that she had." And as some were speaking about the temple, that it had been adorned with beautiful stones and consecrated gifts, He said, "***As for*** these things which you are looking at, days will come in which a stone will not be left upon a stone that will not be thrown down." And they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, when then will these things be? And what ***will be*** the sign when these things are about to take place?" And He said, "See that you are not led astray; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am ***He***,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and disorders, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end ***is*** not immediately."

21:10-19 Then He was saying to them, "Nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be both great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be both fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute ***you***, delivering ***you*** up to synagogues and prisons, being brought before kings and governors on account of My name. And it will turn out for you as a testimony. Therefore settle ***it*** in your hearts not to prepare beforehand to make a defense; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all those opposing you will not be able to contradict nor resist. And you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put ***some*** of you to death. And you will be hated by all because of My name. And a hair of your head will by no means perish. By your endurance acquire your souls.

21:20-28 And when you see Jerusalem being encircled by encampments, then know that her desolation has drawn near. Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those in her midst depart out, and let those in the countryside not enter into her; for these are days of avenging, that all the things that are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who have ***a child*** in ***the*** womb and to those who are nursing in those days! For there will be great distress upon the land and wrath on this people. And they will fall by ***the*** edge of ***the*** sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled by ***the*** nations until ***the*** times of ***the*** nations are fulfilled. And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity, ***the*** sea and ***the*** surge roaring, men fainting from fear and expectation of the things coming on the inhabited earth; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

21:29-38 And He spoke a parable to them: "See the fig tree and all the trees. When they already put forth ***leaves***, seeing ***it***, you know of yourselves that the summer is already near. So also you, when you see these things taking place, know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you

that this generation will by no means pass away until all take place. The heaven and the earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. Now take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of life, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare it will come upon all those sitting on the face of all the earth. Therefore keep watch at every season, praying that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." Now during the days He was teaching in the temple, and during the nights, going out, He was lodging on the mount that is called ***the Mount*** of Olives. And all the people were coming early in the morning to Him in the temple to hear Him.

Chapter 21 Preview

Jesus is still in the temple. He watches rich people dropping their gifts into the treasury, and then a poor widow puts in two tiny coins. He says she gave more than all of them, because she gave everything she had. Then some people admire the temple's beautiful stones, and Jesus tells them that a day is coming when not one stone will be left on another. They ask when this will happen and what the sign will be.

His answer is known as the Olivet Discourse, since Matthew and Mark tell us He gave it on the Mount of Olives. In Luke's account, Jesus warns them about false christs, wars and earthquakes, and tells them they will be persecuted before any of this. Then He tells them that when they see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, its desolation is near. That happened in A.D. 70. Jerusalem would be trampled by the Gentiles "until the times of the nations are fulfilled." After that come signs in the sun, moon and stars, and the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Jesus closes with the parable of the fig tree and a call to watch and pray, so that the day does not catch us like a trap.

Chapter 21 Study

21:1 *And having looked up, He saw the ones casting their gifts into the treasury, rich **men**.*

"And having looked up, He saw the ones casting their gifts into the treasury, rich men." Mark 12:41 tells us Jesus sat down across from the treasury and watched. The treasury was in the Court of the Women at the temple, where there were thirteen trumpet-shaped boxes for offerings. People dropped their coins in, and the clink of coins could be heard. A big gift of many coins would make a lot of noise.

Jesus watches what we give. That is a sobering thought. He is not counting the amount. He is looking at the heart.

21:2 *And He saw also a certain poor widow casting in there two lepta.*

"And He saw also a certain poor widow casting in there two lepta." A lepton was the smallest copper coin in use, worth only a tiny part of a day's wage. Two of them would barely buy anything. This woman was a widow, so she likely had no one to support her, and she was poor.

Just before this, Jesus had warned about scribes who "devour the houses of widows" (20:47). Now here is a widow who had almost nothing left.

21:3-4 *And He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has cast in more than all; for all these out of what was abounding to them cast into the gifts of God, but she out of her poverty cast in all the livelihood that she had."*

"Truly I say to you that this poor widow has cast in more than all." How could two tiny coins be more than all those big gifts?

"For all these out of what was abounding to them cast into the gifts of God, but she out of her poverty cast in all the livelihood that she had." The rich gave from their extra. They went home and had dinner like any other day. She gave everything she had to live on. She could have kept one coin. She gave both.

God does not measure our giving by the amount but by what it costs us and what we keep back. The widow trusted God to take care of her. Her gift was small in the hand but large in heaven.

This is not a command to give away all we have. But it is a question for each of us. Is our giving a sacrifice, or is it only what we will never miss? Paul says God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

21:5-6 *And as some were speaking about the temple, that it had been adorned with beautiful stones and consecrated gifts, He said, "**As for** these things which you are looking at, days will come in which a stone will not be left upon a stone that will not be thrown down."*

"And as some were speaking about the temple, that it had been adorned with beautiful stones and consecrated gifts." Herod the Great had begun rebuilding and expanding the temple about 20 B.C., and the work was still going on (John 2:20). It was built of huge white stones, some of them very large, and parts of it were covered with gold. Consecrated gifts were gifts given to God and put on display, like a golden vine that hung at the entrance.

Jesus answered, "As for these things which you are looking at, days will come in which a stone will not be left upon a stone that will not be thrown down."

That came true in A.D. 70. The Roman army under Titus captured Jerusalem, burned the temple, and pulled it down. The buildings people were admiring that day were gone within about forty years.

Buildings, no matter how grand, do not last. Only what is built on Christ will last forever (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

21:7 *And they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, when then will these things be? And what **will be** the sign when these things are about to take place?"*

"Teacher, when then will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" They were asking about the destruction of the temple. Matthew 24:3 tells us they

also asked about the sign of His coming and the end of the age. They likely thought it would all happen at once.

Jesus' answer covers both. Luke's account records more of what He said about the near event, the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, especially in 21:20-24. But Jesus also looks far ahead to the end of the age and His coming in glory (21:25-28). Reading the passage plainly, we must let Jesus tell us which part is which.

I believe Scripture teaches that Christ will come for His church before the seven-year Tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; John 14:1-3). God "did not appoint us for wrath" (1 Thessalonians 5:9). After the Tribulation, Christ will return visibly to the earth (Revelation 19:11-16). In this discourse Jesus is speaking to Jewish disciples about Jerusalem, Judea, and the nation of Israel. Some of what He says came true in A.D. 70, and some looks ahead to the future Tribulation and His Second Coming. But all of it calls every believer to be faithful and watchful.

21:8 *And He said, "See that you are not led astray; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am **He**,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them.*

"See that you are not led astray." Jesus' first concern was not to give them a timeline. It was to protect them from being fooled.

"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them." Some would claim to be the Messiah. Others would claim to know the time of the end. In the years before A.D. 70, several men stirred up crowds with promises of freedom (Acts 5:36-37). Through history, many more have done the same. Jesus says, do not follow them. The real Christ will not need anyone to point Him out (17:23-24).

21:9 *And when you hear of wars and disorders, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end **is** not immediately."*

"And when you hear of wars and disorders, do not be terrified." Disorders are uprisings and riots, times when everything seems to be falling apart. "For these things must take place first, but the end is not immediately."

Jesus does not want His people living in panic. Wars and unrest are part of life in a fallen world. They do not mean the end has come. Every generation has had them. When we hear frightening news, we can remember that God is not surprised, and the end will come in His time.

21:10-11 *Then He was saying to them, "Nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be both great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be both fearful sights and great signs from heaven.*

"Nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." This is the language of whole nations at war. "And there will be both great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences." A pestilence is a deadly disease that spreads widely. "And there will be both fearful sights and great signs from heaven."

These things have happened in every generation. But Jesus is describing a time when they come together and grow worse. When John saw the seals opened in Revelation 6:1-17, he saw war, famine, death and great signs in the sky. Many Bible teachers believe the events of 21:10-11 match the first part of the seven-year Tribulation. In Matthew, Jesus calls them "the beginning of birth pains" (Matthew 24:8).

Old Testament links: Isaiah 19:2 (alluded to)

21:12 *But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute* ***you****, delivering* ***you*** *up to synagogues and prisons, being brought before kings and governors on account of My name.*

"But before all these things." This is important. Jesus says that before the wars and earthquakes and signs, something else would happen to the disciples themselves. "They will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and prisons, being brought before kings and governors on account of My name."

A synagogue was the local Jewish meeting place for worship and teaching, and it also served as a local court where a person could be judged and beaten. This came true for the apostles, and Luke records it in Acts. Peter and John were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1-3). James was killed by King Herod (Acts 12:1-2). Paul was beaten in synagogues and stood before the governors Felix and Festus and King Agrippa (Acts 24-26). Believers in many countries still face this today.

21:13 *And it will turn out for you as a testimony.*

"And it will turn out for you as a testimony." The persecution would become an opportunity to speak for Christ. When Paul stood in chains before King Agrippa, he used his defense to preach the gospel (Acts 26). The worst the world can do to a believer becomes a pulpit. God turns our trials into a witness.

21:14-15 *Therefore settle* ***it*** *in your hearts not to prepare beforehand to make a defense; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all those opposing you will not be able to contradict nor resist.*

"Therefore settle it in your hearts not to prepare beforehand to make a defense." To settle it means to make up your mind ahead of time. They were not to spend their time worrying about what to say.

"For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all those opposing you will not be able to contradict nor resist." Jesus Himself would give them the words. When Stephen spoke, his enemies "were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he was speaking" (Acts 6:10).

This is not an excuse for a preacher or teacher not to study. It is a promise for believers on trial for their faith. When you are standing before people who hate Christ, you do not have to be afraid of running out of words. He will be with you.

21:16-17 *And you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put **some** of you to death. And you will be hated by all because of My name.*

"And you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death." This is one of the hardest things Jesus said. Persecution would sometimes come from inside the family. In many places today, a person who comes to Christ from another religion is cut off, reported, or even killed by his own family.

"And you will be hated by all because of My name." The world does not hate believers for being kind. It hates the name of Jesus (John 15:18-21).

21:18 *And a hair of your head will by no means perish.*

"And a hair of your head will by no means perish." How does this fit with the verse before it, which says some will be put to death? Jesus is not promising that no believer will ever be hurt or killed. He just said some would be. He is promising that nothing can touch their real life. Their bodies may be killed, but they cannot be lost. Even the hairs of their head are counted (12:7). God will raise them, whole, at the resurrection. Nothing that belongs to Christ will be lost in the end.

21:19 *By your endurance acquire your souls.*

"By your endurance acquire your souls." Endurance means patient staying power, holding on under pressure without giving up. To acquire your souls means to gain or keep your life.

This does not mean we save ourselves by enduring. Salvation is a gift through faith in Christ. But real faith keeps going. Endurance is the mark of a faith that is real. The one who stands firm through persecution shows that his life truly belongs to God.

21:20 *And when you see Jerusalem being encircled by encampments, then know that her desolation has drawn near.*

"And when you see Jerusalem being encircled by encampments, then know that her desolation has drawn near." Encampments are army camps. When they saw armies surrounding the city, they would know its destruction was near. Desolation means being left empty and in ruins.

Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 speak at this point of "the abomination of desolation" standing in the holy place. Luke gives a different part of Jesus' answer. Luke's words describe the Roman siege of Jerusalem. In A.D. 66 the Jews rebelled against Rome. Roman armies came and surrounded the city, then pulled back for a time, and many Christians left. In A.D. 70 the Roman general Titus came back, built a siege wall around the city, and took it after months of starvation and fighting.

I believe Luke 21:20-24 speaks of that fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The abomination of desolation in Matthew and Mark points ahead to the future Antichrist in the Tribulation (Daniel 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). What happened in A.D. 70 was real judgment, and it was also a picture of the greater trouble still to come.

Some Bible teachers believe Daniel 9:27 was fulfilled in A.D. 70, when Rome destroyed the city and the temple. I read it as still future, and I see the word desolation here in Luke as an echo of Daniel, not its fulfillment.

Old Testament links: Daniel 9:27 (alluded to)

21:21 *Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those in her midst depart out, and let those in the countryside not enter into her;*

"Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those in her midst depart out, and let those in the countryside not enter into her." Normally, when an enemy army came, people ran into the walled city for safety. Jesus says do the opposite. Get out of the city. Head for the hills. Do not come in from the countryside.

The early church historian Eusebius tells us that the Christians of Jerusalem remembered a warning and fled the city before it fell, many of them going to a town called Pella across the Jordan River. They obeyed what Jesus said, and their lives were spared.

21:22 *for these are days of avenging, that all the things that are written may be fulfilled.*

"For these are days of avenging, that all the things that are written may be fulfilled." Avenging means God's just judgment. The prophets had warned that if the people broke God's covenant, enemies would besiege their cities, and they would be scattered among the nations (Leviticus 26:31-33; Deuteronomy 28:49-64; Daniel 9:26). Jesus had just wept over the city because it did not know the time of its visitation (19:41-44). Now the judgment He foretold would come.

21:23 *But woe to those who have **a child** in **the** womb and to those who are nursing in those days! For there will be great distress upon the land and wrath on this people.*

"But woe to those who have a child in the womb and to those who are nursing in those days!" This is a cry of pity, not a curse. Pregnant women and mothers with babies could not run or travel far.

"For there will be great distress upon the land and wrath on this people." The siege of Jerusalem was one of the most terrible in history. Josephus, a Jewish historian who was with the Roman army, describes terrible hunger in the city and many thousands of deaths. Jesus saw it all coming, and His heart broke for the people who would suffer it.

21:24 *And they will fall by **the** edge of **the** sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled by **the** nations until **the** times of **the** nations are fulfilled.*

"And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations." Many were killed, and many thousands were taken away as slaves. Within a few generations after this, the Jewish people were scattered across the world.

"And Jerusalem will be trampled by the nations until the times of the nations are fulfilled." Here the SLB says "nations." The same word is often translated Gentiles. To be trampled means to be

under the control of foreign powers. From A.D. 70 on, Jerusalem was ruled by Romans, then by one Gentile power after another for many centuries.

"The times of the nations" is the long period when Jerusalem and the people of Israel are under Gentile rule. It began even before Jesus' day, when Babylon conquered Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (Daniel 2:36-45). But notice the word "until." It will not last forever. Jesus is saying that there is an end to the times of the Gentiles. When that time is fulfilled, Jerusalem will no longer be trampled. Many Bible teachers believe the times of the Gentiles will come to their end when Christ returns to the earth, destroys the last Gentile world power, and reigns from Jerusalem (Daniel 2:44; Zechariah 14:4, 9). This is one of the verses that shows God still has a future for Jerusalem and for the nation of Israel (Romans 11:25-29).

21:25 *And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity, **the** sea and **the** surge roaring,*

"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars." Now Jesus looks past the fall of Jerusalem and the long times of the Gentiles to the end of the age. Matthew tells us these signs come "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (Matthew 24:29). The prophets spoke of the same signs in the sky on the day of the Lord (Isaiah 13:9-10; Joel 2:30-31). I take them to describe real events in the heavens.

"And on the earth distress of nations in perplexity, the sea and the surge roaring." Perplexity means being at a loss, not knowing what to do or where to turn. The whole world will be in confusion and fear, with nature itself thrown into upheaval.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 13:10 (alluded to); Joel 2:10 (alluded to)

21:26 *men fainting from fear and expectation of the things coming on the inhabited earth; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

"Men fainting from fear and expectation of the things coming on the inhabited earth." People will faint, or lose heart, from terror at what they see coming on the world. "For the powers of the heavens will be shaken." God, who made the heavens, will shake them (Haggai 2:6; Hebrews 12:26-27). The things people thought could never move will move.

Old Testament links: Joel 2:10 (alluded to)

21:27 *And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

"And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." This is the Second Coming of Christ to the earth. Daniel 7:13-14 saw one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven to receive an everlasting kingdom. When Jesus went up to heaven, the angels said He would come back the same way they saw Him go (Acts 1:11). Revelation 1:7 says every eye will see Him.

