

The Gospel of Luke

Bro. Frank Shallieu

(1989–1990 Study)

The following notes on the Gospel of Luke were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1989–1990. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by **“Comment”** or **“Q”** (an abbreviation for **“Question”**) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1989-1990)

Luke 1:1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

Luke was saying, "Many [eyewitnesses] have taken in hand" to write about our Lord's life. Two such individuals were Matthew and Mark. The word "many" suggests that others also wrote, but Divine Providence overruled so that only Matthew's and Mark's accounts survived of the Gospels written prior to Luke. Incidentally, the proper sequence of the Gospels is as they appear in Holy Writ: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Luke's purpose was "to set forth [the events] in order," that is, *chronologically*. Matthew and Mark are similar except that Mark is abbreviated and was slanted to the Romans, using Roman terms to appeal to a Roman mind. Matthew wrote for the Jew, and Luke wanted to record events in the proper sequence in which they occurred. Another purpose of Luke was to write to Theophilus (see verse 3).

The things Luke wrote were "most surely believed among us." Hence this Gospel was written with *confidence*. Luke could write confidently and accurately because he was a contemporary of Jesus. Though not an eyewitness of everything that happened, he searched into the matter, as will be discussed later regarding things recorded in Luke but not in the other Gospels.

Luke 1:2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

Luke did not say he personally was an eyewitness to all that occurred, but he was a fellow Christian of those who could accurately speak of the events of our Lord's life. Luke wrote the Book of Acts, which is also in sequential order. He recorded the experiences of Peter and John and then of Paul (he actually traveled with Paul). Luke was a beloved, noted physician in Asia Minor.

Luke 1:3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

In verses 1 and 2, Luke said that others had testified what they saw and heard, but since he had followed closely all things that had occurred, he felt it advisable to write them down in chronological order.

Luke wrote this Gospel to an *individual*: "most excellent Theophilus." It took *much* time and effort for Luke to do this. Theophilus was a man of distinction and wealth who evidently sponsored Luke. As a Christian writing to his superior, Luke laid upon Theophilus the responsibility of pursuing the writing further. Suppose we were a wealthy Christian and Luke prepared this lengthy, detailed Gospel and then gave it to us. What would we do with the manuscript? We would make sure it was dispensed to others. Thus Luke had a motive in writing to Theophilus, who had the wealth, means, and influence to further this Gospel.

Luke 1:4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

Verse 4 is a little inaccurate in the King James Version, for Theophilus was Luke's superior and Luke was using psychology. The Revised Standard Version, which reads, "That you may know the certainty of those things of which you have been informed," reflects a more tactful approach than the King James. Luke's manner was proper, for we are to honor those who are

to be honored: doctor, lawyer, judge, etc. (Rom. 13:7). Luke admired the noble qualities in Theophilus.

Luke wrote this Gospel on behalf of the Apostle Paul, so each Gospel had apostolic authority. The very fact that Luke accompanied Paul throughout his ministry almost to life's end, and thus was with Paul for about 20 years, gives credence to this thought. According to tradition, Mark wrote on behalf of the Apostle Peter, Matthew was an apostle, Luke wrote for Paul, and John was an apostle. Semantic clues exist to show that Paul did not do the writing himself; for example, he noted an *exception* with wording such as, "I Paul have written it with mine *own* hand" (Philem. 19; Gal. 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:17). Luke was the recognized chronicler of the apostles. The Book of Acts, which especially treated Peter, John, and Paul, is entitled "The Acts of the Apostles" (plural).

Luke no doubt died quite a while before the Apostle John. However, Luke lived longer than Paul and hence could write about Paul's life up to the end. Peter and Paul died in AD 66 or 67, and John's ministry in Asia Minor did not even begin until AD 70. In fact, John wrote the Book of Revelation when he was at least 96 years old, and his three epistles were also written late. Therefore, Luke was off the scene before John began to write. Hence John's Gospel was written last—and very late.

Each Gospel writer felt the need to record what the others did not touch upon and sometimes to reaffirm what might otherwise be considered apocryphal or fabricated. For example, some of the miracles Matthew recorded, Mark felt the need to authenticate by repeating. A miracle is sometimes recorded in two Gospels, a very few are written in three Gospels, and none are recorded in four Gospels. "Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses" is the principle (Deut. 17:6; 2 Cor. 13:1).

Of course the Holy Spirit aided the Gospel writers/apostles by bringing things to *remembrance*, but their individual personalities and thinking were not extinguished. For instance, Matthew wrote about the poor and publicans (tax collectors), who were held in disrepute, for these touched him.

Luke 1:5 **There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.**

Luke started his Gospel with events that occurred before John the Baptist and Jesus were born. The Apostle John went back even further—to the beginning of the creation of the Logos.

First, Luke related the circumstances of John the Baptist's birth. Herod was the king of Judea. Of the six or seven Herods who were tetrarch or king, Luke was referring to Herod the Great, who would later order the deaths of all babies two years old and under. Zacharias was a priest in the Temple, serving the course of Abia. He was married to Elisabeth (of the Levitical line).

Zacharias was in Jerusalem, and it was his turn to serve in the Temple. The high priest served year-round, whereas the underpriests had terms of service. The 24 courses were instituted years earlier by David to give the multiple priests an opportunity for service. Porters, singers, musicians, underpriests, etc., were all given courses of service. A "course" was 15 days, or half a month ($24 \times 1/2 = 12$ months, or a year of 360 days, the Hebrew lunar year). The 24 courses are named in 1 Chronicles 24, so we can determine which part of the year Abia, the eighth course, covered. Right away Luke set things "*in order*." It was during the reign of Herod the Great at a particular time of year (Abia).

To be an underpriest, Zacharias had to be of Aaron's lineage. Elisabeth was also of Aaron's

lineage. She is one of the few women who are named in the Gospels. John the Baptist was five-plus months older than Jesus (we usually say six months).

Luke 1:6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Zacharias and Elisabeth were both “righteous,” or “blameless,” in their obedience to God’s commandments and ordinances.

Luke 1:7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

Zacharias and Elisabeth were both old, and they were childless because Elisabeth was barren.

Luke 1:8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest’s office before God in the order of his course,

Luke 1:9 According to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

Luke 1:10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

Zacharias was inside the Temple, performing his course of priestly service, which was to “burn incense.” Meanwhile, the people were praying in the court outside. It was 3 p.m., the “time of incense,” the time of *prayer*. Since the people were used to this service and knew how long it took to burn incense, they were aware of the unusual delay before Zacharias reappeared.

Luke 1:11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

Luke 1:12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

An angel appeared on the right side of the Incense Altar; he was standing. (Here is a detail: the angel was on the right side, not just at the altar. Luke gave details as well as sequence.) When offering incense, Zacharias would be praying too. He prayed as the representative of the people.

The Incense Altar was centered just before the veil that separated the Most Holy. The angel was on the right side from the perspective of standing in the Most Holy and looking out; that is, he was on the south side. The “right” side signifies communication and favor.

Imagine praying and then becoming conscious of a personage next to us! Zacharias was dumbfounded, then troubled and fearful, for he did not know whether the angel’s message would be favorable or unfavorable.

Luke 1:13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

Here is another instance where the Lord caused barrenness before a child of note or promise was born. Elisabeth, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Hannah were all barren for a time. Barrenness was a form of discipline to develop faith.

Notice that although Zacharias and Elisabeth were “well stricken in years” (verse 7), they were

still praying they could have a son. The angel's message was as follows: "Your prayer will be answered. Elisabeth will have a son, and you, Zacharias, will name him John." Thus the angel gave the name of the son *in advance*; that is, *God* gave the name through the angel.

Luke 1:14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

Luke 1:15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

What a happy message and heritage! Joy and gladness would come to Zacharias and Elisabeth through John's birth, and the people would rejoice. And what was most important, John would be "great in the sight of the Lord." He would have a great future and would be a blessing to many people.

Moreover, John was to be a Nazarite from his birth. He could not drink wine or strong drink, and this restriction applied to Elisabeth too. We are reminded of Samson, who also was a Nazarite and had devout parents.

The expression "from his mother's womb" means "from birth," and not "in" his mother's womb. John was to be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth; that is, from the time of his birth, favor from the Lord would be very noticeable. As this child developed, from birth until he became a great preacher to Israel, a remarkable providential grace would be seen.

Luke 1:16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

"Many" Israelites would be turned to God as a result of John's preaching. However, the "many" were a minority. (For example, if 100,000 of 7 million people were affected, the 100,000 would be "many" but a minority.) In this minority was instilled the desire for a renewed life.

Luke 1:17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

John was to go before Jesus "in the spirit and power of Elias [Elijah]." Jesus was *God's* special representative or messenger, and John was *Jesus'* messenger—a messenger of *the* messenger. John prepared the way so that when the real "messenger of the [new] covenant" came (on behalf of God), much obstruction was removed and more concentration could be given to those who had already repented, wanting to live a better life (Mal. 3:1). These Jews were being softened, and of these, some accepted Jesus as Messiah. Similarly, many Christians, before accepting Jesus, had some sorrow or trial in their life that softened them—that is, softened hearts that previously had been thinking very little about God.

Thus it was prophesied that John the Baptist would be successful "in the spirit and power" of Elijah. Realizing that the nation was given to idolatry—to the prophets of either Baal or Jezebel, both being false—Elijah devised a contest and set the terms (1 Kings 18:19-24). The false prophets cut their flesh and waited all day for fire to come down from heaven and consume an animal offering on the altar. Elijah called out sarcastically, "Wail louder! Maybe your god is asleep and does not hear you." At day's end, Elijah poured *much* water on the wood, the sacrifice, etc., and offered a prayer in a simple manner. Fire came down from heaven and consumed the water, the sacrifice, and *even the stones*. As a result, the people were convinced that Jehovah was God, and they slew the false prophets at Elijah's command.

Hence the Israelites were converted to the Lord in Elijah's day, even though the conversion was short-lived. It was like the results of many evangelists today. The results are emotional and

very real, but frequently they are forgotten as time goes on. Nevertheless, the results are lasting with some. It is possible that the 100 prophets whom Obadiah hid in a cave by fifties, lest the king destroy them, had been converted previously by Elijah (1 Kings 18:4). The point is that there was an effect, but the effect was not as demonstrable in the final analysis as the initial results would indicate.

John would be successful in accomplishing what the Lord wanted back there. God was not looking for multitudes at that time. The “called” would be among the multitudes who initially responded to John’s message, for this minority went on to accept Jesus. Thus John would “make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” He would “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children”; that is, as a result of John’s ministry, the adults favorably affected would become childlike. In humility, they would listen to John and respond.

John would also “turn ... the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.” Of those who responded, the publicans and sinners had been disobedient. They had led reprobate lives previously, but their hearts were right and they responded to John and then to Jesus. Tax collectors, for example, had been serving the enemy, Rome. The “disobedient” were enlightened with the truth and became “wise” by responding and discontinuing their former course.

Luke 1:18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

Zacharias asked the angel, “My wife and I are old. How will we know your message is true?”

Luke 1:19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.

Luke 1:20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God and have been sent to tell you this good news. Because you do not believe me, you will be struck dumb, unable to speak, until the very day these things are fulfilled.” Gabriel’s words were a form of criticism, but the overall analysis was that Zacharias and Elisabeth were both “righteous” and “blameless” (verse 6).

The reply of Zacharias may have been inserted to contrast with Mary’s attitude and reply. Zacharias, an old man, was sort of disbelieving. As Jesus said, “With God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). The faith of Zacharias should have grasped this principle—especially coming from a supernatural being—but it did not for the moment, so he was rebuked.