He came the first time in humility, riding on a donkey. He will come the second time with power and great glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16).

Old Testament links: Daniel 7:13 (alluded to)

21:28 *Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*

"Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Redemption means being set free by the payment of a price. Christ paid the price for His people at the cross. Here redemption means the final deliverance that His coming will bring.

For those who know Him, His coming is not a time to hide in fear. It is a time to look up. While the world faints with fear, God's people lift their heads. The same events that terrify the world tell believers that their rescue is near.

Jesus first spoke these words to Jewish disciples, and they will speak most directly to those who come to faith during the Tribulation. But believers today share the same hope. Paul calls it "the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13).

21:29-31 *And He spoke a parable to them: "See the fig tree and all the trees. When they already put forth **leaves**, seeing **it**, you know of yourselves that the summer is already near. So also you, when you see these things taking place, know that the kingdom of God is near.*

He spoke a parable to them: "See the fig tree and all the trees." In Israel, the fig tree and many other trees lose their leaves in winter. When the new leaves come out, everyone knows summer is near.

"So also you, when you see these things taking place, know that the kingdom of God is near." Just as leaves tell you summer is coming, the signs Jesus described tell those who see them that the kingdom is close. The kingdom of God here is the kingdom Christ will set up on earth when He returns. Notice that Luke adds "and all the trees." This makes it clear that Jesus' main point is a simple picture from nature, which anyone could understand.

21:32 *Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all take place.*

"Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all take place." This is one of the most debated verses in the discourse. What does "this generation" mean? There are three main views.

Some say it means the people alive when Jesus spoke, and that it was fulfilled in A.D. 70. But the Son of Man did not come in a cloud with great glory in A.D. 70, and the signs in the sun, moon and stars did not happen then, so this view has to treat much of the passage as figures of speech. Some say the word for generation, genea, can mean a race or people, and that Jesus is promising that the Jewish people will survive until all these things happen. God has indeed preserved them. Others take it to mean the generation that sees the signs Jesus has just described. Those who see those

things begin will see the end. Good Bible teachers hold each of these views. What matters most is the next verse: Jesus' words will not fail.

21:33 *The heaven and the earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*

"The heaven and the earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." Nothing seems more permanent than the sky and the ground under our feet. But Jesus says His words will outlast them. Only God could speak this way about His own words (Isaiah 40:8).

Every promise Jesus made will be kept. Every warning He gave will come true. We can build our lives on what He said.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 40:8 (alluded to)

21:34 *Now take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of life, and that day come upon you suddenly.*

"Now take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of life." Jesus turns from what will happen to how we should live. Dissipation is wild living and its effects, like the headache and dullness after a night of drinking. Drunkenness is obvious. But notice that Jesus puts "cares of life" right next to them. Worry about the ordinary things of life can weigh our hearts down just as much as wild living. A heart that is heavy with worry or with sin is not watching for the Lord.

"And that day come upon you suddenly." A sleepy, distracted heart will be caught off guard.

21:35 *For as a snare it will come upon all those sitting on the face of all the earth.*

"For as a snare it will come upon all those sitting on the face of all the earth." A snare is a trap used to catch an animal. It snaps shut without warning. The animal never sees it coming. That day will come on the whole world that way. No one on earth will be outside its reach.

21:36 *Therefore keep watch at every season, praying that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

"Therefore keep watch at every season, praying that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

To keep watch means to stay awake and alert. Jesus says to do it "at every season," all the time, not only when the news is frightening. And He says to pray.

What does it mean to "escape all these things"? Many pre-tribulation teachers see in this verse the hope of being kept out of the Tribulation altogether, much like the promise to the church in Philadelphia, "I also will keep you from the hour of testing which is about to come upon the whole inhabited world" (Revelation 3:10). Others read it as a call to watch and pray so that we are not swept away by the judgment but stand approved before Christ when He comes. Either way, the goal is to "stand before the Son of Man." That means to stand before Him unashamed, as His own (1 John 2:28).

"Counted worthy" does not mean we earn it. No one is worthy on his own. It speaks of the watchful, praying life that shows a person truly belongs to Christ.

21:37-38 *Now during the days He was teaching in the temple, and during the nights, going out, He was lodging on the mount that is called* ***the Mount*** *of Olives. And all the people were coming early in the morning to Him in the temple to hear Him.*

"Now during the days He was teaching in the temple, and during the nights, going out, He was lodging on the mount that is called the Mount of Olives." Jesus spent His days teaching in the temple courts and His nights on the Mount of Olives. Bethany, where His friends lived, was on the far side of the mount, and the garden called Gethsemane was on its slope (22:39).

"And all the people were coming early in the morning to Him in the temple to hear Him." The people got up early to hear Him. The leaders wanted Him dead, but the people wanted to hear Him teach.

What a picture of how to spend the last days before the cross. Jesus did not hide. He taught God's Word, He prayed, and He stayed faithful. And that is how He calls us to live as we wait for His coming: faithful in His Word, watchful in prayer, and ready.

Chapter 21 Summary

In the temple, Jesus sees rich men giving their gifts and a poor widow putting in two lepta, and He says she gave more than all, because she gave all she had to live on. When people admire the temple's beautiful stones, He says not one stone will be left on another, which came true in A.D. 70. Asked when and with what sign, He warns them not to be led astray by false christs or terrified by wars, earthquakes and famines, and He tells them that before these things they will be persecuted, brought before kings and governors, and even betrayed by their families, yet He will give them words and not a hair of their head will perish. He tells them that when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies, its desolation is near, and they must flee, for the city will be trampled by the nations until the times of the nations are fulfilled. After that, there will be signs in the sun, moon and stars, and the Son of Man will come in a cloud with power and great glory, so believers are to lift up their heads. With the parable of the fig tree, He says His words will never pass away, and He calls them to watch and pray so that day does not come on them like a snare.

Chapter 21 Study Questions

1. Why did Jesus say the poor widow gave more than all the rich? (21:1-4)

2. What did Jesus say would happen to the temple, and when did it come true? (21:5-6)

3. What was Jesus' first warning when the disciples asked about the signs? (21:8-9)

4. What did Jesus say would happen to His followers before the signs, and what did He promise them? (21:12-19)

5. What would tell the disciples that Jerusalem's desolation was near, and what were they to do? (21:20-21)

6. What are "the times of the nations," and what does the word "until" tell us? (21:24)

7. What will happen when the Son of Man comes, and how should believers respond? (21:25-28)

8. What things can weigh down our hearts and keep us from watching? (21:34)

9. How does your giving compare with the widow's? Is it a sacrifice, or only what you will never miss? (21:3-4)

10. If the Lord came today, would He find you watching and praying, or weighed down by the cares of life? (21:34-36)

Chapter 22: The Last Supper and the Arrest

Scripture

22:1-13 Now the Feast of Unleavened ***Bread***, which is called Passover, was drawing near. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might do away with Him, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered into Judas, the one surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And having gone away, he talked with the chief priests and the captains ***about*** how he might deliver Him up to them. And they rejoiced, and they agreed to give him money. And he promised, and was seeking an opportunity to deliver Him up to them apart from a crowd. Then the day of Unleavened ***Bread*** came, on which it was necessary ***for*** the Passover to be sacrificed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Having gone, prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat." And they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare ***it***?" And He said to them, "Look, when you have entered into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you; follow him into the house where he enters. And you will say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' And he will show you a large upper room, furnished; prepare there." And having gone, they found ***it*** just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

22:14-23 And when the hour came, He reclined ***at table***, and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said to them, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I say to you that I will certainly no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And having received a cup, having given thanks, He said, "Take this and divide ***it*** among yourselves. For I say to you that I will certainly not drink of the produce of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And having taken bread, having given thanks, He broke ***it*** and gave ***it*** to them, saying, "This is My body, which is being given for you; do this for My remembrance." And likewise the cup after dining, saying, "This cup ***is*** the new covenant in My blood, which is being poured out for you. But look, the hand of the one delivering Me up ***is*** with Me on the table. And indeed the Son of Man goes according to what has been determined; but woe to that man through whom He is delivered up!" And they began to question among themselves which of them then it might be who was about to do this.

22:24-38 And there was also a dispute among them, which of them is thought to be greater. And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those exercising authority over them are called benefactors. But you, not so; but the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and the one leading as the one serving. For who ***is*** greater, the one reclining ***at table*** or the one serving? ***Is it*** not the one reclining? But I am in your midst as the One serving. And you are those who have remained with Me in My trials. And I appoint to you, just as My Father appointed to Me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, look, Satan has asked for you, to sift ***you*** like wheat. But I begged for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." And he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death." And He said, "I tell you, Peter, a rooster will certainly not crow today before you deny three times that you know Me." And He said to them, "When I sent you without purse and bag and sandals, did you lack anything?" And

they said, "Nothing." Then He said to them, "But now, the one who has a purse, let him take ***it***, likewise also a bag; and the one who does not have ***one***, let him sell his cloak and buy a sword. For I say to you that this which has been written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was counted with lawless ***ones***.' For also the things concerning Me have an end." And they said, "Lord, look, here ***are*** two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

22:39-53 And having gone out, He went according to the custom to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And having come to the place, He said to them, "Pray not to enter into temptation." And He was drawn away from them about a stone's throw, and having knelt down, He was praying, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." And an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He was praying more earnestly; and His sweat became like thick drops of blood falling down upon the ground. And having risen up from the prayer, having come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from the sorrow, and He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Having risen up, pray, so that you may not enter into temptation." And while He was still speaking, look, a crowd, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was going before them, and he drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. And Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you delivering up the Son of Man with a kiss?" And those around Him, having seen what was going to be, said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with a sword?" And a certain one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. And answering, Jesus said, "Allow as far as this." And having touched his ear, He healed him. And Jesus said to those who had come against Him, chief priests and captains of the temple and elders, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? While I was with you every day in the temple, you did not stretch out your hands against Me. But this is your hour, and the power of the darkness."

22:54-71 And having seized Him, they led ***Him*** away and brought Him into the house of the high priest. And Peter was following at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting in the midst of them. And a certain servant girl, having seen him sitting by the light and having looked intently at him, said, "This one also was with Him." But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." And after a little ***while*** another, having seen him, said, "You also are of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." And about one hour having passed, a certain other ***man*** was strongly affirming, saying, "In truth this one also was with Him, for he also is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And having turned, the Lord looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." And having gone outside, Peter wept bitterly. And the men who were holding Jesus were mocking Him, beating ***Him***. And having blindfolded Him, they were striking His face, and they were questioning Him, saying, "Prophesy! Who is it who struck You?" And many other things they were saying against Him, blaspheming. And when it became day, the body of elders of the people was gathered together, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him up into their own council, saying, "If You are the Christ, tell us." And He said to them, "If I tell you, you will certainly not believe; and if I also ask ***you***, you will certainly not answer Me, nor release ***Me***. From now on the Son of Man will be sitting at ***the*** right ***hand*** of the power of God." And they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" And He said to them,

"You say that I am." And they said, "What further need of testimony do we have? For we ourselves have heard ***it*** from His mouth."

Chapter 22 Preview

The Passover is near, and the chief priests are looking for a way to kill Jesus without stirring up the crowds. Then Satan enters Judas, one of the twelve, and he agrees to hand Jesus over for money. Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare the Passover in a large upper room, and there He eats His last meal with the twelve. He tells them how much He has longed to eat this Passover with them before He suffers. He takes bread and says, "This is My body, which is being given for you; do this for My remembrance," and He gives them the cup of the new covenant in His blood.

At the same table, the disciples argue about who is greatest, and Jesus tells them that He is among them as the One who serves. He warns Simon Peter that Satan has asked to sift him like wheat, but He has prayed for him. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus kneels and prays, "not My will, but Yours be done," and in His agony His sweat becomes like drops of blood. Judas comes with a crowd and betrays Him with a kiss. Peter strikes with a sword, and Jesus heals the servant's ear. Jesus is led to the high priest's house, where Peter denies Him three times, and when the rooster crows, the Lord turns and looks at Peter. At daybreak the council asks Him if He is the Son of God, and He says, "You say that I am."

Chapter 22 Study

22:1-2 *Now the Feast of Unleavened **Bread**, which is called Passover, was drawing near. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might do away with Him, for they were afraid of the people.*

"Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called Passover, was drawing near." Passover remembered the night God brought Israel out of Egypt. The angel of death passed over every house that had the blood of a lamb on its doorposts (Exodus 12:1-13). The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed it for seven days, and the people ate bread without yeast to remember how quickly they left Egypt (Exodus 12:14-20). The two were so close together that people called the whole week Passover. Jerusalem would be packed with pilgrims from all over the world.

"And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might do away with Him, for they were afraid of the people." They had already decided to kill Him (19:47). The only question was how, without starting a riot during the feast.

22:3 *Then Satan entered into Judas, the one surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.*

"Then Satan entered into Judas, the one surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve." Satan is the devil, the enemy of God and man. Iscariot likely means man of Kerioth, a town in Judea.

How could Satan enter one of the twelve? Judas had walked with Jesus for three years. He had seen the miracles and heard the teaching. Yet his heart had never truly belonged to Jesus.

John 12:6 tells us he was a thief who stole from the money bag. Satan did not force his way into a willing heart for Christ. Judas had been opening the door to him for a long time through his love of money.

We should never forget that it is possible to be close to Jesus on the outside and far from Him on the inside.

22:4-6 *And having gone away, he talked with the chief priests and the captains **about** how he might deliver Him up to them. And they rejoiced, and they agreed to give him money. And he promised, and was seeking an opportunity to deliver Him up to them apart from a crowd.*

"And having gone away, he talked with the chief priests and the captains about how he might deliver Him up to them." The captains were the officers of the temple guard, a Jewish police force run by the priests.

"And they rejoiced, and they agreed to give him money." The leaders were glad. One of His own men was offering to help them. Matthew 26:15 tells us the price was thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave (Exodus 21:32).

"And he promised, and was seeking an opportunity to deliver Him up to them apart from a crowd." Judas would watch for a time when Jesus was away from the crowds, at night, in a quiet place. He knew where Jesus went to pray.

22:7-9 *Then the day of Unleavened **Bread** came, on which it was necessary **for** the Passover to be sacrificed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Having gone, prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat." And they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare **it**?"*

"Then the day of Unleavened Bread came, on which it was necessary for the Passover to be sacrificed." On this day, thousands of lambs were killed at the temple in the afternoon, and families ate the Passover meal that evening.

And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Having gone, prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat." Preparing the Passover meant getting a lamb, having it sacrificed at the temple, roasting it, and setting out the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, the wine and the other foods for the meal. It was a lot of work.

"Where do You want us to prepare it?"

22:10-12 *And He said to them, "Look, when you have entered into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you; follow him into the house where he enters. And you will say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' And he will show you a large upper room, furnished; prepare there."*

"Look, when you have entered into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you." Carrying water jars was usually women's work, so a man carrying one would stand out. "Follow him into the house where he enters."

They were to say to the owner, "The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" "And he will show you a large upper room, furnished." An upper room was a room built on the roof of a house. Furnished means it was set up with couches and tables for the meal.

Why the secret plan? Judas was looking for a chance to betray Jesus. If he had known ahead of time where they would eat, he might have brought the guards to the meal. Jesus made sure He would have this last supper with His disciples undisturbed. Some think the house may have belonged to the family of John Mark, whose mother's home later became a meeting place for the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). Scripture does not tell us.

22:13 *And having gone, they found **it** just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.*

"And having gone, they found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover." Once again things happened exactly as Jesus said (19:32). He was not a victim of events. He was in control of every detail of His last night.