Gabriel was somewhat irritated: “I am the angel *Gabriel*, who stands in the presence of *God*.” Zacharias was a little numb in comprehending, and Gabriel was saying, “What is the matter with you? I am not just an angel but a *special* angel who stands in *God’s* presence.” (Until Lucifer deflected, Gabriel was third in rank; now he is second.)

The incident when Sarah laughed *inwardly* and the angel perceived her attitude shows that holy angels can read our thoughts (Gen. 18:12,13). They can understand things about us that we might not fully realize. The fallen angels would not quite have that power, however, because God’s children are under special custodial care. Nevertheless, fallen angels can see our conduct 24 hours a day.

Luke 1:21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

Luke 1:22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

The effect on Zacharias was advantageous to the people who were waiting outside, for they had not seen the angel. They “marvelled” that Zacharias was taking so long, and when he emerged from the Temple, his dumbness and beckoning convinced them that he had seen a vision. They knew something unusual had happened. Zacharias probably made all kinds of signs with his hands.

Luke 1:23 And it came to pass, that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

At the end of his 15 days of service in the eighth course of Abia, Zacharias went home.

Luke 1:24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

Luke 1:25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Elisabeth conceived and “hid herself” for five months, saying, “God has taken away my reproach.” She was pregnant and aware of the pregnancy. Somehow Zacharias had gotten the angel’s message across to her, and then she found herself pregnant. What a wonderful secret! She realized that God had hearkened to her prayers, and she wanted the pregnancy to come to fruition.

The reason Gabriel, rather than the Logos, came down to Zacharias is that the Logos was receiving instruction from God about his ministry. “As my *Father* hath taught me, [so] I speak,” he said later (John 8:28). Jesus took no credit himself but gave all credit to God. What he learned was along two lines: (1) his personal acquaintanceship with God for many, many years and (2) what the Father taught him regarding his particular mission to earth. Instruction about the First Advent would have been given at a late date, about the time Gabriel came to Zacharias.

Also, since Gabriel’s message pertained to Jesus indirectly in that John would introduce him, it was more appropriate that another angel bring the message to Zacharias. We have an Old Testament and a New Testament verification that Gabriel was a high-ranking angel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19).

Luke 1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

In the sixth month of Elisabeth’s pregnancy, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to deliver a message in Nazareth, a city in Galilee.

Luke 1:27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.

The message was to go to Mary, a virgin, who was espoused to Joseph. Joseph was of David’s lineage. Once again Gabriel was named as the angel to deliver the message, for the Logos would not serve in this capacity to announce his own conception and birth. Mary is Miriam in Hebrew, and there are many Marys in the New Testament.

Luke 1:28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Gabriel told Mary that she was highly favored and blessed among women, and that God was with her.

Luke 1:29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

When Mary first saw Gabriel, she was “troubled,” or startled. She wondered in what way she would be highly favored and blessed.

Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

Gabriel told Mary, “Do not fear, for you have found favor with God. You will have a baby and call his name Jesus.” Gabriel had told John the Baptist’s name in advance and now Jesus’ name also. Two sons would be born within the same year, six months apart, and both were named by *God*.

Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Gabriel’s message continued: “Jesus shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest. God will give him the throne of his father David. Jesus shall reign over the house of Jacob forever. His Kingdom will not end.”

This prophecy of the future proves that the Kingdom will be Israelitish. We are reminded of Isaiah 9:7, “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, ... to establish it ... for ever.” The Hebrew *olam* and the Greek *aion*, meaning “to a conclusion,” are translated “for ever.” When the reign commences, nothing will interrupt it—until it has fully accomplished what God has purposed. And the peace and blessing will remain when Jesus turns the Kingdom over to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24,28).

Luke 1:34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Again Mary responded. In both cases, her response was quite proper. The first time she was justifiably startled. Here she was saying, “I am a virgin. How can that be?”

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Gabriel explained, “The conception will be miraculously done by the Holy Spirit sent from God.” A transfer would take place. The son born of her would be called the “Son of God.”

This one verse gives the relationship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is defined as “the power of the Highest.” Jesus is put in proper relationship to the Father: “that holy *thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the *Son* of God.” If Jesus were God, the

account would not say “that holy thing.” The King James is the best translation in this case, for other translations try to give it an entity and make it more sacred.

Even though Jesus was a life transferred, he never died in that transfer from spirit being to human nature. There was no cessation of life. Notice (verse 31) that Jesus was not to be called by name until he was out of the womb. Jesus is the only being to have such a birth—with no cessation of life. Not until the birth occurred was viable life recognized and named in the sense of personality.

Q: How can those in the nominal system not see the truth about the Trinity?

A: One of the problems is that when many in the nominal system give their heart to the Lord, they think Jesus and God are the same. Having never studied the subject from the Scriptures, they just accept the doctrine of the Trinity because they heard it so often as a child. In fact, they think the Trinity is the primary truth upon which they came to the Lord and are really almost afraid to think about it in any other light.

Similar comments can be made among Bible Students on other subjects, for example, the reign. We hear such statements as the following: “When I first consecrated, I was given *real truth*. I will not go back on what I was first taught.” However, for *all* of our consecrated life, we must be willing to search the Scriptures *daily* to prove and see whether our beliefs are true. Even if an *apostle* made the statement, we must search the Scriptures, for an apostle is only one testimony and a thing is established out of the mouth of two or three witnesses.

Luke 1:36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

The angel Gabriel also said that Mary’s elderly cousin, who had been barren, would bear a son and that she was already six months pregnant. This verse was inserted here because of the next verse.

Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

“With God nothing shall be impossible.” Just as it was miraculous for Elisabeth to have a son in her old age, so it would be miraculous for Mary, as a virgin, to bear Jesus—and it *would happen* because nothing is impossible with God. Mary was just hearing now, for the first time, that Elisabeth was pregnant. Gabriel’s words made her realize that Elisabeth’s baby was special too. Evidently, Elisabeth had been yearning for a child for years, and the family was well aware of her barrenness. Being old now, she was past the normal age of childbearing.

Luke 1:38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Mary responded with beautiful, simple faith: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.” She could have objected: “I am not married. What will people think?” Gabriel did not rebuke Mary in any sense as he had done with Zacharias, who was struck deaf and dumb for receiving the message with incredulity. Though the message was unique, Mary accepted it.

Mary must have had a very holy family. A remarkable care was provided to nurture and culture this family. We should reflect also on the apostles and their family relationships. The lineage of both Jesus and the apostles was overruled. Several pairs of apostles were brothers, and two apostles were Jesus’ half brothers.

Luke 1:39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah;

Luke 1:40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

Luke 1:41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

Mary journeyed *in haste* to the city in Judah where Zacharias and Elisabeth lived. She entered the house without knocking and called for Elisabeth. Mary was eager to see Elisabeth and have a confirmation of the angel's message that her cousin, previously barren, was six months pregnant in her old age. This was indeed *good news* in the family!

The babe *leaped* in Elisabeth's womb when she heard Mary's greeting; that is, the quickening occurred. What a beautiful experience! The fact that the babe "leaped" would mean it was more than just a poke with a foot. The leaping was a startling and joyous experience.

Comment: This incident shows that God has great powers over the birth process if He wants to exercise them. He can close the womb, open the womb, control the moment of quickening, and control birth to an exact day and hour.

Luke 1:42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

Luke 1:43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Luke 1:44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

Luke 1:45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

Elisabeth's salutation to Mary was miraculous. Elisabeth had not known previously about Mary's pregnancy, yet her salutation ended up as a compliment to Mary for believing the angel Gabriel's announcement.

The Holy Spirit then began to mechanically operate in Elisabeth, and she spoke. It was as though the angel Gabriel was speaking through her, giving her the words. Elisabeth would have realized a holy power was controlling her. Even though she was miraculously speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the message was in tune with her joyous emotions.

Elisabeth called Mary "the mother of my Lord." There is a saying, "Like father, like son." Here is a case of "Like mother, like son." When John the Baptist saw Jesus many years later, he spoke with humility as Elisabeth did here with Mary, saying, "There cometh one [Jesus] mightier than I after me, the latchet [strap] of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose" (Mark 1:7). John had native humility. He pointed out Jesus as the Messiah, *knowing* that his own disciples would leave him and follow Jesus. John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). The point is that Elisabeth commended Mary as being superior, and John recognized Jesus as his superior.

Luke 1:46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

Luke 1:47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Luke 1:48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Luke 1:49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

Luke 1:50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Luke 1:51 He hath shown strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Luke 1:52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

Luke 1:53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

Luke 1:54 He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

Luke 1:55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

Luke 1:56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

Mary's words were prophetic and very profound on an exalted theme. Moreover, her emotions were attached to the message, which reveals a little about her. The message suggests that the family was of humble means. The exaltation of the lowly and the turning away of the rich indicates the family did not have too much of this world's goods. Nazareth and Nazarenes were looked down upon. In fact, the whole Galilee area was looked down upon and Nazareth even more so.

“He hath filled the hungry with good things.” Here was a lowly handmaiden, one not recognized, who had been *highly* honored by the Most High God.

The Magnificat was an adoring, moving expression of Mary in praise of God. We see her faith in the Abrahamic promise. There are at least three levels of interpretation of the Magnificat: (1) a literal application with regard to Mary, (2) a prophecy pertaining to the Kingdom, and (3) the demotion of Solomon's line and the exaltation of Nathan's line.

Mary stayed three months with Elisabeth—almost to the birth of John. Then Mary returned to Nazareth, being three months pregnant and concerned about her own pregnancy. There can be many reasons why Mary left Elisabeth after three months and just before the birth. For one thing, she may not have wanted to witness the painful, emotional, agonizing birth process. Or perhaps she wanted to get back to tell Joseph of her own pregnancy before it was obvious. Incidentally, her conception occurred about December 25.

Luke 1:57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

Luke 1:58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shown great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

Luke 1:59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

Luke 1:60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

Luke 1:61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

Luke 1:62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

Luke 1:63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

Luke 1:64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

Luke 1:65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.

Luke 1:66 And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

When Elisabeth gave birth to a son, relatives and neighbors were so joyous that they were ready to name him Zacharias after the father. Notice that Zacharias could neither hear nor speak, for relatives and neighbors had to make signs with regard to the name for the baby. Zacharias confirmed, or sealed, the name by writing "John." Mother and father agreed—according to Gabriel's instruction. *Immediately* when Zacharias wrote the name, his tongue was "loosed." He was able to speak, and he praised God. Fear (awe) fell on all who witnessed this miracle, and word of the miracle spread throughout the hill country of Judea. As John grew, it was obvious that he was a very remarkable child.

Q: Was the custom to give the name on the eighth day, the day of circumcision?

A: In a *formalized* sense, yes, but of course the name was determined before the parents took the child for circumcision.

Comment: At the time of the First Advent, all were in expectation of Messiah based on certain prophecies. In addition, many knew of the unusual circumstances surrounding the births of both John and Jesus. To those who *thought* on these matters, there was enough information to recognize Messiah if the heart was right.

Zacharias was a type of the Jewish nation. His mouth and ears were stopped until the birth of John and the writing of his name. In antitype, Israel will be blind (deaf and dumb) to the realization that Jesus is Messiah until The Christ is born, complete, beyond the veil. Very shortly thereafter, Israel's blindness will be removed. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25).

Comment: With Zacharias representing the Jewish nation, his prophecy in verses 68-79 is a beautiful picture, for with the exception of only a few verses, it expresses the sentiment of the Holy Remnant at the time the Kingdom is inaugurated.