22:14 *And when the hour came, He reclined **at table**, and the twelve apostles with Him.*

"And when the hour came, He reclined at table, and the twelve apostles with Him." At a feast, people did not sit on chairs. They lay on couches around a low table, leaning on the left elbow and eating with the right hand. The hour was the evening, when the Passover meal began. But the hour also has a deeper meaning. John often speaks of Jesus' hour, the time set by the Father for Him to die (John 13:1). That hour had come.

22:15 *And He said to them, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*

"With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." This is a strong way of saying, I have longed for this with all My heart. Jesus wanted this time with His friends. He knew it was the last meal before the cross.

Think of it. On the night before He died, Jesus' heart was set on being with His disciples. He loves His people, and He wants our company.

22:16 *For I say to you that I will certainly no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."*

"For I say to you that I will certainly no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Jesus would not eat the Passover again until it found its full meaning in the kingdom.

The Passover lamb pointed forward to Him. Paul says, "our Passover was sacrificed for us: Christ" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The meal will be "fulfilled" when Christ's kingdom comes, and His people sit at His table in that day (Revelation 19:9). Jesus is looking past the cross to the day when He will celebrate with His people in His kingdom.

22:17-18 *And having received a cup, having given thanks, He said, "Take this and divide **it** among yourselves. For I say to you that I will certainly not drink of the produce of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."*

And having received a cup, having given thanks, He said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves." The Passover meal had several cups of wine through the evening. Luke mentions two cups: this one, early in the meal, and another one after the meal (22:20). This first cup seems to be one of the earlier Passover cups.

"For I say to you that I will certainly not drink of the produce of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." The "produce of the vine" is wine. Jesus would not drink it with them again until the kingdom. This is a promise as much as a farewell. He will drink it with us again.

22:19 *And having taken bread, having given thanks, He broke **it** and gave **it** to them, saying, "This is My body, which is being given for you; do this for My remembrance."*

And having taken bread, having given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body, which is being given for you; do this for My remembrance."

The bread was unleavened, flat bread made without yeast. At Passover it reminded Israel of their hurry to leave Egypt. Jesus took it and gave it a new meaning. "This is My body." His body would be "given for you," offered up on the cross the next day in our place.

"Do this for My remembrance." Jesus gave His church a meal to remember Him by. Every time believers eat the bread together, we look back to the cross and remember the body He gave for us.

22:20 *And likewise the cup after dining, saying, "This cup **is** the new covenant in My blood, which is being poured out for you.*

And likewise the cup after dining, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is being poured out for you." A covenant is a binding agreement between two parties. At Mount Sinai, God made a covenant with Israel and it was sealed with the blood of animals (Exodus 24:8). Later, through Jeremiah, God promised "a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," in which He would write His law on their hearts and remember their sins no more (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Jesus says His own blood seals that new covenant.

"Which is being poured out for you." Poured out is the language of sacrifice, when blood was poured at the base of the altar. Jesus' blood would be poured out on the cross to pay for our sins.

Verses 19-20 are the beginning of what we call the Lord's Supper, or Communion. What did Jesus mean by "This is My body" and "This cup is the new covenant in My blood"? Many Christians believe Jesus was speaking the way He often did, using a picture. He was sitting right there in His body when He said it, and He called the cup the covenant, which is a way of speaking about what the cup stands for. He also called Himself the door and the vine. Paul tells us the Lord's Supper is a remembrance and a proclamation: "as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). Christians have understood it in other ways too. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the bread and wine become the

body and blood of Christ. Lutherans teach that Christ's body and blood are truly present with the bread and wine, and many Reformed Christians believe Christ is spiritually present to believers in the meal. Whatever our view, every believer should come to the Lord's Table with reverence, examining his own heart (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

Bible teachers also differ on how the church relates to the new covenant Jeremiah promised. Some teach that the church has taken Israel's place in it, but I believe the church shares now in its forgiveness through Christ's blood, while God will still keep every word of it with the house of Israel and the house of Judah when Christ returns, for Paul says, "and this is the covenant from Me to them, when I take away their sins" (Romans 11:27).

Old Testament links: Jeremiah 31:31 (alluded to); Exodus 24:8 (alluded to)

22:21-22 *But look, the hand of the one delivering Me up **is** with Me on the table. And indeed the Son of Man goes according to what has been determined; but woe to that man through whom He is delivered up!"*

"But look, the hand of the one delivering Me up is with Me on the table." Judas was right there. He had shared the bread. Psalm 41:9 speaks of a close friend who ate bread with Him and lifted up his heel against Him.

"And indeed the Son of Man goes according to what has been determined; but woe to that man through whom He is delivered up!" Here both truths stand side by side. God had determined that Jesus would die for sinners (Acts 2:23). Yet Judas was still fully responsible for what he chose to do. God's plan does not excuse anyone's sin. Judas was not a puppet. He chose money over his Master.

Old Testament links: Psalm 41:9 (fulfilled)

22:23 *And they began to question among themselves which of them then it might be who was about to do this.*

"And they began to question among themselves which of them then it might be who was about to do this." No one pointed at Judas. He had hidden his heart so well that none of the others suspected him. Each man wondered about himself. That is a healthy thing. We should not be quick to think, "Not me." Any of us can fall if we are not walking close to the Lord (1 Corinthians 10:12).

22:24 *And there was also a dispute among them, which of them is thought to be greater.*

"And there was also a dispute among them, which of them is thought to be greater." This is hard to believe. Jesus had just told them He was about to give His body and pour out His blood for them. Within minutes, they were arguing about who was the most important.

They had argued about this before (9:46). Pride is stubborn. It shows up even at the Lord's Table. Before we look down on them, we should ask how often we have done the same thing.

22:25 *And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those exercising authority over them are called benefactors.*

"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those exercising authority over them are called benefactors." A benefactor is someone who does good for others, a patron. Rulers in that day loved to be called benefactors, and some even put the title on their coins, while they ruled their people with a heavy hand. That is the way of the world. Power is used to be served, and the powerful want credit for it.

22:26 *But you, not so; but the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and the one leading as the one serving.*

"But you, not so." With three words, Jesus turns the world's idea of greatness upside down. "But the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and the one leading as the one serving."

In that culture, the youngest got the lowest jobs and the least honor. Jesus says the greatest among His people should act like the youngest, and the leader should act like a servant. Leadership in the church is not about position or titles. It is about service.

22:27 *For who **is** greater, the one reclining **at table** or the one serving? **Is it** not the one reclining? But I am in your midst as the One serving.*

"For who is greater, the one reclining at table or the one serving? Is it not the one reclining? But I am in your midst as the One serving."

In the world's eyes, the one at the table is greater than the one bringing the food. But Jesus, the Lord of glory, was among them as a servant. John 13:1-17 tells us that at this same meal Jesus got up, wrapped a towel around Himself, and washed their feet. And the next day He would give His life for them. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

If our Lord took the place of a servant, there is no job beneath us.

22:28-30 *And you are those who have remained with Me in My trials. And I appoint to you, just as My Father appointed to Me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

"And you are those who have remained with Me in My trials." Jesus speaks kindly to these men. For all their faults, they had stayed with Him through hard times, when many others had walked away (John 6:66-69).

"And I appoint to you, just as My Father appointed to Me, a kingdom." The Father had given the kingdom to the Son, and the Son shares it with His faithful followers.

"So that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This is a promise about the future kingdom on earth. When Christ returns and reigns, the apostles will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel under Him (Matthew 19:28). This

is one more sign that God still has a future for the nation of Israel. The twelve tribes will be there, and the twelve apostles will judge them.

They had been arguing about who was greatest. Jesus tells them that the real honor is still ahead, and it is given by Him, not grabbed for ourselves.

22:31 *And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, look, Satan has asked for you, to sift **you** like wheat.*

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, look, Satan has asked for you, to sift you like wheat." Saying his name twice shows how serious this was. Simon was Peter's own name. Jesus gave him the name Peter, which means rock.

Sifting wheat meant shaking it hard in a sieve so the grain falls through and the dirt and chaff are left. Satan wanted to shake the disciples until their faith fell apart. Like with Job, Satan had to ask God's permission (Job 1:6-12). He cannot touch God's people beyond what God allows.

The word "you" in "asked for you" is plural in Greek. Satan wanted all of them. But in the next verse, the "you" is singular. Jesus speaks to Peter directly.

22:32 *But I begged for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."*

"But I begged for you, that your faith may not fail." Jesus had prayed for Peter by name. What a comfort that must have been to Peter later. Jesus still does this for His people today. He is "always living to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

Notice that Jesus did not pray that Peter would not fall. Peter would fall that very night. He prayed that his faith would not fail, that he would not give up on Christ completely. Peter's courage failed. His faith did not.

"And you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Jesus already knew Peter would come back. He gave him a job for afterward. Peter's failure would make him a better shepherd, humble and gentle with others who fall. Read his letters, and you will see a man who learned this lesson (1 Peter 5:5-10).

22:33-34 *And he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death." And He said, "I tell you, Peter, a rooster will certainly not crow today before you deny three times that you know Me."*

"Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death." Peter meant it. He loved Jesus, and he believed he was strong enough to stand. Later he did go to prison for Jesus (Acts 12:3-5), and church history tells us he died for Him. But not yet. That night he trusted in himself.

"I tell you, Peter, a rooster will certainly not crow today before you deny three times that you know Me." The Jewish day began at sunset, so "today" meant before the night was over. Before dawn, Peter would deny Jesus three times.

Self-confidence is dangerous. The moment we think we could never fall is the moment we are closest to falling.

22:35 *And He said to them, "When I sent you without purse and bag and sandals, did you lack anything?" And they said, "Nothing."*

"When I sent you without purse and bag and sandals, did you lack anything?" Jesus reminds them of when He sent them out to preach and heal with nothing (9:3; 10:4). God had taken care of them through the people who welcomed them. And they said, "Nothing."

22:36 *Then He said to them, "But now, the one who has a purse, let him take **it**, likewise also a bag; and the one who does not have **one**, let him sell his cloak and buy a sword.*

"But now, the one who has a purse, let him take it, likewise also a bag; and the one who does not have one, let him sell his cloak and buy a sword."

Things were about to change. When they were sent out before, people welcomed them. After Jesus was gone, they would face a hostile world. They would need to plan and provide for themselves. The talk of a sword is hard, and Bible teachers read it in two main ways.

Some believe Jesus was speaking in a picture. He was telling them that hard and dangerous days were coming, and they must be ready, as a man going into danger would carry a sword. When they took Him at face value and showed Him two swords, He said, "It is enough," as if to say, enough of this talk, you do not understand. Others believe He meant a real sword for self-defense against robbers and wild animals on the road, but never for spreading the gospel or defending Him. Either way, a few hours later Jesus told Peter to stop using a sword (22:51; Matthew 26:52). His kingdom does not advance by the sword (John 18:36).

22:37 *For I say to you that this which has been written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was counted with lawless **ones**.' For also the things concerning Me have an end."*

"For I say to you that this which has been written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was counted with lawless ones.'" Jesus quotes Isaiah 53:12. This is the chapter about the suffering Servant of the Lord, who would carry the sins of many. Jesus says it is about Him.

The next day this came true. He was crucified between two criminals, counted as one of the lawless (23:32-33). The Holy One was treated like a criminal so that criminals like us could be counted righteous.

"For also the things concerning Me have an end." The things written about Him were coming to their fulfillment. The end of His earthly work was near.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 53:12 (quoted)

22:38 *And they said, "Lord, look, here **are** two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."*

And they said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." They took Him in the most literal way possible. Two swords against the Roman army and the temple guard would not go far. And He said to them,

"It is enough." Many see sadness in these words. They still did not understand what kind of battle He was facing.

22:39 *And having gone out, He went according to the custom to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him.*

"And having gone out, He went according to the custom to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him." It was His custom. Jesus went there to pray every night that week (21:37). Matthew and Mark tell us the place was called Gethsemane, which means oil press, a garden of olive trees on the slope of the mount (Matthew 26:36).

Judas knew this custom too (John 18:2). Jesus did not hide. He went to the place where He knew Judas would find Him.

22:40 *And having come to the place, He said to them, "Pray not to enter into temptation."*

And having come to the place, He said to them, "Pray not to enter into temptation." Temptation here means a test or trial that could cause them to fall. Jesus knew what was about to happen. Their best defense was prayer. The battle would be won or lost in the hours before the soldiers arrived.

That is still true for us. We usually lose battles with temptation long before the temptation comes, because we did not pray when we had the chance.

22:41-42 *And He was drawn away from them about a stone's throw, and having knelt down, He was praying, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."*

"And He was drawn away from them about a stone's throw, and having knelt down, He was praying." A stone's throw is a short distance. Jewish men usually stood to pray. Jesus knelt, a sign of the weight on His heart. Matthew says He fell on His face (Matthew 26:39).

"Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

What was the cup? In the Old Testament, a cup is often a picture of God's wrath against sin (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17; Jeremiah 25:15). Jesus was not just afraid of pain or death. Many men have faced death bravely. He was about to drink the cup of God's anger against the sins of the world. He who had never known sin would be made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). The holy Son of God shrank from that.

Here we see that Jesus was fully man. He had a real human will that felt the horror of what was ahead. And here we see His perfect obedience. "Not My will, but Yours be done." That is the most important prayer anyone can pray. Jesus prayed it at the cost of His life.

22:43-44 *And an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He was praying more earnestly; and His sweat became like thick drops of blood falling down upon the ground.*

"And an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him." The Father did not take the cup away. Instead He sent help to give Jesus strength to drink it. Often God does not remove our trial. He gives us strength to go through it (2 Corinthians 12:9).

"And being in agony, He was praying more earnestly; and His sweat became like thick drops of blood falling down upon the ground." Agony means the deepest struggle and anguish of soul. The strength the angel gave did not end the struggle. It helped Him pray harder.

Luke, the doctor, notes that His sweat became "like" thick drops of blood. Some take this to mean the sweat fell in heavy drops the way blood drips from a wound. Others point out that under extreme stress, tiny blood vessels near the skin can break and mix blood with sweat, a rare condition doctors have described. Either way, Luke wants us to see how terrible this struggle was. We will never know what it cost our Savior to say yes to the cross.

These two verses are among the places where the SLB follows the Received Greek Text, the Greek text used for the King James Bible. Some of the oldest Greek copies of Luke do not have these words, while other very early copies do, and some early church writers in the second century knew them. Many modern Bibles put them in brackets or a footnote. No teaching of the faith rests on these verses alone. The Gospels all agree that Jesus faced the cross in deep anguish of soul (Matthew 26:37-38; Mark 14:33-34; Hebrews 5:7).

22:45-46 *And having risen up from the prayer, having come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from the sorrow, and He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Having risen up, pray, so that you may not enter into temptation."*

"And having risen up from the prayer, having come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from the sorrow." Only Luke tells us why they were sleeping. They were worn out by grief. Sorrow can drain a person until he can barely keep his eyes open.

"Why are you sleeping? Having risen up, pray, so that you may not enter into temptation." Jesus does not scold them harshly. But He repeats His warning. They had a short time left, and they were sleeping it away. In a few minutes, every one of them would run.

22:47 *And while He was still speaking, look, a crowd, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was going before them, and he drew near to Jesus to kiss Him.*

"And while He was still speaking, look, a crowd, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was going before them." Luke reminds us again that Judas was "one of the twelve." That is the sad heart of it. He led the crowd. John tells us it included a cohort of Roman soldiers along with the temple officers (John 18:3).

"He drew near to Jesus to kiss Him." A kiss on the cheek was the normal greeting between a disciple and his teacher. Judas had told them the one he kissed was the man to arrest (Mark 14:44). The sign of love became the sign of betrayal.

22:48 *And Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you delivering up the Son of Man with a kiss?"*

"Judas, are you delivering up the Son of Man with a kiss?" Jesus called him by name. He gave Judas one more chance to see what he was doing. Jesus knew everything, and still He spoke to him as a man, not a monster. "With a kiss." There is something especially evil about betraying love with a sign of love.

22:49-50 *And those around Him, having seen what was going to be, said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with a sword?" And a certain one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear.*

"Lord, shall we strike with a sword?" They did not wait for an answer. "And a certain one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear." John tells us it was Peter, and the slave's name was Malchus (John 18:10). Peter was probably aiming for his head. He meant to keep his promise to fight to the death. But it was the wrong fight.

22:51 *And answering, Jesus said, "Allow as far as this." And having touched his ear, He healed him.*

"Allow as far as this." Jesus stopped it. Enough. "And having touched his ear, He healed him." Only Luke, the doctor, tells us this.

Think about this. Jesus' last miracle of healing before the cross was for a man who had come to arrest Him. He loved His enemies, and He did good to those who hated Him, just as He had taught (6:27-28). He also kept Peter from being arrested for assault. Even while being betrayed, Jesus was caring for others.

22:52-53 *And Jesus said to those who had come against Him, chief priests and captains of the temple and elders, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? While I was with you every day in the temple, you did not stretch out your hands against Me. But this is your hour, and the power of the darkness."*

"Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?" Jesus spoke to the chief priests, the captains of the temple guard, and the elders who had come along. He was no armed rebel. "While I was with you every day in the temple, you did not stretch out your hands against Me." They could have arrested Him any day in public. They came at night because they were afraid of the people and ashamed of what they were doing.

"But this is your hour, and the power of the darkness." Darkness here means Satan and the forces of evil. For a short time, God would let the darkness have its hour. But it was only an hour. The darkness could do nothing beyond what God allowed, and in three days it would be defeated.

22:54 *And having seized Him, they led **Him** away and brought Him into the house of the high priest. And Peter was following at a distance.*

"And having seized Him, they led Him away and brought Him into the house of the high priest." The high priest that year was Caiaphas, son-in-law of Annas, who had been high priest before him (John 18:13). The high priest was the head of the Jewish religion and led the Sanhedrin. John tells us Jesus was taken first to Annas and then to Caiaphas (John 18:13, 24).

"And Peter was following at a distance." Peter was brave enough to follow but afraid enough to stay back. Following Jesus at a distance is a dangerous place to be.

22:55 *And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting in the midst of them.*

"And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting in the midst of them." The house had an open courtyard in the middle. Nights in Jerusalem in early spring can be cold. Peter sat down with the servants and guards by the fire. He was trying to blend in with the very people who had arrested his Lord.

22:56-57 *And a certain servant girl, having seen him sitting by the light and having looked intently at him, said, "This one also was with Him." But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."*

And a certain servant girl, having seen him sitting by the light and having looked intently at him, said, "This one also was with Him." The firelight showed his face. She stared at him and spoke up.

But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." A few hours before, Peter had said he was ready to go to prison and to death for Jesus. Now a servant girl frightened him into saying he did not even know Him.

22:58 *And after a little **while** another, having seen him, said, "You also are of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not."*

And after a little while another, having seen him, said, "You also are of them." Someone else said, you are one of His followers. But Peter said, "Man, I am not." The second denial. Each lie made the next one easier.

22:59-60 *And about one hour having passed, a certain other **man** was strongly affirming, saying, "In truth this one also was with Him, for he also is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.*

And about one hour having passed, a certain other man was strongly affirming, saying, "In truth this one also was with Him, for he also is a Galilean." Peter's accent gave him away (Matthew 26:73). People from Galilee spoke with an accent the people of Jerusalem could recognize.

But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying." Mark tells us he began to curse and swear (Mark 14:71). "And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed." The words were still in his mouth when the sound came, just as Jesus had said.

22:61 *And having turned, the Lord looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."*

"And having turned, the Lord looked at Peter." Only Luke tells us this. Jesus must have been where He could see the courtyard, perhaps being led from one place to another. In that moment, their eyes met.

What was in that look? Luke does not say. But Jesus had already prayed for Peter (22:32), so it was surely the look of a friend who knew it would happen and loved him anyway.

And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." It all came back to him at once.

22:62 *And having gone outside, Peter wept bitterly.*

"And having gone outside, Peter wept bitterly." This is what real repentance looks like. Peter did not make excuses. He did not blame the girl or the guards. He went out and wept.

Judas and Peter both failed Jesus on the same night. Judas was sorry, but he went to the priests and then took his own life (Matthew 27:3-5). Peter wept and came back to Jesus. Paul tells us there are two kinds of sorrow, one that leads to repentance and one that leads to death (2 Corinthians 7:10). Jesus had already prayed that Peter's faith would not fail, and it did not. After the resurrection, Jesus restored Peter, and Peter strengthened his brothers just as Jesus said (John 21:15-19; Acts 2:14-41).

If you have failed the Lord, even badly, this is for you. Come back to Him. He knew you would fall, He prayed for you, and He is ready to restore you.

22:63-65 *And the men who were holding Jesus were mocking Him, beating **Him**. And having blindfolded Him, they were striking His face, and they were questioning Him, saying, "Prophesy! Who is it who struck You?" And many other things they were saying against Him, blaspheming.*

"And the men who were holding Jesus were mocking Him, beating Him." The guards made a game of it. And having blindfolded Him, they were striking His face, and they were questioning Him, saying, "Prophesy! Who is it who struck You?" They mocked the idea that He was a prophet. Yet that very night He had foretold Peter's denial, and the rooster had just proved Him right.

"And many other things they were saying against Him, blaspheming." To blaspheme is to speak against God. They were mocking and insulting the Son of God to His face. Isaiah had foretold that the Servant would give His back to those who strike and would not hide His face from insults and spitting (Isaiah 50:6). Peter, who watched this night, later wrote that He, "being reviled, did not revile in return" (1 Peter 2:23).

Old Testament links: Isaiah 50:6 (alluded to)

22:66 *And when it became day, the body of elders of the people was gathered together, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him up into their own council,*

"And when it became day, the body of elders of the people was gathered together, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him up into their own council." This was the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews, made up of about seventy men and the high priest. Matthew and Mark tell of a trial during the night. Jewish custom expected a death sentence to be given in the daytime, so at dawn they met again to make it official.

22:67-68 *saying, "If You are the Christ, tell us." And He said to them, "If I tell you, you will certainly not believe; and if I also ask **you**, you will certainly not answer Me, nor release **Me**.*

"If You are the Christ, tell us." Christ means the Anointed One, the Messiah. It was not an honest question. Their minds were made up.

"If I tell you, you will certainly not believe; and if I also ask you, you will certainly not answer Me, nor release Me." Jesus knew it would make no difference. He had already asked them questions they would not answer (20:3-8, 41-44).

22:69 *From now on the Son of Man will be sitting at **the** right **hand** of the power of God."*

"From now on the Son of Man will be sitting at the right hand of the power of God." Jesus joins two great Old Testament passages. The Son of Man is from Daniel 7:13-14, the One who receives an everlasting kingdom. Sitting at the right hand is from Psalm 110:1, which He had just asked them about (20:42-43). The right hand of God is the place of highest honor and power.

He was telling the court that they were not really His judges. He would soon be seated as their Judge. The prisoner on trial was the King of heaven.

Old Testament links: Psalm 110:1 (alluded to); Daniel 7:13 (alluded to)

22:70 *And they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" And He said to them, "You say that I am."*

And they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" They understood exactly what He was claiming. And He said to them, "You say that I am." That was a way of saying yes. It is as if He said, you have said it, and it is true.

Jesus was not condemned for anything He did wrong. He was condemned for telling the truth about who He is.

22:71 *And they said, "What further need of testimony do we have? For we ourselves have heard **it** from His mouth."*

"What further need of testimony do we have? For we ourselves have heard it from His mouth." They had what they wanted. In their eyes, His claim to be the Son of God was blasphemy, a crime worthy of death (Leviticus 24:16). But if His claim was true, and it was, then the blasphemy was theirs.

Every person must decide what to do with this claim. Jesus said He is the Son of God. Either it is true, and we must bow to Him, or it is not, and the council was right. There is no middle ground.

Chapter 22 Summary

As Passover nears, Satan enters Judas, who agrees to hand Jesus over to the chief priests for money. Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare the Passover in a large upper room, and there He eats it with the twelve, saying how much He has longed to do so before He suffers. He gives them bread as His body given for them, telling them to do this for His remembrance, and the cup as the new covenant in His blood poured out for them. He tells them the betrayer is at the table. When they argue about who is greatest, He tells them that He is among them as the One serving, and He promises them thrones in His kingdom judging the twelve tribes of Israel. He warns Simon that Satan has asked to sift him, but says He has prayed for him, and He foretells Peter's three denials. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus prays, "not My will, but Yours be done," is strengthened by an angel, and prays in agony with sweat like drops of blood. Judas betrays Him with a kiss, and Jesus heals the ear of the high priest's slave. In the high priest's courtyard Peter denies Him three times, the rooster crows, the Lord looks at Peter, and Peter weeps bitterly. The guards mock and beat Jesus, and at dawn the council asks if He is the Son of God, and He says, "You say that I am."

Chapter 22 Study Questions

1. What did Satan do, and what did Judas agree to do? (22:3-6)

2. What did Jesus say about the bread and the cup at the Last Supper? (22:19-20)

3. What were the disciples arguing about at the table, and what did Jesus teach them about greatness? (22:24-27)

4. What did Jesus tell Peter about Satan, and what had Jesus prayed for him? (22:31-32)

5. What did Jesus pray on the Mount of Olives, and how did the Father answer? (22:41-44)

6. How did Jesus respond when one of the disciples cut off the slave's ear? (22:49-51)

7. What happened when the rooster crowed, and what did Peter do? (22:60-62)

8. What did Jesus say about Himself before the council? (22:69-70)

9. When you come to the Lord's Table, what do you remember, and how do you prepare your heart? (22:19-20)

10. Have you failed the Lord in some way that you need to bring back to Him, as Peter did? (22:61-62)

Chapter 23: The Crucifixion

Scripture

23:1-12 And the whole multitude of them, having risen up, led Him to Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this ***man*** misleading the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying Himself to be Christ, a king." And Pilate questioned Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And answering him, He said, "You say ***it***." And Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." But they were insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, having begun from Galilee as far as here." And Pilate, having heard ***of*** Galilee, asked whether the man is a Galilean. And having learned that He is from the jurisdiction of Herod, he sent Him up to Herod, he also himself being in Jerusalem in these days. And Herod, having seen Jesus, was exceedingly glad; for he had been wishing for a long ***time*** to see Him, because of hearing many things about Him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by Him. And he was questioning Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood vehemently accusing Him. And Herod with his troops, having treated Him with contempt and having mocked ***Him***, having put splendid apparel on Him, sent Him back to Pilate. And both Pilate and Herod became friends with one another on that same day; for they had previously been at enmity between themselves.

23:13-25 And Pilate, having called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said to them, "You brought this man to me as one turning away the people; and look, I, having examined ***Him*** before you, found in this man no guilt ***in the things*** of which you are accusing Him; but neither ***did*** Herod, for I sent you up to him; and look, nothing worthy of death has been done by Him. Therefore, having chastised Him, I will release ***Him***." Now he had a necessity to release one to them at ***every*** feast. But they cried out all together, saying, "Take away this ***man***, and release to us Barabbas"— who had been cast into prison on account of a certain insurrection that had occurred in the city, and murder. Pilate therefore called out again, wishing to release Jesus. But they were crying out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!" And a third ***time*** he said to them, "For what evil has this ***man*** done? I found no guilt ***deserving*** of death in Him. Therefore, having chastised Him, I will release ***Him***." But they were insistent with loud voices, asking for Him to be crucified; and their voices and ***those*** of the chief priests were prevailing. And Pilate gave sentence that their demand be done. And he released to them the one who had been cast into the prison on account of insurrection and murder, whom they were asking for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will.

23:26-38 And as they led Him away, having laid hold of Simon, a certain Cyrenian coming from the country, they put the cross on him to carry ***it*** behind Jesus. And a great multitude of the people was following Him, and of women who also were mourning and lamenting Him. And having turned to them, Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For look, days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed ***are*** the barren, and the wombs that did not bear, and the breasts that did not nurse.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do these things in the green tree, what may happen in the dry?" And two others also, criminals, were being led with Him to be put to death. And when they went away to the place which is called Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on ***the*** right and one on ***the*** left. And Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive

them, for they do not know what they are doing." And dividing His garments, they cast a lot. And the people stood watching. And the rulers also with them were sneering, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself, if this is the Christ, the Chosen ***One*** of God." And the soldiers also were mocking Him, coming near, and offering sour wine to Him, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" And there was also an inscription written over Him in Greek and Latin and Hebrew letters: "This is the King of the Jews."

23:39-49 And one of the criminals who had been hanged was blaspheming Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us!" But the other, answering, was rebuking him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same judgment? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving ***things*** worthy of what we did; but this ***man*** did nothing wrong." And he was saying to Jesus, "Remember me, Lord, when You come in Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." And it was about ***the*** sixth hour, and darkness came over all the land until ***the*** ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in the middle. And having called out with a loud voice, Jesus said, "Father, into Your hands I will commit My spirit." And having said these things, He expired. And the centurion, having seen what had taken place, glorified God, saying, "Certainly this man was righteous." And all the crowds who had come together to this spectacle, seeing the things that had taken place, were returning, beating their breasts. And all His acquaintances stood at a distance, and women who had followed with Him from Galilee, watching these things.

23:50-56 And look, a man named Joseph, being a council member, a good and righteous man—this ***man*** had not consented to their counsel and deed—from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who also himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; this ***man***, having gone to Pilate, asked for the body of Jesus. And having taken it down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth, and placed it in a rock-hewn tomb, where no one had yet been laid. And it was ***the*** day of Preparation, and ***the*** Sabbath was dawning. And the women also, who had come with Him out of Galilee, having followed after, saw the tomb and how His body was laid. And having returned, they prepared spices and ointments. And on the Sabbath they indeed rested according to the commandment.

Chapter 23 Preview

This is the chapter the whole Gospel has been moving toward. The council brings Jesus to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, with political charges: He misleads the nation, forbids paying tribute to Caesar, and calls Himself a king. Pilate finds no guilt in Him and sends Him to Herod Antipas, who mocks Him and sends Him back. Three times Pilate says Jesus is innocent, but the crowd shouts for Barabbas, a rebel and murderer, and cries, "Crucify, crucify Him!" Pilate gives in.

Simon of Cyrene carries the cross, and Jesus tells the weeping women of Jerusalem to weep for themselves. At the place called Skull, He is crucified between two criminals, and He prays, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." The rulers, the soldiers and one of the criminals mock Him, but the other criminal asks Jesus to remember him, and Jesus promises, "today you will be with Me in Paradise." Darkness covers the land, the veil of the temple is torn, and Jesus commits His spirit into His Father's hands. A centurion glorifies God, and Joseph

of Arimathea lays the body in a new tomb as the Sabbath begins. Read this chapter slowly. This is what our salvation cost.

Chapter 23 Study

23:1 *And the whole multitude of them, having risen up, led Him to Pilate.*

"And the whole multitude of them, having risen up, led Him to Pilate." The council had condemned Jesus at dawn (22:66-71). But under Roman rule they could not put anyone to death without the governor's order (John 18:31).

Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from about A.D. 26 to 36. He usually lived in Caesarea on the coast but came to Jerusalem at feast times with extra soldiers to keep order. Other ancient writers describe him as harsh and stubborn, and Luke has already mentioned a time he killed some Galileans while they were offering sacrifices (13:1).

23:2 *And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this **man** misleading the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying Himself to be Christ, a king."*

And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying Himself to be Christ, a king."

Notice that they changed the charge. Before their own council, the charge was blasphemy, claiming to be the Son of God (22:70-71). A Roman governor would not care about a Jewish religious argument. So they gave Pilate political charges that Rome would care about.