Reply: Yes, while the initial shock will bring grief and tears, these will be followed by *joy*. The Great Company will similarly weep and gnash their teeth when they find the door closed to them, but afterwards they will be rejuvenated with the hope of participating in the marriage supper.

Luke 1:67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

Luke 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

Luke 1:69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

Luke 1:70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

Luke 1:71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

Luke 1:72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

Luke 1:73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

Luke 1:74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

Luke 1:75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

Luke 1:76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

Luke 1:77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

Luke 1:78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

Luke 1:79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Verses 68-79 are a rather long message from one who had been deaf and could not talk. The message would have been impressive to others, who would first be startled and/or frightened and then recognize that the words of Zacharias were a wonderful prophecy.

Comment: How unusual! This *one* chapter contains beautiful messages from *three* personages who were filled with the Holy Spirit: Elisabeth, Mary, and Zacharias.

Like Mary, Zacharias had faith in the Abrahamic promise. Both had the conception that when Messiah would come, he would break their yoke of bondage and free them. The Israelites were in captivity under Egyptian bondage until Moses came, and devout Jews saw this as a picture of Messiah, who would deliver them from Roman bondage.

The term “dayspring from on high” refers to the sun rising, that is, to when the sun bursts over the horizon at the opening of dawn. We are in the Millennial day but not the Millennial dawn. The latter will be the sunrise, when the Kingdom is established. We are in the day of the Lord’s *secret* presence. It is still dark, but when the Kingdom is inaugurated, when blind eyes are opened, when the sun comes over the horizon, it will be dawn.

Luke 1:80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

John the Baptist grew in a remarkable way with spiritual perception and powers. He “waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day [at age 30] of his showing to Israel.” In the days when Herod issued a decree to kill all babes in Jerusalem and environs who were two years old and under, John was taken into the wilderness. As a priest, Zacharias would have lived in Hebron, a city in the environs of Jerusalem that was allocated to the priesthood. When the slaughter began, Herod knew that people would flee to surrounding towns, so he cordoned off the whole area and killed all babes. However, John’s parents got sufficient

warning and gave him to a servant with instructions to flee to the desert wilderness and keep John there until he grew up. During this time, Zacharias was slain, and John's mother, being old, would have died. Hence John was an orphan raised in the wilderness and sustained by living off the land. That type of life providentially prepared him and led to his wearing crude garments so that others later thought he was Elijah. At the start of his ministry, John came seemingly out of nowhere and preached with *great power*. For example, "Bring forth therefore fruits *worthy of repentance*" (Luke 3:8). John did not want to baptize hypocrites. To speak that way and wear crude garments made people think he was Elijah. All this was psychologically beneficial in awakening the nation to its real priorities—that Israel was the kingdom, the people of God.

John the Baptist's father is the Zacharias slain between the Temple and the altar (Matt. 23:35; Luke 11:51). Most translators think it was the Old Testament Zechariah, but that would leave *too great a time gap*. All the sins from righteous Abel to Zacharias came on the generation at the First Advent. The death of John the Baptist's father brought the account up closer to Jesus' days, a *contemporary* generation.

In summary, it was providential for John to be led into the wilderness apart from his family. Luke's insight is interesting in regard to the circumstances surrounding the birth and family of both John the Baptist and (especially) Jesus.

Comment: It was providential that Luke the *physician* gave the details of Jesus' miraculous birth—his profession and experience gave more credibility.

Reply: Yes. Luke was specially prepared for recording information about the pregnancies of Elisabeth and Mary.

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

Luke 2:2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

Caesar Augustus decreed that "all the world" should be taxed; that is, all the *Roman* world. This taxing first occurred when Cyrenius was the governor of Syria. This information, in conjunction with Luke 3:1, helps to set the date for Jesus' birth. At the beginning of his Gospel, Luke said he would set forth an accurate chronological account (1:1).

Luke 2:3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

Everyone went to the city of his birth to be taxed. "Taxed" means "inrolled" (see King James margin); that is, a census was taken for taxation purposes. "All" seems to include females. The census was broader than just the exacting of taxes, for the families were also recorded, and the taxes were levied later.

Luke 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

The important point is that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, "the city of David," in Judea.

Luke 2:5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

At this time, Mary, Joseph's "espoused wife," was "great with child."

Luke 2:6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

While in Bethlehem, Mary's pregnancy came to full term. Knowing that Jesus had a full-term birth proves he was born six months after John the Baptist.

Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

About the first of October, 2 BC, Mary brought forth her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger. During her pregnancy, the angels watched her carefully to make sure nothing untoward happened, for the birth had to take place in Bethlehem, and not even en route to Bethlehem, which would be premature. Moreover, the angels made sure she was not jostled too much, that the donkey did not rear up, etc.

The term "firstborn son" implies *later-born* sons. If Jesus were Mary's only son, the account would so state. And "swaddling clothes [cloths]" suggest that Mary had brought the cloths along in anticipation the birth might take place before she could return to Nazareth. It was customary to use swaddling cloths for wrapping and protecting a newborn and also because of the afterbirth.

A "manger" was a hollowed-out stone receptacle used to hold food or water for animals; that is, it was used as a feeding trough. Jesus was born in a cave that was used to shelter animals. The "cave" thought is confirmed by the Grotto in the Great Pyramid.

The clause "because there was no room for them in the inn" indicates coolness and alienation in connection with Jesus' birth. From a spiritual standpoint, that is also the problem, for there is no room for Jesus in present society, generally speaking. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11).

The *great* Jesus, King of kings, had a *humble* birth. The *great* Jehovah planned it that way. We would have done otherwise and given all the best if our son were about to be born and we had the means. But God has His own way, and there is great wisdom in it.

Luke 2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Luke 2:9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Contemporary with the birth, another incident took place. Out in the fields in a different area, shepherds were keeping their flocks by night. Suddenly, what would have seemed like a floodlight appeared in the darkness of night. How very startling! *Sudden* illumination was around them, and then the shepherds heard a voice. Probably the angel speaking was Gabriel, who had announced the prospective births earlier to Elisabeth and Mary.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

The angel said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you *good* tidings of *great* joy, which shall be to *all* people." Luke's Gospel records that in the appearances to Zacharias, Mary, and the shepherds, the angel said *right away*, "Fear not" (Luke 1:13,30). The words had a calming effect.

What was the reason for the startling method of having the "glory of the Lord" suddenly shine

out in the dark night? The purpose was to show that this was an angelic, divine message from God, that it was a supernatural experience. In this case, it showed a most unusual birth. The revealment of the miraculous message in such a startling manner transferred the importance to the babe. It is interesting that all “were in expectation” of Messiah, but not all believed the shepherds’ testimony (Luke 3:15).

Comment: Perhaps the shepherds later became disciples of Jesus, for no doubt they were handpicked to be honored with this experience. They must have been longing for the Messiah.

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

The “sign” was a newborn babe (1) wrapped in swaddling clothes and (2) lying in a manger. To see a newborn wrapped in swaddling clothes would simply mean that a baby had just been born, but for the two things to happen on the same day was unusual. It would be interesting to know how the shepherds went about finding the newborn babe.

Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Suddenly a multitude of angels appeared, singing and praising God. The listening shepherds would have been very excited, their hearts beating rapidly.

Q: Were the angels actually singing, for the account does not so state?

A: We think so, but it is true that the Scriptures do not actually say.

Luke 2:15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

The shepherds said, “Let us now go even unto Bethlehem.” They knew that “the city of David” was Bethlehem (verse 11).

Luke 2:16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

The shepherds went “with *haste*” and found Mary, Joseph, and the babe.

Luke 2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

The shepherds made known the angelic message they had been given—the announcement of the birth of Christ.

Luke 2:18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

The announcement of Jesus’ birth occurred 30 years before his formal introduction at Jordan,

when John the Baptist announced him as the Messiah. There is a parallel with regard to the Millerite movement, which expected Jesus to return in 1844. However, the Lord's presence did not occur until 1874, which was 30 years later.

Luke 2:19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Why did Mary keep all these things and ponder them in her heart? This was characteristic of Mary. She had an accumulation of things to ponder: (1) Gabriel's initial announcement that she would bear the Messiah, (2) Elisabeth's message via the Holy Spirit before John's birth, (3) her own Magnificat, (4) the angelic announcement to the shepherds, etc. Pondering/meditating is a good quality. Of those who were disappointed with regard to the expected 1844 date of the Millerite movement, the ones with the right heart condition continued to ponder those things and hence were ready to receive the truth when 1874 came.

Luke 2:20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

After running around telling what had happened with regard to the angel's message, the shepherds returned to their flocks.

Luke 2:21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Luke 2:22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

Luke 2:23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

Luke 2:24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

In harmony with the Law, Mary and Joseph took the babe to the Temple in Jerusalem to perform the ritual (to "present him to the Lord" and offer a sacrifice of two doves or two pigeons). According to the Law, the male babe was to be circumcised on the eighth day. Then, counting the eighth day, came an additional 33 "days of purification" for the mother of the male child (Lev. 12:2-4). The total wait was 40 days (7 + 33).

The sacrifice of two doves or pigeons was for the poor. Therefore, we know that Mary and Joseph had very modest means.

Luke 2:25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

Luke 2:26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Luke 2:27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

Luke 2:28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Luke 2:29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

Luke 2:30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

Luke 2:31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

Luke 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Luke 2:33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

Luke 2:34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

Luke 2:35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Simeon was promised that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. The inference was that he was an old man waiting for the “consolation of Israel.” The Holy Spirit informed him that if he went to the Temple, he would see the babe coming for circumcision.

It helps to put ourselves in Joseph’s and Mary’s place. When they entered the Temple, a devout old man, a stranger, picked up the babe and uttered a prophecy under the influence of the Holy Spirit. This miracle was another startling experience for them.

First, the old man praised God. After blessing Mary and Joseph, he specifically addressed Mary: “A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also.” Of course the prophetic reference was to Jesus’ crucifixion. The thought was that a thin, sharp stiletto blade (not a broad sword) would pierce her heart. This figuratively occurred when Jesus was crucified naked on the Cross and exposed with shame before the whole nation as if he were a cursed, vile criminal. “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13).

Comment: Within a year and a half, there were multiple prophecies through the Holy Spirit, namely, Zacharias, Elisabeth, Mary, the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna.

Reply: The prophecies would help stop the mouths of some who criticized Jesus’ claim. Some tried to show he was a false Messiah—but not for a couple of centuries because there were too many witnesses. The number and variety of witnesses/eyewitnesses gave veracity to the claim that Jesus truly was the Messiah. Everything about Jesus was very unusual. Even his enemies, if they searched into his background while he was still alive, would have to admit that unusual things had transpired. And his miracles testified to his identity.

It was necessary for Jesus to go to Egypt for a time. One reason is that in this period of absence, people forgot the miraculous happenings. No matter how startling the experience, it is human nature to forget unless a conscious effort is made otherwise. And so it is helpful for the Christian to retrace his life to reassure himself that the Lord is dealing with him.

Luke 2:36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

Luke 2:37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

Luke 2:38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Anna was a prophetess of the tribe of Asher. She was of “great age” (perhaps 120). We do not know how old she was when she got married, but perhaps she was 18 years old. Then she was married for 7 years and a widow for 84 years—for a total of at least 109 years.

Anna was in the Temple night and day with fastings and prayers. No doubt the coming of Messiah was very much on her mind. She was rewarded for her hunger, but note the test of patient endurance with her (and with Simeon too). Anna may have served the priesthood, with her service being accompanied with fastings and prayers.

When she came in and saw Jesus, she gave thanks and spoke of him to all those in Jerusalem who were looking for the Messiah. Picture this elderly woman, *over 100 years of age*, who had been a prophetess all along, now prophesying about the Messiah, whom she had seen. She went out witnessing to any who had a hearing ear. Thus there were *two elderly witnesses*: Simeon and Anna. Both could have been centenarians.

Just as Simeon and Anna prophesied when Messiah was born, so there may be 120-year-old(s) who prophesy right after Jacob’s Trouble when *The Christ* is born. This thought is based on Joel 2:28, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.”

Luke 2:39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

Mary and Joseph returned to Nazareth.

Luke 2:40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Jesus grew and waxed strong, and he was filled with wisdom. “And the grace of God was upon him.” How absurd the Trinitarian view would be: “And the grace of God was upon God”!

Luke 2:41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

Luke 2:42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

Verses 41 and 42 help us to know that Joseph was still alive when Jesus was 12 years old.

Luke 2:43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

Luke 2:44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

Reprint article No. 2558 says that it was the custom for the women to travel ahead and the men behind, so each parent would have supposed Jesus to be with the other. Also, there seem to be indications that Jesus was of a large family counting aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. With the many kinsfolk, Mary and Joseph could have assumed at first that Jesus was with one of the relatives. At any rate, after traveling a day’s journey from Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph discovered that Jesus was missing.

Luke 2:45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

It would have taken a second day for Mary and Joseph to return to Jerusalem to look for Jesus.

Luke 2:46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

Luke 2:47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

All who heard Jesus were astonished at his depth/degree of understanding and answers. So he not only asked questions of those learned in the Law but also gave answers. When the “doctors” of the Law realized the nature and depth of Jesus’ questions, they probably prodded him with questions. Jesus’ replies amazed them.

Luke 2:48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

When Mary and Joseph saw Jesus there, they were amazed. Mary said, “Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have sought you *sorrowing*.”

Luke 2:49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?

Jesus replied, “Do you not know that I must be about my Father’s business?” His answer was sort of a rebuke. Similarly, Jesus rebuked Mary years later at the wedding in Cana in regard to the wine situation. That rebuke was providentially done to counteract the doctrine of Mariolatry.

It was unusual at that time to call God “my Father.” The term came into use after Pentecost and the begetting to sonship of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was not aware of his preexistence until Jordan when the “heavens were opened unto him,” but he would have known about the miraculous circumstances of his birth (Matt. 3:16). The angel, for example, had told Mary her son would be “the Son of the Highest” (Luke 1:32). With the exception of this incident at age 12, there is a void in the Scriptures about Jesus from the time of his birth until his baptism at age 30.

Luke 2:50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

Mary and Joseph did not understand Jesus’ reply.

Luke 2:51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

Jesus returned to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph. Again Mary “kept all these sayings in her heart.” Despite Mary’s not understanding Jesus’ reply, it is to her credit that she did not dismiss his words but kept them in her heart.

Luke wrote for Paul, and both of them could have questioned Mary to learn these things. We know that Paul, at the beginning of his ministry, privately visited James, the Lord’s brother, to ask questions about Jesus’ upbringing and early life, and he also visited the Apostle Peter (Gal. 1:18,19).

Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. People would have realized that Jesus was unusual from his politeness, deep understanding, perhaps his

appearance, his reverence, etc. And God looked down from heaven on Jesus with favor as His Son grew up into manhood.

Luke 3:1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

Luke's Gospel is different. Here he named several individual rulers and their territories—this was part of his setting forth things "in order" (Luke 1:1). Tiberius Caesar was on the throne, in the fifteenth year of his reign. Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea. Herod was the tetrarch of Galilee. Philip (brother of Herod) was the tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis. Lysanias was the tetrarch of Abilene. Iturea and Trachonitis were in Syria, being northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Rome controlled that whole part of the world.

Luke's Gospel was available to the early Church in the first century. If any of these facts were incorrect, they would have been disputed immediately. Therefore, the very fact there was no dispute regarding when John the Baptist's ministry occurred is proof that the statements are true. The real criticism of the Gospels did not take place until all of the living contemporaries were dead—those who had witnessed the earthquake, those who knew the Temple veil was rent, etc. Claiming to do research, today's higher critics attack Genesis, Exodus, and other books of the Bible—*many years* after the death of all parties concerned—but if the criticism were valid, it should have been given around the time of the initial writing.

Luke 3:2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Luke 3:3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

The high priests at the time were Annas and Caiaphas. The same high priests were in office four years later when Jesus was crucified. Incidentally, there were two high priests in David's day too, of which Zadok was one (2 Sam. 8:17).

In those days, the word of God came unto John the Baptist while he was in the wilderness. His father, Zacharias, was dead by this time. John preached the "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" in the Jordan River area.

Luke 3:4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Luke 3:5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

Luke 3:6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Verses 4-6 are a prophecy from Isaiah 40:3-5. Here "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" was John the Baptist. John's prophetic and figurative message can be summarized as: "Prepare the way of the Lord. Everything will be leveled and straightened out." The leveling was to prepare a highway for Jesus, who would shortly follow. John the Baptist was a herald of Jesus' coming, and Jesus was a herald of his own coming Kingdom, when "all flesh shall see [understand] the salvation of God." Verse 6 cannot be taken literally, for no man can actually see God and live (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12).

Comment: John was a type of the consecrated at the end of the age.

Reply: Yes, John the Baptist was a prototype of the work and ministry of Pastor Russell during the Second Advent presence of Christ. John also represents a *class* during the *parousia*: the consecrated.

Luke 3:7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Luke 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

John was preaching baptism for the remission of sins, and a multitude was there to hear him. John particularly addressed the scribes and Pharisees: “O generation of vipers! Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. Do not boast that Abraham is your father.” John was decrying their *wrong* motive for coming. His purpose was to baptize the *sincerely* contrite and repentant Jews.

Great multitudes came to hear John preach. Those with the wrong motive probably came out of fear because of familiarity with Malachi’s prophecy (4:5,6). “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and *dreadful* day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart ... lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” “Who shall be able to withstand that day, which shall burn like an oven” (Mal. 4:1 paraphrase).

Clothed similarly to Elijah, John the Baptist had a leather girdle and came from the wilderness (Matt. 3:4). His sudden appearing also made him seem like a prophet. Malachi 3:1 mentions that God’s messenger would announce the Messiah, who would come suddenly. “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.” Since John’s appearance and message seemed to fulfill Malachi’s prophecy, the multitudes fled to him out of fear and to try to escape the coming trouble. With any radical dispensational change, there would be such a tendency. To a certain extent, we will see this tendency again in the near future when people begin to realize the significance of events. Serious, somber times will jolt the people into giving up things that now dominate their time—sports, movies, etc.

Q: John made an interesting statement here: “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” Jesus said later that the very stones would have cried out if the multitudes had not shouted “Hosanna.” Since God could have *literally* caused those stones to speak, are we to take John’s statement literally too?

A: God is *able* to do that—yes. However, John’s language may have been intended as just figurative.

Early in the Harvest period, a time element was given as to when the Kingdom would be established: 1914. Because that date was presented years before—in the 1880s—it did not have the same effect on the public that events of the near future will have. When the people see the *actual* crumbling of the nations, they will react.

“Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance.” Just the mouthing of repentance is not necessarily proper repentance. A mood or feeling has to be associated with the works of repentance. John the Baptist was stirring up Jews who had forsaken the Law Covenant or been lax toward it. Such were being awakened out of their stupor. Many sincerely responded, and of these, a good portion later accepted Jesus’ message.

Luke 3:9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

John continued, "The axe is laid unto the root of the trees." Notice that the "axe" is singular, but the "trees" and the "root(s)" would be plural. The "trees" represented the Jewish people, the individuals. The "axe" symbolized a time of *judgment*. The axe was being measured to the trunks of the trees before the trees were cut down. Hence John's ministry had a twofold effect: (1) The right-hearted "trees" fell down favorably in the sense of *repentance*. (2) If the "trees" were proud, the message cut in an irritating way. John the Baptist (and later Jesus) called to mind the inconsistencies of the people who professed to be true Jews but were not. Thus John was welcomed by one element and opposed by another, as was Jesus. In summary, then, the axe was a period of judgment that cut at the roots of the trees, that is, at the hearts and feelings of the people.

Luke 3:10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

Luke 3:11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

Luke 3:12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

Luke 3:13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

Luke 3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

A multitude was listening to John, but then a representative from each group (the people, the publicans, and the soldiers) asked, "What shall we do?" A summary is given of the general way in which John answered these questions.

Q: How would these questions and answers apply in the antitype in our day in the near future?

A: Notice that John did not say to repent and be baptized to have sins washed away. A preparatory work was being shown: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Luke 3:4). While John was the immediate forerunner of the Messiah, there had to be a preparatory work of being made low. Those with means were to help those in need of food or clothing. Soldiers were to be content with their wages, avoid violence, and not bear false witness. In regard to "violence," sometimes those who carry guns terrorize the civilian population and make exorbitant demands. The soldiers were not to do these things but were to steer a meek course. Publicans were told to collect only those taxes they were appointed to collect. This practical advice was preparatory to receiving the Messiah.

This advice may have a specific application in the future. In the real Time of Trouble, people will not be consecrating because there will be too much confusion, violence, hunger, etc. Practical advice will be given as the trouble approaches. "Seek righteousness, seek meekness" is the thought (Zeph. 2:3).

Q: Were there many Jewish soldiers? A Jewish guard was set at Jesus' tomb. Did many Jewish soldiers serve the Romans?

A: No, not many, just the guard. The fact this element came out suggests that a number of

scribes and Pharisees were present. Also, the fact these questions were asked shows that concerned individuals were among the multitude.

John was preparing the way for Jesus at the First Advent. If this practical advice has an antitype, it will be to prepare the way of Jesus during the Second Advent for the establishment of the Kingdom from the standpoint of the world. This message would fit in beautifully just before the establishment of the Kingdom when there is fear of the coming Time of Trouble. It would then be the responsibility of those who are asked for advice to give similarly helpful counsel. At that time, even some of the leaders will seek information from the feet members.

Luke 3:15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

Luke 3:16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

Luke 3:17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Luke 3:18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

Out of the multitude, John was exhorting those with a hearing ear. The people were in expectation of Messiah. Daniel's prophecy was understood, to a certain extent, as being a prophecy of 70 weeks of *years*, that is, 490 years. Although the people did not know the specific ending year, they knew it was about the time for fulfillment when Messiah would come. Moreover, Daniel had prophesied of coming trouble, and so did John. Therefore, over the 30-year period from Jesus' birth to his baptism, there was an expectation of Messiah. The *thinking* public sensed that this was a time of the end, and the same is true today.

"All men mused in their hearts" whether John was the Messiah. Like the earlier prophets, John could tell, through the power of the Holy Spirit, what the people were thinking as they came to him. On the one hand, he criticized the scribes and Pharisees for being insincere inquirers. On the other hand, he gave attention to those who were sincere.

The King James margin reads, "The people were in *suspense*" as to whether John was the Christ. This alternate reading is also a good thought, for the excitement would build as they kept asking, "Who is this? Is he the Messiah?"

John the Baptist talked about two kinds of "baptism" with *fire*, as follows:

1. Primary application—the fire of God's wrath and judgment in AD 69-70. John zeroed in on this "trouble" baptism. Two classes were affected: (1) The wheat was separated and purged, and (2) the chaff was burned.
2. Secondary application—the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in AD 33. The "fire" of *acceptance* came on the gathered disciples when they were baptized at Pentecost. What appeared on their heads looked like fire and was shaped like tongues, that is, tongues of fire. The tongues meant that the disciples got the gift of speaking in different languages. That gift was manifested so that they, especially Peter and John, could witness to people of various nations. Later on, the Holy Spirit was of a diverse nature.