Every one of them was twisted. Jesus did not mislead the nation. He called it to repent. He did not forbid paying tribute to Caesar. He said the opposite (20:25). He did claim to be the Christ, the King, but not the kind of king who would lead a revolt against Rome.

23:3 *And Pilate questioned Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And answering him, He said, "You say **it**."*

And Pilate questioned Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Pilate must have looked at the man in front of him, beaten, tied, and alone, and wondered how this could be a king.

And answering him, He said, "You say it." This was a yes, but a careful one. John 18:33-38 tells us Jesus explained that His kingdom is not of this world. He was a King, but He was no threat to Rome in the way they claimed.

23:4 *And Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man."*

And Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." This is the first of three times in this chapter Pilate says Jesus is innocent (23:4, 14, 22). Luke wants us to see it clearly. Jesus did not die because He was guilty of anything. The Roman judge himself said so. He died as the innocent One in the place of the guilty.

23:5 *But they were insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, having begun from Galilee as far as here."*

But they were insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, having begun from Galilee as far as here." They pressed harder. He is a troublemaker, they said, and His movement has spread all over the land. Galilee had a reputation for rebels against Rome, so mentioning it was meant to make Pilate nervous.

23:6-7 *And Pilate, having heard **of** Galilee, asked whether the man is a Galilean. And having learned that He is from the jurisdiction of Herod, he sent Him up to Herod, he also himself being in Jerusalem in these days.*

"And Pilate, having heard of Galilee, asked whether the man is a Galilean." Pilate saw a way out. "And having learned that He is from the jurisdiction of Herod, he sent Him up to Herod." Jurisdiction means the area where a ruler has legal authority. This was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who ruled Galilee under Rome. He was the one who had put John the Baptist to death (9:7-9). He was in Jerusalem for the Passover.

Pilate wanted to pass the problem to someone else. But no one can hand off the decision about Jesus.

23:8 *And Herod, having seen Jesus, was exceedingly glad; for he had been wishing for a long **time** to see Him, because of hearing many things about Him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by Him.*

"And Herod, having seen Jesus, was exceedingly glad; for he had been wishing for a long time to see Him." Herod had been curious about Jesus for a long time (9:9). "He was hoping to see some sign done by Him." He wanted a show, like a king calling for a magician to entertain him.

Herod was not looking for truth. He was looking for entertainment. Many people today are like that. They are curious about Jesus but have no interest in bowing to Him.

23:9-10 *And he was questioning Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood vehemently accusing Him.*

"And he was questioning Him with many words, but He answered him nothing." Herod talked and talked. Jesus said nothing at all. This was the man who had silenced John the Baptist, God's voice to him. Now the Word of God stood before him and was silent. When a person keeps refusing God's truth, there can come a time when God stops speaking.

Isaiah had foretold this: like a lamb led to slaughter and a sheep silent before its shearers, the Servant would not open His mouth (Isaiah 53:7).

"And the chief priests and the scribes stood vehemently accusing Him." They had followed Him to Herod and kept shouting their charges.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 53:7 (alluded to)

23:11 *And Herod with his troops, having treated Him with contempt and having mocked **Him**, having put splendid apparel on Him, sent Him back to Pilate.*

"And Herod with his troops, having treated Him with contempt and having mocked Him, having put splendid apparel on Him, sent Him back to Pilate." Contempt means treating someone as worthless. Herod and his soldiers mocked Jesus as a joke king and dressed Him in a bright, fancy robe. Then he sent Him back. Herod found nothing to charge Him with either.

23:12 *And both Pilate and Herod became friends with one another on that same day; for they had previously been at enmity between themselves.*

"And both Pilate and Herod became friends with one another on that same day; for they had previously been at enmity between themselves." Enmity means hostility. These two rulers had been enemies. What they had in common now was their treatment of Jesus. Peter later saw in this a fulfillment of Psalm 2, where the kings of the earth and the rulers gather together against the Lord and His Anointed (Acts 4:25-28).

23:13-15 *And Pilate, having called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said to them, "You brought this man to me as one turning away the people; and look, I, having examined **Him** before you, found in this man no guilt **in the things** of which you are accusing Him; but neither **did** Herod, for I sent you up to him; and look, nothing worthy of death has been done by Him.*

Pilate called together "the chief priests and the rulers and the people." He told them, "You brought this man to me as one turning away the people; and look, I, having examined Him before you, found in this man no guilt in the things of which you are accusing Him."

Then he added, "but neither did Herod, for I sent you up to him; and look, nothing worthy of death has been done by Him." This is Pilate's second statement of Jesus' innocence. Two rulers, a Roman governor and a Jewish king, had both examined Him and found nothing.

23:16 *Therefore, having chastised Him, I will release **Him**."*

"Therefore, having chastised Him, I will release Him." To chastise here means to have Him whipped as a warning. Pilate hoped a beating would satisfy the crowd.

Think about how unjust this is. Pilate found Him innocent, so he would have Him whipped. Pilate cared more about keeping the peace than about justice.

23:17 *Now he had a necessity to release one to them at **every** feast.*

"Now he had a necessity to release one to them at every feast." It was a custom for the governor to release one prisoner to the people at Passover, the feast that celebrated Israel's freedom from slavery (Matthew 27:15; Mark 15:6). Pilate hoped they would choose Jesus.

This verse is one of the places where the SLB follows the Received Greek Text, the Greek text used for the King James Bible. Most of the older Greek copies of Luke do not have it, and many modern

Bibles put it in brackets or a footnote. Matthew 27:15, Mark 15:6 and John 18:39 all describe the same custom, so the fact is not in doubt. No teaching of the faith rests on this verse alone.

23:18-19 *But they cried out all together, saying, "Take away this **man**, and release to us Barabbas"— who had been cast into prison on account of a certain insurrection that had occurred in the city, and murder.*

But they cried out all together, saying, "Take away this man, and release to us Barabbas." Luke tells us who Barabbas was. He had been put in prison "on account of a certain insurrection that had occurred in the city, and murder." An insurrection is an armed uprising against the government.

Here is the irony. The leaders accused Jesus of stirring up rebellion against Rome, which He had not done. Then they asked for the release of a man who really had led a rebellion and committed murder.

Barabbas was guilty. Jesus was innocent. The guilty man went free, and the innocent Man died in his place. That is the gospel in one picture. Each of us is Barabbas. Jesus took our place.

23:20-21 *Pilate therefore called out again, wishing to release Jesus. But they were crying out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!"*

"Pilate therefore called out again, wishing to release Jesus." Pilate tried again. But they were crying out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!"

Crucifixion was the Roman way of executing slaves, rebels, and the worst criminals. The victim was nailed or tied to a wooden cross and left to hang until he died, often after hours or even days. It was slow, public, and shameful. Deuteronomy 21:22-23 said that anyone hanged on a tree was under God's curse. The crowd wanted Jesus to die the most shameful death there was.

23:22 *And a third **time** he said to them, "For what evil has this **man** done? I found no guilt **deserving** of death in Him. Therefore, having chastised Him, I will release **Him**."*

And a third time he said to them, "For what evil has this man done? I found no guilt deserving of death in Him. Therefore, having chastised Him, I will release Him." This is Pilate's third statement of Jesus' innocence. He asked them the question no one could answer: what evil has He done? None.

23:23-24 *But they were insistent with loud voices, asking for Him to be crucified; and their voices and **those** of the chief priests were prevailing. And Pilate gave sentence that their demand be done.*

"But they were insistent with loud voices, asking for Him to be crucified; and their voices and those of the chief priests were prevailing." The noise won. The shouting of a crowd beat the judgment of a judge.

"And Pilate gave sentence that their demand be done." Pilate had the power to release Jesus (John 19:10). He knew Jesus was innocent. But John tells us the crowd threatened him: if he

released this man, he was not Caesar's friend (John 19:12). Pilate was afraid for his own position, so he gave in.

We may think we would never do what Pilate did. But every time we go along with the crowd against what we know is right, we are standing where he stood.

23:25 *And he released to them the one who had been cast into the prison on account of insurrection and murder, whom they were asking for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will.*

"And he released to them the one who had been cast into the prison on account of insurrection and murder, whom they were asking for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will."

Luke tells it plainly. The murderer was released. Jesus was handed over. Luke does not describe the flogging and the crown of thorns, which Matthew, Mark and John tell us about (Matthew 27:26-31; John 19:1-3). He moves straight to the road to the cross.

It is important to say this plainly. The guilt for Jesus' death has sometimes been laid on the Jewish people as a whole, and that has been used to justify hatred and violence against them. That is wicked and has no place in the heart of a Christian. Romans and Jews both took part, Gentile governor and Jewish leaders together (Acts 4:27). And in the deepest sense, it was my sin and yours that put Jesus on the cross (Isaiah 53:5-6).

23:26 *And as they led Him away, having laid hold of Simon, a certain Cyrenian coming from the country, they put the cross on him to carry **it** behind Jesus.*

"And as they led Him away, having laid hold of Simon, a certain Cyrenian coming from the country, they put the cross on him to carry it behind Jesus." A condemned man usually carried the crossbeam of his cross to the place of execution. Jesus had been beaten and flogged and had not slept, and He was too weak to carry it all the way. So the soldiers grabbed a man coming in from the countryside and forced him to carry it.

Cyrene was a city in North Africa, in what is now Libya, where many Jews lived. Simon may have come to Jerusalem for Passover. Mark 15:21 calls him the father of Alexander and Rufus, which suggests these men were known to the early church. Many believe Simon's family came to faith. Paul greets a Rufus in Rome (Romans 16:13), and some think he was the same man, though we cannot be sure.

Notice that he carried the cross "behind Jesus." That is a picture of every disciple. Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (9:23).

23:27-28 *And a great multitude of the people was following Him, and of women who also were mourning and lamenting Him. And having turned to them, Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.*

"And a great multitude of the people was following Him, and of women who also were mourning and lamenting Him." Not everyone in Jerusalem wanted Jesus dead. These women wept and wailed for Him as He went by. Only Luke tells us about them.

"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Even on the way to His own death, Jesus was thinking about others. He knew what was coming on the city, the judgment He had wept over a few days before (19:41-44).

23:29-30 *For look, days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed **are** the barren, and the wombs that did not bear, and the breasts that did not nurse.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.'*

For look, days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that did not bear, and the breasts that did not nurse." In Israel, having children was seen as one of God's greatest blessings, and being unable to have children was a deep sorrow. Jesus says a time is coming that will be so terrible that people will say it was better not to have had children at all, rather than watch them suffer.

"Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.'" Jesus is quoting Hosea 10:8. People will be so desperate that they will wish the mountains would bury them. This came true in the horror of the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Revelation 6:16 uses the same words for the terror of the coming day of God's wrath.

Old Testament links: Hosea 10:8 (quoted)

23:31 *For if they do these things in the green tree, what may happen in the dry?"*

"For if they do these things in the green tree, what may happen in the dry?" A green tree is full of life and hard to burn. A dry tree catches fire easily. Jesus is the green tree, innocent and full of life. If the Romans would do this to Him, an innocent man, what would they do to a guilty, rebellious nation when it was dry and ripe for judgment? Some also see God's own judgment in these words: if God let this happen to His innocent Son, how much worse will it be for those who reject Him?

23:32-33 *And two others also, criminals, were being led with Him to be put to death. And when they went away to the place which is called Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on **the** right and one on **the** left.*

"And two others also, criminals, were being led with Him to be put to death." Jesus had said He would be counted with lawless ones (22:37; Isaiah 53:12). Here it is.

"And when they went away to the place which is called Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left." Skull in Aramaic is Golgotha, and in Latin it is Calvaria, from which we get the name Calvary. It was outside the city wall, near a road where

many people would pass by (John 19:17, 20; Hebrews 13:12). We do not know for sure why it was called Skull. It may have been a rocky hill shaped like a skull, or a place of execution.

"There they crucified Him." Luke says it in just a few words. He does not describe the nails and the pain. He did not need to. His readers knew exactly what crucifixion meant. Jesus was placed in the middle, as if He were the worst of the three.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 53:12 (fulfilled)

23:34 *And Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And dividing His garments, they cast a lot.*

And Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." This is the first of Jesus' words from the cross. Luke says He "was saying" it, which can mean He kept on saying it. While the nails were going in, Jesus was praying for the men doing it.

Who are "them"? The soldiers who nailed Him, surely, and also the leaders and the crowd who called for His death. They did not fully understand that they were crucifying the Lord of glory (Acts 3:17; 1 Corinthians 2:8). Their ignorance did not make them innocent. That is why they needed forgiveness. And God answered that prayer. Fifty days later, on the day of Pentecost, thousands of people in Jerusalem repented and were forgiven (Acts 2:36-41). Even some priests came to faith (Acts 6:7).

Jesus did what He taught. "Love your enemies," and "pray for those who mistreat you" (6:27-28). Stephen, the first Christian martyr, followed his Lord and prayed the same kind of prayer as he was stoned (Acts 7:60). Is there someone you need to forgive? If Jesus could pray this prayer from a cross, He can give you the grace to forgive.

"And dividing His garments, they cast a lot." The soldiers who carried out a crucifixion could take the victim's clothes. They threw dice for them. Psalm 22:18 had foretold it a thousand years before.

Old Testament links: Psalm 22:18 (fulfilled); Isaiah 53:12 (alluded to)

23:35 *And the people stood watching. And the rulers also with them were sneering, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself, if this is the Christ, the Chosen **One** of God."*

"And the people stood watching." Some came to stare. And the rulers also with them were sneering, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself, if this is the Christ, the Chosen One of God." To sneer is to turn up your nose at someone in scorn.

Without knowing it, they spoke the truth. He did save others. And the reason He would not save Himself was because He was saving others. He could have come down. He stayed on the cross because He loved us. If He had saved Himself, He could not have saved anyone else.

23:36-37 *And the soldiers also were mocking Him, coming near, and offering sour wine to Him, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!"*

"And the soldiers also were mocking Him, coming near, and offering sour wine to Him." Sour wine was a cheap, vinegar-like wine that soldiers drank. Psalm 69:21 says, "for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

And saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" The soldiers mocked Him as a king who could not even save Himself. To them, a real king would have power and an army. They could not imagine a King whose greatest act of power was to lay down His life.

Old Testament links: Psalm 69:21 (alluded to)

23:38 *And there was also an inscription written over Him in Greek and Latin and Hebrew letters: "This is the King of the Jews."*

There was also an inscription written over Him in Greek and Latin and Hebrew letters: "This is the King of the Jews." The Romans usually posted the crime of the man being crucified above his head. Pilate had this written in three languages so everyone could read it: Greek, the common language of the empire; Latin, the language of Rome; and Hebrew, the language of the Jews. John tells us the chief priests wanted it changed to say He only claimed to be king, and Pilate refused (John 19:21-22).

Pilate meant it as a mockery, or as a jab at the leaders. But God made it a proclamation to the whole world. It was true. He is the King.

23:39 *And one of the criminals who had been hanged was blaspheming Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us!"*

And one of the criminals who had been hanged was blaspheming Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us!" Even a dying man joined in the mocking. He did not want a Savior from sin. He wanted to get off the cross. Matthew and Mark tell us that at first both criminals mocked Jesus (Matthew 27:44). But something changed in one of them.

23:40-41 *But the other, answering, was rebuking him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same judgment? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving **things** worthy of what we did; but this **man** did nothing wrong."*

But the other, answering, was rebuking him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same judgment?" Something had happened in this man's heart. He had heard Jesus pray for His enemies. He had seen how Jesus suffered. Now he feared God.

"And we indeed justly, for we are receiving things worthy of what we did; but this man did nothing wrong." This is real repentance. He did not make excuses or blame anyone else. He said, I deserve this. And he said Jesus was innocent. He saw what Pilate had seen, and more.