Luke 3:19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

Luke 3:20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

Verses 19 and 20 give a brief summary of the rebuking message that John the Baptist directed to Herod and Herodias for their adulterous situation (Mark 6:18,19). Herodias was Philip's wife, and Philip was Herod's brother. Verse 18 said that John exhorted "many other things" to the people. Verse 19 gives an example of what he taught and rebuked.

Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

Luke 3:22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

When John had finished baptizing that day, Jesus came to him separately, requesting to be baptized. Matthew 3:16 tells that the "heavens were opened" to Jesus (in other words, the public did not see anything and was not present). What "heavens" were "opened" to Jesus? The knowledge of his preexistent life with the Father flooded Jesus' mind at the time of his baptism. As a result, Jesus was in an emotional trauma. He had come to give his heart in consecration and full devotion at age 30 (the proper time). Now came a flood of intelligence and understanding where he found himself in fashion as a man in preparation for humbling himself and becoming obedient to the Cross (Phil. 2:8).

A literal dove alighted on Jesus, representing the Holy Spirit coming on him. The purpose of the manifestation of a physical dove was to convince John the Baptist that Jesus was the Messiah. (John had been told in advance that the person on whom a dove would alight and remain would be the Messiah. Moreover, this experience would happen while John was baptizing—John 1:33.) The people did not see the dove, just John. And John heard God say, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Of course Jesus heard those words too. No wonder Jesus fled into the wilderness to think these things over—what a startling revelation!

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

Jesus' lineage through Mary is given in verses 23-38. Jesus was *exactly* 30 years old. The words "began to be about" are just an expression. Similarly, the Book of Acts says that the Period of the Judges was "about" 450 years, meaning *exactly* 450 years. "About" in these contexts does not mean "approximately."

Luke 3:24 Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,

Luke 3:25 Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,

Luke 3:26 Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Judah,

Luke 3:27 Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,

Joanna was a man.

Luke 3:28 Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,

Luke 3:29 Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,

Luke 3:30 Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Judah, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,

Luke 3:31 Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,

Luke 3:32 Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson,

Luke 3:33 Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Judah,

Luke 3:34 Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,

Luke 3:35 Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala,

Luke 3:36 Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,

Luke 3:37 Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan,

Luke 3:38 Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

Luke's Genealogy (Luke 3) Compared to Matthew's Genealogy (Matthew 1)

Matthew's genealogy is the *paternal* line, showing Joseph as the *legal* father of Jesus. (God was the *actual* Father.) Joseph was noted as a son of Abraham in order to show Jesus' descent as a Son of David. The Jews required this information, for the "sure mercies" were given to David, that is, that Messiah would come through his lineage (Isa. 55:3). Luke's genealogy is traced through Mary, the *maternal* line, yet her name is not mentioned.

Matthew's lineage says "begat, begat, begat," so there is no question that a father-son relationship is given: father, son, grandson, great grandson, etc. Luke's genealogy keeps repeating "which was the son of," but the words "the son" were supplied by the translators. Therefore, the genealogy should read "so-and-so, which was of so-and-so," etc.

Matthew started with the ancient past and proceeded forward to Jesus, whereas Luke started with Jesus and went back to Adam. Both lineages are in sequence, the former in ascending order, the latter in descending order.

Matthew said Joseph's father was Jacob. Luke said Joseph's father was Heli (or Eli). The translators felt that both lineages were of the literal father, but such thinking would contradict. Joseph's father did not have two different names; rather, there were two different *relationships*. In Egypt, even though a queen was reigning, her name was not mentioned in the tablets.

However, the woman was so important that one could not become the Pharaoh, normally speaking, unless he was born of a royal mother. Nevertheless, the king's name (that is, the Pharaoh's) was listed on the tablets, not the queen's. That is what happened in the Luke genealogy. All *male* names were listed, but these were in-laws in 90 percent of the cases. Fathers-in-law were listed—the mothers were being considered but were not listed. In other words, instead of a listing of the mother's name, her *husband's* name was recorded.

The Matthew and Luke accounts thus confirm on *both* sides (Mary as the mother and Joseph as the legal father) that Jesus was truly a son of Abraham. Mary was a daughter of David, and Joseph was a son of David.

One or two names are common to both lineages, for example, Salathiel. The reason is that when in Babylonian captivity, the Jews, being few in number, were told to multiply. This occurred in two ways. (1) According to the Law, if a husband died not leaving an heir, the other natural brother had to take the widow as a mate and raise up seed to preserve the lineage. (2) Some men had more than one wife. Salathiel was one such man, and David was another. Monogamy became a requirement in the Gospel Age for two reasons: (1) to teach spiritual lessons and (2) to prevent genetic flaws as the race degenerated. Adam lived 930 years; Methuselah, 969 years. Today a life span artificially prolonged through medication to the 80s or 90s is considered long. Salathiel was a father in Matthew's genealogy, but he is listed through the mother in Luke, that is, as a father-in-law.

Matthew traced the lineage back to Abraham. He wrote especially for the Jews, who had to know whether Jesus, the purported Messiah, was truly a son of Abraham and of David. Matthew tried to prove that connection through the male line. Incidentally, Abraham was considered the father of the Hebrews because of Heber.

Luke wrote for the Gentiles. Since he wanted to convince them of Messiah's claim, he went back to Adam, "the son of God" and father of the human race (verse 38). It was promised in the Book of Genesis that the mysterious seed of the woman Eve would crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). Luke wanted to show that Jesus was *the* Son of (the man) Adam—the prophesied seed of woman.

Joseph was the son-in-law of Heli/Eli, and Mary was the daughter. Once Luke got back to David and Abraham, there was no more need to trace through the maternal line because the Old Testament lists the genealogy.

Jesus had literal brothers, two being "real" brothers and two being of a subsequent marriage. Joseph was relatively old when he married Mary and thus died long before she did. (Similarly, Boaz was old when he married Ruth and had Obed.) Luke's purpose was to give an even more credible lineage than Matthew.

Luke's Gospel, which was *Paul's* thinking, brought out certain things that the other Gospels did not—regarding the cup, for instance. Paul had many visions, and in 1 Corinthians 11:23, he said the Lord had revealed this information to him. One of the earliest things he did after his conversion was to go to Jerusalem to talk to Peter and Jesus' brother James (Gal. 1:18,19), but why? He wanted to find out about Jesus' background and about Mary. Luke would not have known these things, for he was not an apostle. Also, some of Paul's *wording* is in the Gospel of Luke. Various clues show that Luke was Paul's amanuensis (scribe) and historian. Luke's style was scholarly, but the thinking was definitely Paul's. Paul would have dictated certain portions, but as regards other parts of the Gospel, Luke, knowing Paul's thinking, wrote for him. And Luke added some historical and chronological facts such as who was on the throne. Luke's Gospel is very important for verifying the accuracy and the authenticity of Messiah's life, and for locating it with exactness on the stream of time. If such facts were not true, Jesus' enemies

could easily have discredited the Gospel. It is significant that *none* of the early critics debated Jesus' authenticity as being a son of David.

What about the source of the lineage? The Old Testament genealogy goes past the Babylonian captivity. The two to three centuries before Christ were established by current records.

Ezra got a commission in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes, who gave him the Hebrew records that were being housed in a Babylonian temple. Ezra began to train the Levites, and he reinstated the reading of the Law to the people every seven years. He enacted a great reform. In fact, Nehemiah's work was built on Ezra's work. The two were contemporaries for quite a while, although, of course, Nehemiah outlived Ezra.

Luke 4:1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Luke 4:2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

Jesus was *full* of the Holy Spirit; that is, he had the Spirit without measure (John 3:34). The *flood* of information regarding his preexistence with the Father that Jesus received at Jordan impelled him to seek solitude in the wilderness. He also found himself "as a man" (Phil. 2:8). Now he had two sources of knowledge: (1) his youth up to his current manhood and (2) the knowledge of his preexistence. Jesus went into the wilderness to think things out. Incidentally, "forty days" (also forty years) is a testing period, a trial, in Scripture.

Luke 4:3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

For the first temptation, Satan waited until the psychological moment when Jesus "hungered." His words (paraphrased) were, "Since you are the Son of God, use your power to turn this stone into bread." A test for the new creature is to pray for personal prosperity and temporal things as opposed to desiring growth for the new creature. Jesus had a *legitimate* right to eat bread, but the temptation was to *command* the stones to be made into bread. To do this, he would have to perform a miracle. Hence the temptation was the *circumstances* under which Jesus would have taken bread for bodily sustenance—had he performed the miracle, he would have followed Satan's suggestion.

Comment: Adam and Eve were tempted and sinned in connection with eating. Jesus' first temptation was also along the lines of eating.

Reply: In other words, as Adam was *the man*, the human son of God, the father of the human race, so Jesus, as the Ransom price, was *the Son* of the promised seed. Adam was tempted in regard to eating forbidden fruit. Jesus was tempted in regard to a misuse of power to gratify and feed self. Adam succumbed; Jesus did not.

"If" should be "since." Jesus had just heard the Father say at Jordan, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Therefore, Jesus *knew* he was the Son of God.

Probably Jesus saw Satan in this temptation; that is, he saw the Adversary making a "friendly" suggestion. They were already adversaries (for example, they had disputed over Moses' body—Jude 9), and Satan was the enemy of God, but here Satan posed as a *friend*. Because Jesus had the right principles, he renounced any suggestion of Satan.

Matthew and Luke listed all three temptations but reversed the order of the last two. Luke's

Gospel, the one “in order” (1:1), is accurate chronologically.

Luke 4:4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Jesus answered Satan with Scripture: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God” (Deut. 8:3 paraphrase).

Luke 4:5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Verse 5 tells of the second temptation. In *vision*, Jesus was taken to a high mountain from which he could view all the kingdoms of the world. Note: There is no literal mountain high enough to provide such a view.

Luke 4:6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

Luke 4:7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

Satan was offering to join forces with Jesus. He said in effect, “I have been your adversary, but if you will now recognize, worship, and submit to me, I will give you the *power* and the *glory* of these kingdoms and you will not have to suffer.” This was a powerful temptation. Jesus probably saw Satan as they were talking, but whether or not he did, the temptation was equally powerful either way. For example, when Jesus said to Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan,” Jesus recognized the *source* of the suggestion without seeing Satan (Matt. 16:23).

The temptation was, “If you worship me, you will be recognized as the King of the world.” Satan was trying not only to drive a wedge between Jesus and the Father but also to take the Father’s place. “Just transfer your allegiance to me instead of to the Father, and I will give you the power and the glory.” Just as Pharaoh was over Joseph, so Satan wanted to be over Jesus. Only in the throne would Satan be higher. Jesus’ allegiance and fidelity would be of the same type but to a different being. If Jesus had yielded to this temptation, he would have avoided death on the Cross, the Ransom would not have been paid, and sin and death would not be destroyed.

Comment: Satan was very sure of himself. He knew that he was the “god of this world” and that all power and glory and all of the kingdoms had been delivered unto him.

Reply: It took *faith* for Jesus to trust God’s arrangements. Consider that the holy angels knew God, yet some of them fell. And the holy angels were *spirit* beings, whereas Jesus was now a puny, little *human* being with the knowledge of just how large and powerful Satan really was.

God momentarily allowed Satan to intrude into Jesus’ mind. This was a *test* on Jesus to see how he would react. God *tests*; Satan *tempts*. Tests are permitted to develop and strengthen our characters. Every time we resist, we become stronger, normally speaking.