23:42 *And he was saying to Jesus, "Remember me, Lord, when You come in Your kingdom."*

And he was saying to Jesus, "Remember me, Lord, when You come in Your kingdom." This is one of the greatest statements of faith in the Bible. Look at what he saw. He saw a man dying on a cross, beaten and mocked, with a sign over His head calling Him a king. And he called Him "Lord." He believed Jesus was a King who would have a kingdom, even though He was dying. He believed death would not be the end for Jesus. His disciples had run away. A dying thief believed.

He did not ask for much. Only "remember me." He knew he had nothing to offer.

23:43 *And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." The man asked to be remembered someday. Jesus promised him far more, and sooner. Today, not someday. With Me, not just remembered, but with Jesus. In Paradise.

Paradise is a word that first meant a park or garden. The Greek Old Testament used it for the garden of Eden. In Jesus' day it was used for the place of blessing where the righteous go when they die. Paul says he was caught up to Paradise, which he also calls the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2-4), and Revelation 2:7 places the tree of life in the Paradise of God.

Bible teachers have different views about where Paradise was at the time Jesus spoke. Some believe it was then a place of comfort for the righteous dead, the place Jesus called "the bosom of Abraham" (16:22), and that after His resurrection Jesus led those saints up to heaven (Ephesians 4:8-10). Others believe Paradise was heaven itself, where God is, then as now. Either way, the thief would be with Jesus that very day. Some have tried to move the comma, so that it reads "I say to you today," but the plain sense is that "today" goes with the promise.

What does this tell us? It tells us that when a believer dies, he goes to be with the Lord right away. Paul says to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8), and to depart and be with Christ is "much better" (Philippians 1:23).

And it tells us how a person is saved. This man could not be baptized, could not join a church, could not do good works, and could not make up for his past. He could only turn to Jesus in faith. And that was enough. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone. Baptism and good works are the right and obedient steps that follow faith for those who have time to take them. But no one is saved by them. The thief is proof that it is never too late to turn to Christ while there is breath. It is also a warning not to wait. Only one thief turned.

23:44 *And it was about **the** sixth hour, and darkness came over all the land until **the** ninth hour.*

"And it was about the sixth hour, and darkness came over all the land until the ninth hour." The Jews counted the hours of the day from sunrise, about six in the morning. The sixth hour was about noon, and the ninth hour was about three in the afternoon. For three hours in the middle of the day, the land went dark.

This was not an eclipse of the sun. Passover was held at the full moon, and an eclipse cannot happen then. It was an act of God. In Scripture, darkness often goes with God's judgment (Exodus 10:21-23; Amos 8:9). During those hours, Jesus was bearing the judgment for our sins. Matthew and Mark tell us that at the end of the darkness He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46).

Old Testament links: Amos 8:9 (alluded to)

23:45 *And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in the middle.*

"And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in the middle." The veil was the thick curtain in the temple that separated the holy place from the most holy place, where God's presence dwelt. Only the high priest could go behind it, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, with the blood of a sacrifice (Leviticus 16:2; Hebrews 9:7). The veil said: God is holy, and sinners cannot come near.

When Jesus died, God tore it in two. Matthew and Mark say it was torn "from top to bottom" (Matthew 27:51). No man did it. The way into God's presence was opened. Now, because of the blood of Jesus, anyone who trusts Him can come boldly to God (Hebrews 10:19-22). We do not need a priest or a curtain between us and God. Jesus is our way in.

23:46 *And having called out with a loud voice, Jesus said, "Father, into Your hands I will commit My spirit." And having said these things, He expired.*

And having called out with a loud voice, Jesus said, "Father, into Your hands I will commit My spirit." Jesus quotes Psalm 31:5. Some say it was a common bedtime prayer in Jewish homes. Jesus added the word "Father." He died trusting His Father completely.

He called out "with a loud voice." Men dying by crucifixion usually grew too weak to speak, struggling for breath. Jesus did not slowly fade away. He gave up His life when He chose to. He had said, "No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down from Myself" (John 10:18).

"And having said these things, He expired." To expire means to breathe out one's last breath. The Son of God died. It was a real death, not a faint or a trick. His spirit went to the Father, and His body would be laid in the tomb.

Here is a lesson for every believer. Jesus' last words were a prayer of trust. When our own time comes, we can pray the same thing. Stephen did (Acts 7:59). Our spirits are safe in our Father's hands.

Old Testament links: Psalm 31:5 (quoted)

23:47 *And the centurion, having seen what had taken place, glorified God, saying, "Certainly this man was righteous."*

And the centurion, having seen what had taken place, glorified God, saying, "Certainly this man was righteous." A centurion was a Roman army officer in command of about a hundred soldiers.

He was in charge of the crucifixion. He had seen many men die. He had never seen anyone die like this.

Matthew and Mark tell us he also said Jesus was God's Son (Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:39). Luke records that he called Him righteous, meaning innocent, in the right. Both are true. After Pilate and Herod and the thief, here is one more witness, a Roman soldier, saying that Jesus was innocent. And he "glorified God." A Gentile soldier at the foot of the cross gave glory to God. This is a preview of the many Gentiles who would come to faith through the preaching of the cross.

23:48 *And all the crowds who had come together to this spectacle, seeing the things that had taken place, were returning, beating their breasts.*

"And all the crowds who had come together to this spectacle, seeing the things that had taken place, were returning, beating their breasts." A spectacle is something people gather to look at. Many had come to watch a show. They went home beating their chests in grief and alarm, like the tax collector in the temple (18:13). The darkness and the way Jesus died had shaken them. Some of them may have been among those who repented at Pentecost.

23:49 *And all His acquaintances stood at a distance, and women who had followed with Him from Galilee, watching these things.*

"And all His acquaintances stood at a distance, and women who had followed with Him from Galilee, watching these things." His acquaintances were the people who knew Him. They watched from far away. The women from Galilee had followed Him and served Him from their own means (8:1-3). They stayed to the end. Luke makes a point of them, because they will be the first witnesses of the empty tomb.

23:50-51 *And look, a man named Joseph, being a council member, a good and righteous man—this **man** had not consented to their counsel and deed—from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who also himself was waiting for the kingdom of God;*

"And look, a man named Joseph, being a council member, a good and righteous man." Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin, the same council that had condemned Jesus. Luke tells us "this man had not consented to their counsel and deed." He did not vote for what they did. Mark 15:43 says he was a prominent member, and John 19:38 tells us he was a secret disciple, out of fear of the Jews.

"From Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who also himself was waiting for the kingdom of God." Arimathea was a town in Judea. Like Simeon and Anna at the beginning of Luke's Gospel (2:25, 38), Joseph was one of the faithful who were looking for God's promises to be fulfilled.

23:52 *this **man**, having gone to Pilate, asked for the body of Jesus.*

"This man, having gone to Pilate, asked for the body of Jesus." This took courage. Joseph had kept his faith secret, but now he went openly to the governor. Asking for the body of a man executed as a rebel king could have cost him his place on the council and his good name. The Romans often

left crucified bodies on the cross or threw them in a common grave. Joseph would not let that happen to his Lord.

Sometimes the death of Jesus moves a quiet believer to stand up and be counted. When it mattered most, Joseph came forward, while most of the twelve were hiding.

23:53 *And having taken it down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth, and placed it in a rock-hewn tomb, where no one had yet been laid.*

"And having taken it down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth, and placed it in a rock-hewn tomb, where no one had yet been laid." A rock-hewn tomb was a burial cave cut out of solid rock, the kind of tomb only the wealthy could afford. Matthew 27:57-60 tells us Joseph was rich and that it was his own new tomb. John tells us Nicodemus helped him (John 19:39-40).

Isaiah 53:9 had said the Servant's grave would be "with a rich man in His death." Here it is.

Notice too that it was a tomb where no one had yet been laid. When the tomb was found empty, there would be no confusion about whose body was missing.

23:54 *And it was **the** day of Preparation, and **the** Sabbath was dawning.*

"And it was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was dawning." The day of Preparation was Friday, the day Jews got everything ready for the Sabbath, since no work could be done on the Sabbath. The Sabbath began at sundown on Friday. Jesus died about three in the afternoon, so Joseph had very little time to bury Him before sunset.

23:55-56 *And the women also, who had come with Him out of Galilee, having followed after, saw the tomb and how His body was laid. And having returned, they prepared spices and ointments. And on the Sabbath they indeed rested according to the commandment.*

"And the women also, who had come with Him out of Galilee, having followed after, saw the tomb and how His body was laid." These women watched carefully. They knew exactly which tomb it was and where His body was. Later, no one could say they went to the wrong tomb.

"And having returned, they prepared spices and ointments." They planned to come back and anoint His body properly, as a last act of love. Spices and sweet-smelling ointments were used to honor the dead and cover the smell of decay. They did not expect a resurrection. They expected a body.

"And on the Sabbath they indeed rested according to the commandment." They kept the Sabbath, as God's Law commanded (Exodus 20:8-10). Then they waited.

That Sabbath must have been the darkest day of their lives. Their Lord was dead and buried. But the story was not over. Sunday was coming.

Old Testament links: Exodus 20:8-10 (alluded to)

Chapter 23 Summary

The council brings Jesus to Pilate with false political charges, and Pilate finds no guilt in Him. Learning He is from Galilee, Pilate sends Him to Herod, who questions and mocks Him and sends Him back, and Herod and Pilate become friends that day. Pilate three times declares Jesus innocent and offers to chastise and release Him, but the crowd demands the release of Barabbas, a rebel and murderer, and shouts for Jesus to be crucified, and Pilate gives in. Simon of Cyrene carries the cross behind Jesus, and Jesus tells the women of Jerusalem to weep for themselves because of the days coming on the city. At the place called Skull, He is crucified between two criminals and prays for the Father to forgive them. The rulers, the soldiers and one criminal mock Him, but the other criminal confesses his guilt and Jesus' innocence and asks to be remembered, and Jesus promises he will be with Him in Paradise that day. Darkness covers the land from noon until three, the veil of the temple is torn, and Jesus commits His spirit to the Father and dies. A centurion glorifies God and calls Him righteous, the crowds go home beating their breasts, and Joseph of Arimathea lays the body in a new rock-hewn tomb as the Sabbath begins, while the women watch and prepare spices.

Chapter 23 Study Questions

1. What charges did the leaders bring to Pilate, and how were they different from the charge in their own council? (23:2; 22:70-71)

2. How many times did Pilate say Jesus was innocent, and why did he give in? (23:4, 14, 22-24)

3. What does the release of Barabbas teach us about what Jesus did for us? (23:18-25)

4. What did Jesus pray as He was crucified, and how was that prayer answered later? (23:34)

5. What did the second criminal say about himself and about Jesus, and what did he ask? (23:40-42)

6. What did Jesus promise the thief, and what does it teach about salvation and about what happens when a believer dies? (23:43)

7. What happened to the veil of the temple, and what does it mean for us? (23:45)

8. What did Joseph of Arimathea do, and why did it take courage? (23:50-53)

9. Is there someone you need to forgive, as Jesus forgave those who crucified Him? (23:34)

10. Like the thief, have you turned to Jesus and asked Him to remember you? If not, what is keeping you from doing it today? (23:42-43)

Chapter 24: He Is Risen

Scripture

24:1-12 But on the first ***day*** of the week, at deep dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain ***others*** with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. And having entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, while they were perplexed about this, that look, two men stood by them in flashing garments. And as they became terrified and were bowing the face to the ground, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living ***One*** among the dead? He is not here, but He has been raised. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered up into ***the*** hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise." And they remembered His declarations, and having returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary the Magdalene and Joanna and Mary of James, and the other women with them, who were telling these things to the apostles. And their declarations appeared before them like nonsense, and they were not believing them. But Peter, having risen up, ran to the tomb; and having stooped down, he sees the linen strips lying alone; and he went away to his ***home***, wondering at what had come to pass.

24:13-27 And look, two of them were going on that same day to a village distant approximately 7 miles (sixty stadia) from Jerusalem, whose name ***is*** Emmaus. And they were talking with one another about all these things that had taken place. And it came to pass, while they were talking and reasoning, that Jesus Himself, having drawn near, was walking along with them. But their eyes were being held, so as not to recognize Him. And He said to them, "What ***are*** these words which you are exchanging with one another while walking, and you are sad?" And answering, the one whose name ***was*** Cleopas said to Him, "Are You alone sojourning in Jerusalem, and did not know the things that have come to pass in it in these days?" And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a man, a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to a judgment of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it is He who is about to redeem Israel. But indeed, with all these things, this is the third day today since these things came to pass. But also certain women from among us amazed us, having been at the tomb early; and not having found His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is living. And some of those with us went to the tomb and found ***it*** so, just as the women also said; but Him they did not see." And He said to them, "O foolish ***ones*** and slow in heart to believe in all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary ***for*** the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" And having begun from Moses and from all the prophets, He was explaining to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

24:28-35 And they drew near to the village where they were going, and He made as though to be going farther. And they urged Him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening, and the day has declined." And He went in to stay with them. And it came to pass, as He reclined ***at table*** with them, having taken the bread, He blessed ***it***, and having broken ***it***, He was giving ***it*** to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He vanished from them. And they said to one another, "Was not our heart burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road,

and while He was opening the Scriptures to us?" And having risen up that same hour, they returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has truly been raised, and He has appeared to Simon." And they were relating the things on the road, and how He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

24:36-49 And as they were saying these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and says to them, "Peace to you." But having been startled and having become terrified, they were thinking ***that they were*** seeing a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts come up in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, just as you see Me having." And having said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they were still disbelieving for joy and wondering, He said to them, "Do you have anything to eat here?" And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and ***some*** from a honeycomb. And having taken ***it***, He ate ***it*** before them. And He said to them, "These ***are*** the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all the things which are written concerning Me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it has been written, and thus it was necessary ***for*** the Christ to suffer and to rise out from ***the*** dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins to be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. And look, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you; but you, remain in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high."

24:50-53 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and having lifted up His hands, He blessed them. And it came to pass, while He was blessing them, He parted from them and was being carried up into heaven. And having worshiped Him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Chapter 24 Preview

Early on the first day of the week, the women come to the tomb with their spices and find the stone rolled away and the body gone. Two men in flashing garments ask them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has been raised." The women run to tell the apostles, who think it is nonsense. Peter runs to the tomb and finds only the linen strips.

That afternoon two disciples walk to Emmaus, sad and confused, and Jesus Himself joins them, though they do not recognize Him. Beginning from Moses and all the prophets, He explains to them the things in all the Scriptures about Himself. When He breaks bread at their table, their eyes are opened, and He vanishes. They hurry back to Jerusalem, and while they are telling the others, Jesus stands among them. He shows them His hands and feet, eats a piece of fish in front of them, and opens their minds to understand that everything written about Him in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled. He tells them repentance and forgiveness of sins must be preached in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem, and they must wait for the promise of the Father. Then He leads them out to Bethany, lifts up His hands to bless them, and is carried up into heaven. They return to Jerusalem with great joy, praising God in the temple.

Chapter 24 Study

24:1 *But on the first **day** of the week, at deep dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain **others** with them.*

"But on the first day of the week, at deep dawn, they came to the tomb." The first day of the week is Sunday. "Deep dawn" means very early, while it was still getting light. The Sabbath had ended at sundown on Saturday, and now, as soon as they could, the women came.

They were "bringing the spices which they had prepared" (see 23:56). They came to do one last loving thing for a dead body. They did not come expecting to see Him alive. "Certain others with them" tells us there were more women than the ones Luke names later.

Because Jesus rose on the first day of the week, the early church began to gather on that day to worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). Every Sunday is a reminder of the empty tomb.

24:2-3 *And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. And having entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.*

"And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb." A large, round stone, like a wheel, was rolled in a groove across the entrance of tombs like this one. It took several men to move it. Mark tells us the women had been asking each other on the way who would roll it away for them (Mark 16:3). When they arrived, it was already done.

"And having entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus." Notice that Luke calls Him "the Lord Jesus." This is the first time in his Gospel that he uses that full title. The One they had buried was the Lord.