Since God allowed this intrusion by Satan into Jesus’ life, it means that we can have a similar experience. Evil suggestions *may not necessarily* be our natural depravity of nature (although in most cases they are), for some intrusions can come into the holiest of men who are desperately trying to do God’s will. Since Jesus had a *perfect* mind, any intrusion was foreign to his natural thinking. With us, however, Satan takes advantage of the natural depravity of man and uses it as a leverage to make us succumb to certain evil suggestions. Hence we need the Holy Spirit, prayer, and fasting to struggle and fight against Satan’s temptations. Our characters are

developed by resisting.

Job is a good example. God asked, “Have you seen my faithful servant Job?” Satan replied, “Yes, but look at how he prospers. He has land, wealth, family, good health, friends, etc. If he loses these, the situation will be different.” God permitted Satan to afflict Job with trials short of taking his life, but Job remained faithful. We have examples in the Bible of how the Adversary has intruded and can intrude on the saints both past and present.

Luke 4:8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Again Jesus countered with Scripture: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Exod. 20:3; 34:14). In other words, “No man can serve two masters.” In each case, Jesus gave short, terse, to-the-point negative answers. He did not reason, parley, or have a discussion with Satan. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” is the principle (James 4:7). The danger with evil is to think we can help the one who is following an evil course, believing we can reason with him and remain untainted.

Luke 4:9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

Luke 4:10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

Luke 4:11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Luke 4:12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

In the third temptation, Jesus was transferred in vision to Jerusalem to a pinnacle of the Temple (the southeast corner where the wall and Temple are one) about 600 feet above the bottom of the valley. Satan’s suggestion was, “Cast yourself off this pinnacle, for the Scriptures promise you protection. You will not get hurt.” Jesus would have been conspicuous had he deliberately jumped. For the first time, Satan quoted Scripture, implying, “If you jump off, the angels will catch you. Many people will see you miraculously escape death and acclaim you as the Messiah. You will be crowned King.” However, Satan *added* to Psalm 91:11,12 with the phrase “at any time.” (He used this same method in the Garden of Eden with Eve.) For Jesus to have yielded to this temptation would also have circumvented the suffering. But notice Jesus’ reply: “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” In quoting Deuteronomy 6:16, Jesus wisely countered a *misused* Scripture with a *correctly* used Scripture. In effect, Jesus simply answered “no.” He did not give a long explanation by going back to the Scripture and comparing it. By answering as he did, Jesus was telling Satan, “You are trying to get me to disobey my Father.” It is significant that all three temptations came at Jesus’ weakest moments.

Luke 4:13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

After the three temptations, Satan departed from Jesus “for a *season*.” The same thing happens when we resist Satan. No matter how strong the test, when peace follows, we must be on guard, for another test will surely come.

Luke 4:14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

Luke 4:15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

Verses 14 and 15 took place rather early in Jesus' ministry. John's Gospel filled in a gap with the wedding at Cana, which took place before Jesus got up to Galilee. At this point in Luke, Jesus had been in Galilee for some months in order for his fame to spread "through all the region round about."

Q: The expression Jesus "returned in the power of the Spirit" is somewhat similar to Luke 4:1, where Jesus, "being full of the Holy Spirit returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit [his new mind] into the wilderness." What does "returned in the power of the Spirit" signify?

A: Jesus went into the wilderness because he was overwhelmed by the knowledge of his prehuman existence and the instruction God had given before sending him on this mission. We know that Jesus was briefed before coming down here because he said he spoke as the Father had taught him (John 8:28; 12:49,50). Jesus' experience to that point as a human being was one thing, and his prehuman existence and knowledge were another. He had to adjust the two and decide how to start his ministry. Apparently, he had things sorted out after the 40 days, and now he was returning with the power of the Holy Spirit, knowing how to proceed with his ministry.

Jesus taught in the synagogues. He had not gone to any rabbinical school, and his parents were known. As he read portions of Scripture, the people realized he was not a rabbi in the normal sense. Hearing him explain with great knowledge—above what any rabbi could ever hope to know—they could not understand where his great wisdom came from. They sat stunned as he opened up the Scriptures to them. Whatever the Scripture reading was would determine the nature of his discourse. The Scripture reading was "programmed" in advance (as in many churches today), but Jesus breathed new life into the Scriptures. The people would want to hear him again on the following sabbath. Jesus would read with understanding and the right intonation, sit down, and then explain what he had read.

Luke 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

"And he came to Nazareth" where he had been raised. Some time expired following his consecration before he returned to his hometown. He had first gone to Capernaum and had a ministry around the Sea of Galilee. In Nazareth, he stood up in the synagogue to read. His fame had preceded him "through all the region round about" (verse 14), so the people of Nazareth were waiting for him.

Luke 4:17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Luke 4:19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

The Scriptures were on scrolls back there. It was providentially arranged that Jesus was specifically handed the Book of Isaiah. Of the Old Testament Scriptures, Isaiah and the Psalms were most often quoted, as recorded in the Gospels and the Book of Acts, both of which contain much information on Messiah. Jesus read Isaiah 61:1,2a. The following is a comparison of Luke 4:18,19 and Isaiah 61:1,2a.

Isaiah

Preach good tidings unto the meek
 Bind up the brokenhearted
 Proclaim liberty to the captives
 Open the prison to them that are bound
 Proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord

Luke

Preach the gospel to the poor
 Heal the brokenhearted
 Preach deliverance to the captives
 Set at liberty them that are bruised
 Preach the acceptable year of the Lord
 Recover sight to the blind

Whether Jesus preached from a boat, the shore, or the side of a mountain, those who came to hear him were generally ordinary people—the poor. And he actually *healed* the blind, the infirm, those who were deaf, lepers, those possessed with devils, etc. Therefore, those who heard him read this passage from Isaiah would think, “Well, that is exactly what Jesus is doing. That is what his fame is all about.” In other words, the people back there were not thinking of deliverance from sin and death. Also, his intonations would be meaningful, and perhaps he paused when saying, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon—*me*.”

“He hath anointed me ... to preach deliverance to the captives.” This portion of Jesus’ reading struck a very appealing note, for the people thought he meant deliverance from the Roman yoke.

Jesus was speaking to a mixed multitude with three types of listeners, and although his words were powerful, there was a problem: “Familiarity breeds contempt.” Since the inhabitants of Nazareth knew Jesus personally as the carpenter’s son, some were turned off even by these gracious words. How one received his words depended on the condition of heart and the ability to look beyond the natural. Jesus said, “No prophet is accepted in his own country” (verse 24).

From Isaiah 61:2, Jesus intentionally omitted the second half of the verse pertaining to “the day of vengeance of our God.” He did, however, speak of a day of vengeance just before his crucifixion (Luke 23:28). “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.” And he said the stones in the Temple would be leveled (Matt. 24:2). Thus he did preach vengeance but not on this occasion in Nazareth. The message of the feet members will be to preach “the day of *vengeance* of our God.” The “day of vengeance” Jesus referred to occurred at the close of his ministry. The *real* “day of vengeance” will occur at the completion of The Christ class at the end of this age.

Luke 4:20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

Jesus “closed the book,” that is, rolled together the scroll, and then gave it to the minister and sat down. The fact that “the eyes of all ... in the synagogue were fastened on him” shows how *powerful* just his Scripture reading was.

Luke 4:21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

The words “began to say” suggest he said other things that are not recorded. “*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*”

Luke 4:22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph’s son?

All wondered at Jesus’ gracious words. The people said, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” Thus they knew Joseph and, by implication, Jesus as the carpenter there in Nazareth before his baptism. Previously Jesus spoke only privately; now he was preaching *publicly*. How startling! Here was

a son who had been dutifully caring for his mother, Joseph having probably deceased, and then, at age 30, he left home and began his ministry. Then came a report of his miracles. The people of Nazareth would have been puzzled, yet when they listened to him, they could not deny that he spoke with *authority and learning*.

Luke 4:23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

Luke 4:24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

Luke 4:25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

Luke 4:26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

Luke 4:27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

Notice that Jesus slanted his remarks in a certain direction. “Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country [Nazareth].” Jesus was reading the minds of the people in Nazareth before they could audibly say this to him. He had already given them a lesson, but now he was directing his comments along another line. What did he mean when he said, “Physician, heal thyself”? Some suggestions follow.

1. Since Jesus had come to his own home territory, he could have read their thoughts as meaning, “You have done miracles *elsewhere*; now do them here in *your* hometown”; that is, “Physician, heal *thine own*”—your family, your neighbors, the townspeople.
2. At times, Jesus was accused of healing by the power of Beelzebub. The evil-minded people in Nazareth could have attributed his power of healing to the same vile source. And in Nazareth, Jesus did have the reputation of being a Samaritan—of not being a true Jew but a renegade—and of performing miracles by an occult power.

Even enemies can be momentarily startled and awed by the gospel. For example, the soldiers who apprehended Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane all fell backward when he said, “I am he” (John 18:5,6). They fell backward from the *power* of his presence, but they apprehended him, nevertheless. Jesus’ action shows that he could have evaded the Crucifixion had he chosen to do so.

3. Some wondered why he did not do wonderful works there in Nazareth as he had done in Capernaum. After all, he was a Nazarene and they wanted to share his popularity. They felt left out to think that their home son did wonderful things elsewhere but not at home. Their attitude was, “Now do your duty *here*.”

In effect, Jesus told the people of Nazareth they were not in the right heart condition; hence he would not comply. They wanted excitement, whereas Jesus wanted to comfort the sin-sick, the brokenhearted, and the afflicted. This wrong element wanted Jesus but on *their* terms.

“No prophet is accepted in his own country.” As the Logos, Jesus must have observed this principle over and over, for he would have seen Israel’s treatment of the prophets, who were usually not honored in their own hometown.

Jesus continued to explain that “many widows were in Israel” in the days of Elijah during the famine, but Elijah helped a *non-Israelite*, a widow of Sarepta in Sidon. It was the same with the lepers in Elisha’s day; only Naaman the *Syrian* was cleansed. Jesus’ statements were not tactful, but there is a time not to use tact. His statements caused anger and resentment. Jesus could read the minds of the people in regard to what they really wanted him to do, and he said in effect that they were not in the right heart condition for him to do such works. In other words, they were not worthy of such works. As proof, he used the examples of Elijah and Elisha and the healing of non-Israelites. His words were a slap in the face, yet they were *Christlike*. There is a time and a place for different types of behavior.

Normally, when a person returns home, he likes to demonstrate what he can do to help the people, but Jesus was right to do otherwise because some who were hostile were listening. Similarly, when Ezekiel was in captivity and some wanted him to do certain things, he bluntly said they were not worthy.

Luke 4:28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

Luke 4:29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

Luke 4:30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

Luke 4:31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

The crowd reacted angrily, just as Jesus knew they would. All in the synagogue “were *filled with wrath*.” They rose up, pushed him out of the synagogue, thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill of the city to push him off the cliff headlong. But he passed through them miraculously and went on his way to Capernaum, where he taught on the sabbaths. The people of Nazareth were exploding with such anger that they wanted to kill him. Incidentally, at that time, Nazareth was mostly situated up on a hill.

The crowd was *allowed* to push Jesus for a certain distance before he miraculously escaped. Had the people not been permitted to pursue their evil intentions and vent their wrath up to a point, their wrong heart attitude might not have been as discernible. And so, God has *permitted* evil to show what happens when man governs himself—what a mess! Ultimately, this method will help people to appreciate God’s principles and their own nothingness and lack of wisdom.