The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out. He did not need that (John 20:19). It was rolled away to let the witnesses in.

24:4 *And it came to pass, while they were perplexed about this, that look, two men stood by them in flashing garments.*

"And it came to pass, while they were perplexed about this, that look, two men stood by them in flashing garments." Perplexed means confused, at a loss. They did not know what to think.

The two men were angels. Later in this chapter they are called "a vision of angels" (24:23), and John 20:12 calls them two angels. Their clothes shone like lightning. Matthew and Mark mention one angel, the one who spoke (Matthew 28:2-5; Mark 16:5). Luke and John tell us there were two. When one account mentions one and another mentions two, there is no contradiction. If there were two, there was certainly one.

24:5 *And as they became terrified and were bowing the face to the ground, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living **One** among the dead?*

"And as they became terrified and were bowing the face to the ground." They were frightened and bowed down in fear and awe.

Then the angels asked, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead?" This is one of the great questions of the Bible. A tomb is a place for the dead. Jesus is the living One. You will not find Him in a graveyard.

Many people today still look for Jesus among the dead. They see Him as a great teacher who lived and died long ago, someone to be admired like a figure in a history book. The angels' question is for them. Jesus is not a dead hero. He is alive.

24:6-7 *He is not here, but He has been raised. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered up into* ***the*** *hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise."*

"He is not here, but He has been raised." These are the most important words ever spoken at a grave. Jesus did not just survive. God raised Him from the dead, bodily, never to die again (Romans 6:9).

"Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee." The women had been with Jesus in Galilee (8:1-3; 23:55). They had heard Him say that the Son of Man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise (9:22, 44; 18:31-33).

Jesus had told them plainly, more than once. The resurrection should not have been a surprise. Notice the word "must." His death and resurrection were God's plan from the beginning.

24:8 *And they remembered His declarations,*

"And they remembered His declarations." Suddenly it all came back. His words made sense now. That is often how God works in our lives. We hear His Word, and then later, at the right moment, He brings it back to our minds and we understand (John 14:26). This is one reason to fill our hearts with His Word now.

24:9-10 *and having returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary the Magdalene and Joanna and Mary of James, and the other women with them, who were telling these things to the apostles.*

"And having returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest." The eleven were the apostles, the twelve minus Judas.

Luke names some of the women: "Mary the Magdalene and Joanna and Mary of James, and the other women with them." Mary Magdalene was from the town of Magdala on the Sea of Galilee, and Jesus had cast seven demons out of her (8:2). Joanna was the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household (8:3). Mary of James was likely the mother of James.

God chose women to be the first witnesses of the resurrection. In that culture, the word of a woman did not count for much in a court of law. If someone were making up a story about a resurrection, he would not have made women the first witnesses. That they are named here is a sign that Luke is telling what really happened. And it shows how much God honors those the world overlooks.

24:11 *And their declarations appeared before them like nonsense, and they were not believing them.*

"And their declarations appeared before them like nonsense, and they were not believing them." The word for nonsense was used for the wild talk of someone sick with fever. The apostles thought the women were out of their minds.

This verse is important. The disciples were not gullible men who wanted to believe and made up a story. They did not expect a resurrection. They refused to believe it at first. It took real evidence to change their minds. And when it did, they were willing to die for what they had seen.

24:12 *But Peter, having risen up, ran to the tomb; and having stooped down, he sees the linen strips lying alone; and he went away to his* ***home****, wondering at what had come to pass.*

"But Peter, having risen up, ran to the tomb." Peter had to see for himself. John 20:3-8 tells us John ran with him. "And having stooped down, he sees the linen strips lying alone." The burial cloths were still there, but the body was gone. If someone had stolen the body, they would not have taken the time to unwrap it and leave the cloths behind.

"And he went away to his home, wondering at what had come to pass." Peter did not understand yet, but he was wondering. Later that day, the Lord appeared to him personally (24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5). What a meeting that must have been, after Peter's three denials. Scripture does not tell us what was said, but we know Jesus restored him.

24:13 *And look, two of them were going on that same day to a village distant approximately 7 miles (sixty stadia) from Jerusalem, whose name* ***is*** *Emmaus.*

"And look, two of them were going on that same day to a village." The SLB gives the distance as about seven miles from Jerusalem. "Whose name is Emmaus." We do not know for sure where Emmaus was. Several places have been suggested.

These two were not of the eleven. They were among the wider group of disciples. One of them is named Cleopas (24:18). We are not told who the other was. Some think it was his wife, but Scripture does not say.

24:14-16 *And they were talking with one another about all these things that had taken place. And it came to pass, while they were talking and reasoning, that Jesus Himself, having drawn near, was walking along with them. But their eyes were being held, so as not to recognize Him.*

"And they were talking with one another about all these things that had taken place." They were going over and over it. The cross, the burial, the strange report of the women.

"Jesus Himself, having drawn near, was walking along with them." Jesus came to two sad, confused disciples on a dusty road. He did not wait for them to come to Him.

"But their eyes were being held, so as not to recognize Him." God kept them from knowing who He was for a time. Why? Jesus wanted them to understand His death and resurrection from the Scriptures first, not only from seeing Him. Faith must rest on the Word of God.

24:17 *And He said to them, "What **are** these words which you are exchanging with one another while walking, and you are sad?"*

"What are these words which you are exchanging with one another while walking, and you are sad?" Jesus knew the answer. He asked so they would pour out their hearts. He does the same with us. He knows what troubles us, and He still invites us to tell Him.

"And you are sad." Their faces showed it. They had lost all hope.

24:18 *And answering, the one whose name **was** Cleopas said to Him, "Are You alone sojourning in Jerusalem, and did not know the things that have come to pass in it in these days?"*

And answering, the one whose name was Cleopas said to Him, "Are You alone sojourning in Jerusalem, and did not know the things that have come to pass in it in these days?" A sojourner is a visitor, someone staying for a short time. Cleopas could not believe it. Everyone in Jerusalem was talking about the crucifixion. How could this man not know?

There is irony here, though Cleopas did not see it. He was asking the One person who knew more about those events than anyone else alive.

24:19-20 *And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a man, a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to a judgment of death, and crucified Him.*

And He said to them, "What things?" Jesus let them tell it. And they said, "The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a man, a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." They believed He was a great prophet, with miracles and teaching to prove it.

"And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to a judgment of death, and crucified Him." They told what happened plainly. Their own leaders had handed Him over to die.

24:21 *But we were hoping that it is He who is about to redeem Israel. But indeed, with all these things, this is the third day today since these things came to pass.*

"But we were hoping that it is He who is about to redeem Israel." These may be some of the saddest words in the Bible. "We were hoping." Their hope was in the past tense. To redeem Israel meant to set the nation free, likely from Rome. They had believed Jesus was the Messiah who would do it. Then He died.

Their hope was right, but their idea of how it would happen was too small. Jesus had come to redeem Israel and the world, but by dying for sin, not by fighting Rome. And He will still redeem Israel as a nation when He comes again (Romans 11:26).

"But indeed, with all these things, this is the third day today since these things came to pass." Jesus had said He would rise on the third day. They mention the third day without seeing what it meant.

24:22-24 *But also certain women from among us amazed us, having been at the tomb early; and not having found His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is living. And some of those with us went to the tomb and found **it** so, just as the women also said; but Him they did not see."*

"But also certain women from among us amazed us, having been at the tomb early." They told the stranger about the women's report. "And not having found His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is living."

"And some of those with us went to the tomb and found it so, just as the women also said; but Him they did not see."

They had all the facts. The tomb was empty. Angels said He was alive. Others had checked and found it just as the women said. But they could not put it together. "Him they did not see." And all the while, He was walking right beside them.

24:25 *And He said to them, "O foolish **ones** and slow in heart to believe in all that the prophets spoke!*

And He said to them, "O foolish ones and slow in heart to believe in all that the prophets spoke!" Foolish here does not mean stupid. It means without understanding. Their problem was "slow in heart." They believed some of what the prophets said, the parts about a glorious King. But they had not believed "all" that the prophets spoke, including the parts about His suffering.

That is still a danger for us. We can pick the parts of Scripture we like and pass over the rest. We need to believe all of it.

24:26 *Was it not necessary **for** the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"*

"Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" Christ means the Anointed One, the Messiah. The cross was not a failure of God's plan. It was the plan. The Messiah had to suffer first, and then enter His glory. That is the order all through Scripture: suffering, then glory (1 Peter 1:10-11).

24:27 *And having begun from Moses and from all the prophets, He was explaining to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

"And having begun from Moses and from all the prophets, He was explaining to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

What a Bible study that must have been! Jesus took them through the Old Testament and showed them Himself. Moses means the first five books of the Bible. We are not told which passages He used, but we can think of some. He is the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head

(Genesis 3:15). He is the ram God provided in Isaac's place (Genesis 22:8, 13). He is the Passover lamb whose blood saves from death (Exodus 12). He is the bronze serpent lifted up for the dying to look at and live (Numbers 21:8-9; John 3:14). He is the prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15). In the prophets, He is the suffering Servant who was pierced for our transgressions (Isaiah 53), the King riding on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9), the One they pierced (Zechariah 12:10), and the Son of Man coming with the clouds (Daniel 7:13-14).

The whole Bible is about Jesus. When we read the Old Testament, we should look for Him. He is there on every page, in promise and picture and prophecy.

24:28-29 *And they drew near to the village where they were going, and He made as though to be going farther. And they urged Him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening, and the day has declined." And He went in to stay with them.*

"And they drew near to the village where they were going, and He made as though to be going farther." Jesus did not force Himself on them. He acted as if He would keep walking.

And they urged Him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening, and the day has declined." The day was ending, and it was not safe to travel the roads at night. They did not want this stranger to go. Their hearts had been stirred, though they did not yet know why. "And He went in to stay with them."

Jesus still waits to be invited in. He will not push His way into a heart that does not want Him (Revelation 3:20).

24:30-31 *And it came to pass, as He reclined **at table** with them, having taken the bread, He blessed **it**, and having broken **it**, He was giving **it** to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He vanished from them.*

"And it came to pass, as He reclined at table with them, having taken the bread, He blessed it, and having broken it, He was giving it to them." Jesus, the guest, took the place of the host. He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, the same things He did when He fed the five thousand (9:16) and at the Last Supper (22:19).

"And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him." Maybe it was the way He broke the bread. Maybe they saw the nail wounds in His hands as He held it out. Scripture does not say. But God opened their eyes, and they knew Him.

"And He vanished from them." As soon as they knew Him, He was gone. His resurrection body was a real body, but it was not bound by the limits our bodies have now.

24:32 *And they said to one another, "Was not our heart burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, and while He was opening the Scriptures to us?"*

"Was not our heart burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, and while He was opening the Scriptures to us?" Looking back, they realized that the whole time He was teaching them, their hearts had been on fire.

That is what happens when Jesus opens the Scriptures to us. God's Word is not dry and dead. When the Spirit of God shows us Christ in the Scriptures, our hearts burn. Has that ever happened to you? If your heart feels cold, spend time in His Word and ask Him to open it to you.

24:33-34 *And having risen up that same hour, they returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has truly been raised, and He has appeared to Simon."*

"And having risen up that same hour, they returned to Jerusalem." They had just walked about seven miles. It was night. But they could not keep this news to themselves. They walked all the way back.

They found the eleven and those with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has truly been raised, and He has appeared to Simon." Before Cleopas could even tell his news, the others told him theirs. Jesus had appeared to Peter. Paul lists this appearance first among the witnesses of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:5). Peter, who had denied Him, was the first apostle to see Him alive. That is grace.

24:35 *And they were relating the things on the road, and how He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.*

"And they were relating the things on the road, and how He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread." The two from Emmaus told their story. Two separate groups had now seen Him in two separate places. The witnesses were adding up.

"The breaking of the bread" later became a common way to speak of believers sharing meals together and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42, 46). Every time believers break bread together in His name, we remember that He is alive and with us.

24:36 *And as they were saying these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and says to them, "Peace to you."*

"And as they were saying these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them." John 20:19 tells us the doors were locked, because they were afraid. Jesus did not knock. He was suddenly there, standing among them.

And says to them, "Peace to you." This was the normal Jewish greeting, shalom. But on His lips that night it meant far more. These were men who had run away and left Him. The first word He spoke to them was not a rebuke. It was peace. Through His death He had made peace between God and sinners (Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:20).

24:37 *But having been startled and having become terrified, they were thinking* ***that they were*** *seeing a spirit.*

"But having been startled and having become terrified, they were thinking that they were seeing a spirit." Even after the women's report and Peter's word and the two from Emmaus, when He

actually appeared, they were terrified. They thought it was a ghost. People who expect a resurrection do not react this way.

24:38-40 *And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts come up in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, just as you see Me having." And having said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.*

"Why are you troubled? And why do doubts come up in your hearts?" Jesus is patient with their fear and their doubts.

"See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, just as you see Me having." Jesus gave them evidence. He showed them the nail wounds in His hands and feet. He invited them to touch Him. He was not a spirit or a vision. He had a real body of flesh and bones.

This matters a great deal. Some people say Jesus' resurrection was only spiritual, that His spirit lived on while His body stayed in the grave. Jesus Himself says no. He rose bodily. The same body that was nailed to the cross was raised, changed and glorified, never to die again. And His resurrection is the pattern for ours. One day He "will transform the body of our humiliation" to be like "the body of His glory" (Philippians 3:21).

"And having said this, He showed them His hands and His feet." He still bears those wounds. In heaven John saw Him as "a Lamb standing as having been slain" (Revelation 5:6). The scars of the cross are His forever.

24:41-43 *And while they were still disbelieving for joy and wondering, He said to them, "Do you have anything to eat here?" And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and **some** from a honeycomb. And having taken **it**, He ate **it** before them.*

"And while they were still disbelieving for joy and wondering." This is a beautiful phrase. It was too good to be true. They were so happy they could hardly believe it.

He said to them, "Do you have anything to eat here?" Jesus gave them one more proof. "And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some from a honeycomb. And having taken it, He ate it before them." A spirit does not eat fish. He ate right in front of them. Peter later preached that the apostles "ate and drank with Him after He rose out of the dead" (Acts 10:41).

24:44 *And He said to them, "These **are** the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all the things which are written concerning Me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled."*

"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all the things which are written concerning Me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled."

The Jews divided their Scriptures, our Old Testament, into three parts: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Psalms was the first and largest book of the Writings, so "the psalms" here can

stand for that whole part. Jesus is saying that every part of the Old Testament speaks of Him. And "must be fulfilled." God's Word cannot fail.

24:45 *Then He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures,*

"Then He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures." They had read and heard the Scriptures all their lives. But they did not understand them until Jesus opened their minds.

We need the same help. Reading the Bible is not only a matter of brains. We need the Lord to open our minds by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:12-14). That is why we pray before we study, as this study encourages you to do, asking God to open our eyes to see wonderful things in His Word (Psalm 119:18).

24:46-47 *and He said to them, "Thus it has been written, and thus it was necessary **for** the Christ to suffer and to rise out from **the** dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins to be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*

"Thus it has been written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise out from the dead on the third day." Here is the heart of the gospel, written beforehand in the Old Testament: the Messiah must suffer, die, and rise on the third day (Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:5-12; Hosea 6:2).

"And repentance and forgiveness of sins to be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." This is Luke's version of the Great Commission. Repentance means a change of mind that turns from sin to God. Forgiveness of sins means God sends our sins away and no longer holds them against us. This message is to be proclaimed "in His name," on His authority and through faith in Him. And it is for "all the nations," every people group on earth. The Gentiles are included.

"Beginning from Jerusalem." The city that crucified Him would be the first to hear the offer of forgiveness. Acts tells how it happened. The gospel started in Jerusalem, spread to Judea and Samaria, and went out to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Notice that the gospel message is not only that God loves us. It is repentance and forgiveness of sins. We cannot leave out sin and still preach the gospel Jesus gave.

24:48 *And you are witnesses of these things.*

"And you are witnesses of these things." A witness tells what he has seen and heard. These men had seen Jesus live, die and rise. Their job was to tell it. Acts is the story of these witnesses (Acts 1:22; 2:32; 3:15).

We are not eyewitnesses as they were. But we have their testimony in Scripture, and we have the experience of a changed life. Every believer is called to tell others what Jesus has done.

24:49 *And look, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you; but you, remain in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high."*

"And look, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you." The promise of the Father is the Holy Spirit. God had promised through the prophets to pour out His Spirit (Joel 2:28-29; Ezekiel 36:26-27). John the Baptist said Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit (3:16).

"But you, remain in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high." To be clothed means to be covered and wrapped as with a garment. They were not to go out and start preaching in their own strength. They were to wait for the Spirit. Ten days after Jesus went up to heaven, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came on them in power (Acts 2:1-4). The work of God can only be done by the power of God.

24:50 *And He led them out as far as Bethany, and having lifted up His hands, He blessed them.*

"And He led them out as far as Bethany, and having lifted up His hands, He blessed them." Bethany was on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12). Luke does not mention the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension here, but he tells us about them in Acts 1:3. This scene took place at the end of those forty days.

Lifting up the hands to bless was what a priest did. Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them (Leviticus 9:22). Jesus, our great High Priest, lifted His nail-scarred hands over His people and blessed them. The last thing the disciples saw Jesus do on earth was bless them.

Old Testament links: Leviticus 9:22 (alluded to)

24:51 *And it came to pass, while He was blessing them, He parted from them and was being carried up into heaven.*

"And it came to pass, while He was blessing them, He parted from them and was being carried up into heaven." This is the ascension. Jesus went up bodily into heaven, and a cloud took Him out of their sight (Acts 1:9).

He went up while He was blessing them. In a sense, He has never stopped. He is now at the right hand of the Father, praying for His people (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). And He will come back. The angels told the disciples that this same Jesus will come in the same way they saw Him go into heaven (Acts 1:11). I believe He will first come for His church, taking His people to be with Him (John 14:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), and after the Tribulation He will return to the Mount of Olives in power and glory to reign (Zechariah 14:4; Revelation 19:11-16).

24:52 *And having worshiped Him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy,*

"And having worshiped Him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy." They worshiped Jesus. Faithful Jews worshiped only God. These men now knew who Jesus was.

"With great joy." You might expect them to be sad. Their Lord had left them. But they were full of joy. Why? Because they knew He was alive, He was Lord, He had blessed them, and He had

promised to send His Spirit and to come back. Luke's Gospel began with the angel announcing "great joy" at the birth of Jesus (2:10). It ends with great joy too.

24:53 *and they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.*

"And they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen." Luke's Gospel began in the temple, with the priest Zechariah offering incense (1:8-9). It ends in the temple, with the disciples praising God.

They were waiting, as He had told them to, for the promise of the Father. And they were waiting with praise. That is how God's people should wait for Him. Luke's second book, Acts, picks up the story right here.

"Amen" means so be it, or it is true. Everything Luke has written is true. Jesus lived, died, rose again, and went up to heaven. And He is coming again.

Chapter 24 Summary

Early on the first day of the week, the women come to the tomb with spices and find the stone rolled away and the body gone. Two men in flashing garments tell them He is not here but has been raised, as He said in Galilee. The women tell the apostles, who think it is nonsense, but Peter runs to the tomb and finds only the linen strips. That day Jesus joins two disciples on the road to Emmaus, though they do not recognize Him. They tell Him of their dashed hopes, and beginning from Moses and all the prophets He explains the things in all the Scriptures concerning Himself. When He breaks bread with them, their eyes are opened, He vanishes, and they hurry back to Jerusalem to find the eleven saying the Lord has appeared to Simon. Then Jesus stands among them, says "Peace to you," shows His hands and feet, and eats fish before them to prove He has a real body. He opens their minds to understand that all written of Him in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled, and He commissions them to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem, after they are clothed with power from on high. At Bethany He lifts His hands, blesses them, and is carried up into heaven, and they return to Jerusalem with great joy, praising God in the temple.

Chapter 24 Study Questions

1. What did the women find at the tomb, and what did the angels say to them? (24:1-7)

2. How did the apostles respond to the women's report, and what did Peter do? (24:11-12)

3. What were the two disciples on the road to Emmaus hoping for, and why were they sad? (24:17-21)

4. What did Jesus show them from the Scriptures? (24:25-27)

5. When were their eyes opened, and what did they say about their hearts? (24:30-32)

6. What proofs did Jesus give that He had risen bodily? (24:38-43)

7. What message did Jesus say must be proclaimed, to whom, and beginning where? (24:46-48)

8. What did Jesus do as He was carried up into heaven, and how did the disciples respond? (24:50-53)

9. When was the last time your heart burned as God opened His Word to you? What could you change to spend more time in it? (24:32)

10. Jesus told His disciples, "you are witnesses of these things." Who in your life needs to hear what Jesus has done? (24:48)

Conclusion

Luke told us at the start why he wrote. He had followed all things carefully from the first so that Theophilus, and every reader after him, would know the certainty of what he had been taught (1:3-4). He began in the temple with an old priest and a promise, and he took us to a manger in Bethlehem, to the Jordan, to the towns of Galilee, and down the long road to Jerusalem. He showed us a Savior who touched lepers, ate with tax collectors, welcomed children, raised a widow's son, and stopped under a tree in Jericho for a man everyone else had written off. The whole book can be summed up in one verse: "for the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which has been lost" (19:10).

Luke also showed us what it cost. Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem knowing what waited for Him there. He wept over the city that rejected Him. At the table He gave His disciples the bread and the cup, His body given and His blood poured out for them. In the garden He prayed, "not My will, but Yours be done" (22:42). On the cross He prayed for the men who crucified Him and opened Paradise to a dying thief. The innocent One died in the place of the guilty, just as the prophets had written. And on the third day He rose. The tomb was empty, the women saw the angels, the disciples on the road to Emmaus had their hearts set on fire, and the eleven touched His hands and feet and watched Him eat.

As I said at the start of this study, the guiding principle throughout has been to read God's Word plainly, as it is written, and let Scripture explain Scripture. When we do that with Luke, we find what the risen Jesus showed His disciples: the whole Old Testament points to Him. "Thus it has been written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise out from the dead on the third day," and "repentance and forgiveness of sins" must "be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (24:46-47). We also find a King who is coming back. Jesus told us to be like servants waiting for their master, to do business until He comes, and to watch and pray. I believe He will first come for His church, and after the Tribulation He will return in power and great glory to reign. God has not forgotten Jerusalem or His people Israel. The times of the Gentiles will end, just as He said (21:24).

Luke ends where he began, in the temple, with God's people full of great joy, praising God. That joy is for us too. The question for each of us is the one the angels asked the women at the tomb: "Why do you seek the living One among the dead?" (24:5). Jesus is alive. He still seeks the lost, and He still welcomes every sinner who turns to Him in faith, just as He welcomed the thief on the cross. The only thing required of us to spend eternity with God is to receive His Son, Jesus, as our Lord and Savior.

If you haven't yet entered into a relationship with Jesus, or if you want to deepen the one you already have with Him, I invite you to pray this prayer with me:

Lord Jesus, You are the Savior of the world, and You forgive all who come to You. I come before You to confess that I have sinned against You. I have rebelled against You and put myself first above You and all others. I want to have a deep, meaningful relationship with You where I can show others by my demeanor and character that You are first in my life. I am asking for Your forgiveness

for all my sins. You died for me on the cross so that I could be forgiven and made right with God. Please help me not forget that You gave Your very life for me. I am asking that You take control of my life and make a new creature out of me and into the person You want me to be. I thank You, Lord, and I love You. Amen.

If you prayed this prayer, tell another believer, ask a pastor about being baptized, and find a church where you can grow in His Word and become a witness of what He has done, as Jesus told His first disciples (Luke 24:46-48).

Old and New Testament Links in Luke

This table lists every Old and New Testament link printed in this study, in verse order. I took the links from the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, with help from the OpenBible.info cross-references, and I checked each one by reading both passages in the Steadfast Literal Bible. Where I was not sure of a link, I left it out.

Verse in this study	Old Testament passage	Kind
1:5	1 Chronicles 24:10	alluded to
1:6-7	Genesis 18:11	alluded to
1:14-15	Numbers 6:3	alluded to
1:14-15	Judges 13:4	alluded to
1:16-17	Malachi 4:5-6	alluded to
1:26-27	Isaiah 7:14	fulfilled
1:30-31	Isaiah 7:14	fulfilled
1:32-33	Isaiah 9:7	alluded to
1:32-33	2 Samuel 7:13-16	alluded to
1:36-37	Genesis 18:14	alluded to
1:42-43	Judges 5:24	alluded to
1:46-48	1 Samuel 2:1	alluded to
1:49-50	Psalm 103:17	alluded to
1:49-50	Psalm 111:9	alluded to
1:51-53	Psalm 107:9	alluded to
1:51-53	Psalm 89:10	alluded to
1:54-55	Psalm 98:3	alluded to
1:59-61	Genesis 17:12	alluded to
1:67-69	Psalm 18:2	alluded to
1:67-69	Psalm 132:17	alluded to
1:67-69	Psalm 111:9	alluded to
1:70-75	Psalm 106:10	alluded to
1:70-75	Micah 7:20	alluded to
1:70-75	Genesis 26:3	alluded to
1:76-77	Isaiah 40:3	alluded to
1:76-77	Malachi 3:1	alluded to
1:78-79	Isaiah 9:2	alluded to
1:78-79	Malachi 4:2	alluded to
1:78-79	Psalm 107:10	alluded to
2:3-5	Micah 5:2	fulfilled
2:6-7	Isaiah 7:14	fulfilled
2:21	Leviticus 12:3	alluded to
2:22-24	Exodus 13:2	quoted
2:22-24	Exodus 13:12	quoted
2:22-24	Leviticus 12:8	quoted
2:22-24	Leviticus 12:4-6	alluded to
2:25-26	Isaiah 40:1	alluded to
2:29-32	Isaiah 49:6	alluded to
2:29-32	Isaiah 42:6	alluded to
2:29-32	Isaiah 52:10	alluded to

Verse in this study	Old Testament passage	Kind
3:4-6	Isaiah 40:3-5	quoted
3:21-22	Psalm 2:7	alluded to
3:21-22	Isaiah 42:1	alluded to
3:28-31	1 Chronicles 3:5	alluded to
3:32-34	Genesis 11:10-26	alluded to
3:32-34	Ruth 4:18-22	alluded to
3:35-38	Genesis 11:10-26	alluded to
3:35-38	Genesis 5:3-32	alluded to
4:3-4	Deuteronomy 8:3	quoted
4:8	Deuteronomy 6:13	quoted
4:8	Deuteronomy 10:20	quoted
4:9-11	Psalm 91:11-12	quoted
4:12	Deuteronomy 6:16	quoted
4:18-19	Isaiah 61:1-2	quoted
4:25-26	1 Kings 17:9	alluded to
4:25-26	1 Kings 17:1	alluded to
4:27	2 Kings 5:1	alluded to
4:27	2 Kings 5:14	alluded to
6:3-4	1 Samuel 21:4-6	alluded to
6:3-4	Leviticus 24:9	alluded to
6:29	Lamentations 3:30	alluded to
7:15	1 Kings 17:23	alluded to
7:22-23	Isaiah 35:5-6	alluded to
7:22-23	Isaiah 29:18	alluded to
7:26-27	Malachi 3:1	quoted
8:9-10	Isaiah 6:9	quoted
9:34-35	Deuteronomy 18:15	alluded to
9:54-56	2 Kings 1:10	alluded to
9:54-56	2 Kings 1:12	alluded to
9:61-62	1 Kings 19:20	alluded to
10:15	Isaiah 14:13-15	alluded to
10:18	Isaiah 14:12	alluded to
10:19	Psalm 91:13	alluded to
10:26-27	Deuteronomy 6:5	quoted
10:26-27	Leviticus 19:18	quoted
11:20	Exodus 8:19	alluded to
11:29-30	Jonah 3:4	pictured
11:31	1 Kings 10:1	alluded to
11:31	1 Kings 10:4	alluded to
11:32	Jonah 3:5	alluded to
11:49-51	Genesis 4:8	alluded to
11:49-51	2 Chronicles 24:20-21	alluded to
11:49-51	2 Chronicles 24:22	alluded to
11:49-51	Genesis 4:10	alluded to
12:13-14	Exodus 2:14	alluded to
12:24	Psalm 147:9	alluded to
12:51-53	Micah 7:6	alluded to
13:14	Exodus 20:9	alluded to

Verse in this study	Old Testament passage	Kind
13:18-19	Daniel 4:12	alluded to
13:18-19	Ezekiel 31:6	alluded to
13:26-27	Psalm 6:8	quoted
13:35	Psalm 118:26	quoted
14:8-9	Proverbs 25:6	alluded to
14:8-9	Proverbs 25:7	alluded to
14:10	Proverbs 25:6-7	alluded to
15:4	Ezekiel 34:16	alluded to
17:14	Leviticus 14:2	alluded to
17:26-27	Genesis 7:7	alluded to
17:26-27	Genesis 7:23	alluded to
17:28-29	Genesis 19:24	alluded to
17:28-29	Genesis 19:25	alluded to
17:31	Genesis 19:17	alluded to
17:32	Genesis 19:26	alluded to
18:20-21	Exodus 20:12-16	quoted
18:20-21	Deuteronomy 5:16-20	quoted
19:8	Exodus 22:1	alluded to
19:10	Ezekiel 34:16	alluded to
19:35-36	Zechariah 9:9	fulfilled
19:37-38	Psalm 118:26	quoted
19:39-40	Habakkuk 2:11	alluded to
19:45-46	Isaiah 56:7	quoted
19:45-46	Jeremiah 7:11	quoted
20:9	Isaiah 5:1-2	alluded to
20:17	Psalm 118:22	quoted
20:18	Isaiah 8:14-15	alluded to
20:18	Daniel 2:34	alluded to
20:18	Daniel 2:35	alluded to
20:28	Deuteronomy 25:5-6	alluded to
20:28	Genesis 38:8	alluded to
20:37-38	Exodus 3:6	quoted
20:37-38	Exodus 3:15	quoted
20:42-43	Psalm 110:1	quoted
21:10-11	Isaiah 19:2	alluded to
21:20	Daniel 9:27	alluded to
21:25	Isaiah 13:10	alluded to
21:25	Joel 2:10	alluded to
21:26	Joel 2:10	alluded to
21:27	Daniel 7:13	alluded to
21:33	Isaiah 40:8	alluded to
22:20	Jeremiah 31:31	alluded to
22:20	Exodus 24:8	alluded to
22:21-22	Psalm 41:9	fulfilled
22:37	Isaiah 53:12	quoted
22:63-65	Isaiah 50:6	alluded to
22:69	Psalm 110:1	alluded to
22:69	Daniel 7:13	alluded to

Verse in this study	Old Testament passage	Kind
23:9-10	Isaiah 53:7	alluded to
23:29-30	Hosea 10:8	quoted
23:32-33	Isaiah 53:12	fulfilled
23:34	Psalm 22:18	fulfilled
23:34	Isaiah 53:12	alluded to
23:36-37	Psalm 69:21	alluded to
23:44	Amos 8:9	alluded to
23:46	Psalm 31:5	quoted
23:55-56	Exodus 20:8-10	alluded to
24:50	Leviticus 9:22	alluded to

Bibliography

The following sources were consulted for this study. The Jewish historian Josephus is named in the text where his work is used. The commentary reflects my own study and convictions, and any direct quotation from an outside source is identified and cited at the point where it appears.

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