Jesus returned to Capernaum, the very place those of Nazareth had recognized as the site of his miracles (verse 23). Capernaum is “down” from Nazareth. Coming down a long hill, one passes through Cana and then Tiberias, Magdala, and Capernaum down along the Sea of Galilee. At Capernaum, Jesus “taught them on the sabbath days,” which was his custom.

Luke 4:32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

The people were “*astonished* at his doctrine: for his word was with *power*.” Oh, to hear Jesus speak!

Luke 4:33 And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

Luke 4:34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art

thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

Luke 4:35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

Luke 4:36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

Luke 4:37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

Capernaum was Jesus' main base. When in the synagogue on the sabbath, Jesus healed a man possessed by an evil spirit. But, first, the man cried out with a loud voice, "Let us alone. What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? You are the Holy One of God." A single demon, representing other demons, did the speaking. We are reminded of the girl who followed Paul for many days crying out in possession, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:16-18). Paul exorcised the evil spirit. The Christian does not want honor from evil spirits.

Jesus *rebuked* the demon: "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." The rebuke shows that a *separate* personality was inside the man. Jesus addressed the demon with power, authority, and distinction. The demon threw the man down in the midst of the people in the synagogue and then was forced out of him, not being allowed to hurt the man permanently. This scene was allowed in order to prove that a *real presence* was in that man.

The people were *amazed* that Jesus had such *authority*. "With authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!" Jesus' fame spread throughout the area—and later beyond.

Luke 4:38 And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

Luke 4:39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

In Peter's house, his mother-in-law had a "great fever." When those who were there asked Jesus to heal her, he stood over her, took her hand, and rebuked the fever (Matt. 8:15). *Immediately*, she arose and served them—as if she had never been sick. Incidentally, verse 38 proves Peter was married, yet Catholics say that he was the first pope and that their clergy should not marry.

Jesus had to do miracles to create an impetus for Christianity to survive. The miracles so energized his apostles that after his death, they preached with all confidence.

Luke 4:40 Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

Luke 4:41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

Luke 4:42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

Luke 4:43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

Luke 4:44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

Jesus began healing in late afternoon. The people brought *many* who had diverse diseases. We know from another account that virtue went out of him, greatly fatiguing him (Mark 5:30). Being a perfect man, he was replenished overnight, but nevertheless, he felt virtue (power) draining out of him until he was revived. Therefore, the healing *cost* him something.

The demons were convinced that Jesus was Christ, but Jesus made them keep quiet because he did not want the work of the Second Advent done at the First Advent. The First Advent work was to lay down his life. The Second Advent work is to bring deliverance and restitution and to fulfill the Abrahamic promise.

Jesus “went into a desert place,” but the people sought him there, urging him not to depart. They looked for him when he was absent. Jesus replied, “I have other cities to go to besides Capernaum.” Elsewhere he said, “I am sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Hence the “cities” in verse 43 were in Israel.

It is sobering to note that *many* were possessed with devils in the Capernaum area at the time of the First Advent, let alone in the whole nation (verse 41). And many are possessed with devils today, although they do not know it.

Jesus preached in synagogues in the entire Galilee region, not just in Capernaum. The people in Capernaum were willing to keep Jesus at this time. Later Jesus said that Capernaum was cast down to hell and that it would be more tolerable for Sodom in the Kingdom (Matt. 11:23). Jesus’ strong words showed that the people were mostly interested in the healing. Instead of realizing that the miracles were an evidence of his Messiahship and desiring his *message*, they sought the loaves and the fishes and did not become his disciples. Much is attributed to *social communication*. Many are attracted by *fellowship and sociality*. *Very few* hunger for the real gospel, for the Word itself. This is as true today as it was back there.

Luke 5:1 And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

As the people gathered to “hear the word of God,” the multitude increased in such numbers that Jesus could see they were pushing him closer and closer to the shoreline, constricting him.

Luke 5:2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

Jesus saw two empty boats at the shore of the lake as a way to extricate himself from the pressure of the crowd and thus be able to preach more comfortably. The boats were empty because the fishermen had come ashore to wash their nets. No doubt the fishermen ceased washing when Jesus began to preach.

Luke 5:3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon’s, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Of the two boats, Jesus entered Simon Peter’s and asked Peter to thrust out a little from the shore. Then Jesus sat down and taught the people from the ship. Jesus must have had a *powerful voice* to be able to *sit down* and be heard by the multitude when he talked.

Notice that Jesus observed a certain decorum or courtesy by requesting an *empty* boat. That

way he would not inconvenience a fisherman by interfering in his business. Of course Jesus knew that the boat was Peter's, but he respected certain rights until later, when he commanded Peter and the others to do things because of the change in their relationship as his apostles.

John 1:35-42 shows that Jesus had previously spoken to Peter at Jordan and given him the name Peter. Jesus' fame and reputation had since permeated the Galilee area (Luke 4:14), where Peter was now working as a fisherman. Peter had not yet received a special invitation to follow Jesus as a disciple/apostle. Therefore, the name Cephas, or Peter, was prophetic of his becoming a follower of the Master.

Luke 5:4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

When Jesus had finished speaking, he told Simon to launch out into the deep water and let down the nets to catch fish. The nets were large, and the Sea of Galilee was deep. Evidently, James and John also thrust out when Peter's boat left the shore area, and Andrew was probably with Peter.

Luke 5:5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

Peter said they had fished the previous evening and caught nothing but added, "Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." The reaction of this born leader is rather touching. Jesus' fame had spread in the Galilee area, and now Peter called him "Master."

Luke 5:6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

When the net was let down, it enclosed/caught a "great multitude of fishes"—so much so that the net broke.

Luke 5:7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

The partners in the other boat were summoned to help with the *enormous* catch. All cooperated and both boats were filled with so many fish that they began to sink. The boats were so low on the waterline that the water was probably coming in. The fishermen would have been astonished and somewhat frightened.

Luke 5:8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

What was Peter's reaction to Jesus' instruction to launch out and then the subsequent event of catching so many fish? He fell down at Jesus' knees (like Mary Magdalene later) and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." What a wonderful man Peter was! Being in the presence of one so great and powerful as to control the fish made Peter acutely aware he was a sinner. Impetuosity, as manifested here and elsewhere by Peter, is a good quality when properly disciplined. It was providential, first, that they caught nothing the night before and, second, that they now got such a huge catch. The great contrast accentuated the miracle. A magnetic spirit power first repelled the fish and then attracted them into the net. Incidentally, Peter probably meant the opposite of the way his words sound here in verse 8—he wanted to *draw closer* to the Lord.

Luke 5:9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

Luke 5:10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

Peter and those with him were astonished at the size of the catch, including John and James Zebedee, Peter's partners. Jesus singled out Simon Peter (again showing he was a natural leader): "Fear not; from henceforth you shall catch *men*."

The miracle had a manifold effect: (1) It showed Jesus' authority—his supernatural powers. (2) It established confidence that whoever followed Jesus need not worry about temporal matters. (3) It would now be easier for the fishermen to leave their business and follow Jesus.

Here Jesus likened fish unto men. Fish became the symbol of the early Christian church in the first three centuries. Sometimes the rooster and the fish are combined, associating Peter's denial with the catching of fish. The gospel call is to catch men.

Luke 5:11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

The miracle had such a powerful effect on Peter, Andrew, James, and John that when they had brought their ships to land, they "forsook all" and followed Jesus. Andrew's name was not mentioned, probably because the prominence goes to the other three again and again. Hence God and Jesus are respecters of persons but not in matters of judgment, that is, in matters of right and wrong.

Christian brotherhood love should be a love for those who love *God* supremely, and for those who hunger after *God's Word*. That is what Jesus meant when he said his mother and brethren were those who heard the Word of God and obeyed it. When we do not know an individual, we accept his profession and give him the benefit of the doubt and treat him courteously, but as time goes by, we respect the most those in our fellowship who love God's Word intensely. That is how God and Jesus judge. (Of course we make allowances for those who have handicaps for which they are not personally responsible.)

Q: When they "forsook all," did they do this *immediately*?

A: No, they left the business with someone as a caretaker (for example, John and James Zebedee's father) and then followed Jesus.

We, too, are to launch out into the deep, preaching the gospel and trying to catch men and bring them into the gospel net. In the Parable of the Dragnet (Matt. 13:47,48), Jesus brought the net to shore and sorted the fish (that is, men) into good and bad (true Christians and tares, respectively).

Luke 5:12 And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

In a certain city, a leprous man prostrated himself before Jesus when he saw him, saying, "Lord, if you *will*, you *can* make me clean." The man had faith that Jesus could heal him if he so desired (and leprosy was considered almost incurable except by divine miracle). The Gospel of Matthew shows that when Jesus was asked to heal, he would say, "According to your *faith* be it unto you [so be it]" (Matt. 9:29). Thus the man was rewarded for his faith.

Luke 5:13 And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

Jesus touched the leprous man with his hand and said, “I will: be thou clean.” *Immediately* the leprosy was cured.

Luke 5:14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Jesus instructed the cured man to tell no one else *at first*, but to go and show himself to the priest and make an offering for cleansing according to the Law. The reason was that the cure would be a testimony to the *priesthood*.

Obviously, Jesus did not mean to never tell anyone other than the priests, for others knew the man and it would have been impossible to hide the fact that he was no longer a leper. Rather, the man was to obey the Law and, in so doing, testify of Jesus’ power to the priests. If the man had first told others, he might have become so enamored with the miracle that he would forget to go to the priests.

This incident helps us to see that John 8:1-11 is spurious in regard to Jesus’ supposedly forgiving the woman who was caught in the act of adultery. If the account were true, he would have violated the Law. Jesus *did not* tell people to disobey the Law—no, he *magnified* the Law by keeping it in both letter and spirit.

When *first* afflicted, an individual had to go to a priest to see if it was leprosy. If the answer was yes, the priest pronounced the disease of leprosy upon the person. Presumably the man had gone through this ritual earlier. Under the Law, one returned for periodic inspection. If the priest saw that the leprosy was arrested, that was very favorable. A week later the leper returned again to see if the disease was static or had receded still more. If it was better, the priest pronounced him clean, and the individual made his offerings. (Of course if the leper returned to the priest *completely* healed, he did not have to go through the normal *repeated* inspection procedures.)

As Jesus instructed, the cured man was to go to the priest for inspection and to make an offering of two birds, etc. Although the account does not so state, the man probably went to the same priest who had originally pronounced him leprous.

Luke 5:15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

Luke 5:16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

Jesus’ fame spread even more, and *great multitudes* came to hear him and to be healed. When Jesus healed all of these people, virtue (strength) went out of him. Giving long sermons and then healing many would have exhausted him. Therefore, Jesus withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. He recuperated during this time but did not just rest. He used the time to pray, that is, to commune or communicate with his Father.

Luke 5:17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

Jesus’ popularity began to indirectly affect the scribes and Pharisees—the teachers of the Law.

He was purportedly doing all these miracles and deeds and preaching wonderful sermons. On a certain day when Jesus was preaching to and teaching many, and “the power of the Lord was present to heal them,” the Pharisees and doctors of the Law were sitting by *critically*. Then the incident with the palsied man occurred.

Incidentally, Young’s *Analytical Concordance* shows the word “certain” to be very characteristic of Luke’s writing for Paul. The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts contain many “certains,” for example, “certain day,” “certain city,” “certain Pharisees,” “certain women,” and “certain of the Sadducees.”

Luke 5:18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

Luke 5:19 And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

The paragraph mark should be deleted because verses 18-26 are related to verse 17. Some men brought a palsied (paralyzed) man in a bed to Jesus, but so many people were present that they could not get through the crowd. Therefore, they climbed up on the roof, removed some tiles, and let the man on his bed down into the room before Jesus. This act shows the *zeal* of the men and their *great affection* for the one they carried. It also shows their *faith*, and faith (but not necessarily by the one who was healed) is the channel. The faith could be on the part of others who prayed, brought the sick one, etc.

Luke 5:20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven.” That was a startling thing to say before the scribes and Pharisees. Many feel even now, and especially back there, that sickness, disease, and calamities are associated with sinning. For Jesus to say that the man’s sins were forgiven was *appalling and blasphemous* to the scribes and Pharisees. The forgiveness of sins was invisible—just a statement—and to them, the statement seemed to be a mockery. After all, couldn’t a fraud also say to someone, “Your sins are forgiven”? Jesus made this statement strategically, knowing in advance how the scribes and Pharisees would react.

Luke 5:21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

Luke 5:22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

Luke 5:23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

They began to reason among themselves and in their thoughts: “Who is this that speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God?” Evidently, they did not think Jesus would hear them, but Jesus overheard and, perceiving their thoughts, asked, “What do you reason in your hearts? Which is easier to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven’ or ‘Rise up and walk’?” In other words, it was easier to make a statement than to perform a miracle. The statement was invisible; the miracle was visible.

Luke 5:24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

The man with palsy was healed so that the scribes and Pharisees would know Jesus had the power to forgive sins. Stating the matter another way, seeing the *visible* miracle performed should have convinced them that the *invisible* had also occurred.

Luke 5:25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

Immediately, the palsied man got up, took his bed, and went home, glorifying God. Let us again consider the setting for the miracle. The house was so crowded that the men had to let the couch down through the roof into Jesus' presence. When Jesus told the palsied man to get up, he arose in the midst of the crowd. Before Jesus did the miracle, those who accompanied the sick man could not get him through the crowd, but after the miracle, the crowd made way for the man to walk out of the house with his couch. How dramatic!

Luke 5:26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things today.

The people were all amazed. They glorified God and were filled with reverence, saying, "We have seen strange [wonderful] things today." Of the scribes and Pharisees who were present, this miracle may have started to build up a reservoir of belief, for some of them later accepted Jesus.

Luke 5:27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

Luke 5:28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

Luke 5:29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

Luke 5:30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

Luke 5:31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

Luke 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

The scribes and Pharisees directed their criticism to Jesus' disciples (verse 30), but Jesus was the one who replied, for after all, the criticism applied to him too. He said, "Those who [*think* they] are whole do not need a physician, only those who are sick [that is, those who are repentant and recognize they are sick, for none are righteous]. I came not to call the righteous [the proud and the self-righteous], but [those who realize they are] sinners to repentance." Jesus was using a form of sarcasm. The self-righteous do not think they need a physician, for they consider themselves already healed. Since they do not feel the need of a physician, they refuse to listen to Jesus' message.

Levi was another name for Matthew the publican (tax collector).

Luke 5:33 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

Luke 5:34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

Luke 5:35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

To those who have spiritual discernment, Jesus gave a common-sense answer. He was asked, “Why do your disciples eat and drink when the disciples of John the Baptist and of the scribes and Pharisees fast often?” Jesus replied, “Can you make my disciples fast when I am with them? After I am taken away, they will fast.” Jesus’ disciples would subsequently mourn and miss him in his absence.

Luke 5:36 And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.

Luke 5:37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

Luke 5:38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

Luke 5:39 No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

Then Jesus gave two parables: the impropriety of (1) putting a new patch on an old garment and (2) putting new wine in an old wineskin. In each case, there is loss. Here was another practical lesson with a spiritual point. The new piece of cloth, or the new wine, was the new gospel doctrine, as compared to the old Law. In other words, there would be an incompatibility in changing *abruptly*, and putting a new patch on an old garment or putting new wine in an old wineskin would be a sudden change. Jesus’ parables show that he understood the situation and made allowance, as indicated by the last verse: “No man also having drunk old wine immediately desires new wine, for he says, ‘The old wine is better.’” In other words, it is hard for those who have been schooled all their life in a certain doctrine to make a sudden change, and we should recognize that fact. Sometimes we forget how we changed and do not realize that *time* was a factor. Then, when it comes to others, we expect them to change quickly from their past indoctrination.

Jesus said that the desire for sudden change was not practical, just as it was not practical to put a new patch on an old garment. His doctrine was *new wine* in a *new bottle* and a *new patch* on a *new garment* (the robe of his righteousness versus justification under the Law). In short, it was a *new arrangement*. From another perspective, the antitypes are superior to the types.

Jesus was saying, “The change cannot be made abruptly, and I will be compassionate to a certain extent.” He broke in the disciples gradually. For example, physical signs and visions and instruction were given to help the apostles and early disciples to accept the change, a sheet with unclean animals was shown to Peter in a dream, and tongues of fire appeared at Pentecost.

Luke 6:1 And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

As Jesus and his disciples went through the wheat fields, the disciples, being hungry, plucked the kernels (wheat germ), rubbed them in their hands, and ate. They were not attempting to harvest or store up excess.

Luke 6:2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to

do on the sabbath days?

Certain Pharisees asked the disciples why they were doing an unlawful thing on the sabbath days, for they considered rubbing the hands to be work. Today orthodox Jews consider it wrong to push an elevator button on the sabbath (they call it work), so they have self-running elevators in Israel that open on every floor. The use of the term “sabbath days” (*plural*) shows the Pharisees were looking for things to criticize.

Luke 6:3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him.

Luke 6:4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the showbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

Jesus replied, “Have you not read how David and his men ate the showbread of the Tabernacle when they were hungry, and that bread was for the priests?” How *quickly* Jesus responded! He used David as an example—David, Abraham, and Moses being the individuals most revered by the average Jew back there. The parallel was David and those with him versus Jesus and those accompanying him.

Jesus stressed the fact that David and his men were *hungry* (Matt. 12:1). Thus this was not pleasure eating but necessity. Taking a kernel of wheat in their mouths was like taking a pebble. The hard kernel needed much chewing to soften it. Moreover, Jesus had no home to go to for meals, and he and his disciples were in transit.

David’s experience seemed to be a more serious infraction of the Law because the showbread was holy. With Jesus and his disciples, the criticism was that they rubbed the kernels (that is, they *labored*) to loosen them for eating.

Luke 6:5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Jesus summed up the principle: “The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.” His statement was true, but to the Pharisees, it was like heaping blasphemy upon blasphemy. Jesus was (and is) the Lord of the sabbath. God has “appointed a [sabbath] day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Christ Jesus] whom he hath ordained; whereof he [God] hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him [Jesus] from the dead” (Acts 17:31). In other words, Jesus was ordained with regard to the antitypical sabbath day, the Kingdom Age. Mark 2:27 extends the principle: “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.” The sabbath was meant to be a blessing and not to put man in a straitjacket as he tries to conform to rules and regulations—thus missing the whole spirit of the sabbath.

Luke 6:6 And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

Luke 6:7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

Luke 6:8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

Luke 6:9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

Jesus was in the synagogue on another sabbath. The scribes and Pharisees were watching him

to see if he would heal on the sabbath as he had done previously. A man with a withered right hand was present.

Jesus “knew their thoughts [the thoughts or reasonings of the scribes and Pharisees].” They reasoned that Jesus’ actions were a violation of the Law. Jesus thought lightning fast—before the others could get set to question him. He asked the scribes and Pharisees one question: “Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?” They were reluctant to say, “To do good,” and of course it was not lawful to do evil. The answer was obvious: “to do good” and “to save life.” The common people could appreciate this reasoning.

Through these miracles on the sabbath, Jesus showed forth the work of the Kingdom, the antitypical sabbath. To make this particular miracle even more dramatic and manifest, Jesus told the man with the withered right hand to “*rise up, and stand forth in the midst*” of the congregation.

Luke 6:10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Luke 6:11 And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

When Jesus performed the miracle, the scribes and Pharisees were “filled with madness”—a strong reaction! They anticipated that Jesus might heal the man, but they did not anticipate the *manner* in which he did the healing. After telling the man with the withered hand to rise up and stand forth, Jesus asked the scribes and Pharisees the question about whether it was lawful on the sabbath days to do good or to do evil. In other words, Jesus asked the question with the man *still standing* and the others all being seated. When the question was not answered, Jesus looked around at the scribes and Pharisees and then told the man to stretch forth his withered hand. The man did so, and Jesus restored his hand. What a striking scene! The withered hand, being shorter, would have been obscured up in the garment sleeve. When the miracle occurred, the hand was *instantly visible* below the sleeve.

After the scribes and Pharisees saw such a miracle, it would seem impossible that they could get so mad, but they did. The miracle was *outstanding* in that Jesus did not just heal a limb or whatever, but he actually “restored” something that was nonexistent. The reaction of the scribes and Pharisees indicates that education and enlightenment alone cannot reform the world. *Judgments* plus the New (Law) Covenant are needed. Note: Orthodoxy will exhibit this same kind of madness toward the feet members at the end of the age.

Angry that Jesus had embarrassed them, the scribes and Pharisees discussed what they could do to him. They were in a critical attitude to start with, wanting to minimize him, but Jesus rubbed salt in the wound by looking around at them and asking a question. He *pressed* the point. By no means was everything he did tactful. Many of his statements were very hurtful—but they were also constructive and helpful for those who reacted properly. The scribes and Pharisees ended up looking foolish and Jesus was magnified.

This incident shows us that in the Kingdom Age, when the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea, there is no guarantee that *great* numbers will get life. The *heart* is what matters. If one *really wants* to be in harmony with the Lord’s will, he will make it.

Luke 6:12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

Luke 6:13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose

twelve, whom also he named apostles;

Luke 6:14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

Luke 6:15 Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,

Luke 6:16 And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

The twelve apostles were selected after Jesus' ministry had progressed for many months with preaching and healing. By this time, his fame had spread, and now came the harvesting of the apostles. In other words, Jesus had had some individual contact with them earlier—they just were not officially commissioned until later.

Jesus prayed all night on a mountain before naming the twelve apostles. There he was removed from distracting influences and would have felt closer to his Father. Obviously, his prayers centered on the selection of the apostles. He would have prayed for wisdom regarding whom to select, the names to be given, etc. His praying all night shows the seriousness of the selection.

The apostles were named in pairs, either by disposition or by family. Peter and Andrew were brothers, as were James and John Zebedee. There were two Judases, two Simons, and two Jameses. Judas Iscariot was listed last, even though he had the potential to be the No. 1 apostle (Paul was his replacement).

Luke 6:17 And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

Luke 6:18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

Luke 6:19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

Jesus' fame had spread to Tyre, Sidon, and Judea. People coming from that distance to hear him and be healed were waiting at the bottom of the mountain. After naming the apostles, Jesus came down and saw a *multitude* who had diverse diseases. What a pitiful sight!

Jesus healed them all—after not sleeping the night before. “Virtue” (vigor and vitality) went out of him each time. And he gave a long sermon afterwards (verses 20-49). The statement “the whole multitude sought to touch him” means it was a surging multitude.

Luke 6:20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

Luke 6:21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

Luke 6:22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

Verses 20-49 are a partial reiteration of the Sermon on the Mount (of Beatitudes) in the Sea of Galilee vicinity. Jesus had been on the mountain talking with his apostles (Matthew 5-7). Then

he descended to the plain and addressed, first, the disciples and then the multitude—hence a mixed audience. Imagine having the vitality to do so after having just healed so many!

The “blesseds” were addressed to the disciples, but even the subsequent “woe” warnings were good for them to hear, although primarily intended for the multitudes. Hearing the “woes” would be the same principle as being told, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

Luke 6:23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

Luke 6:24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

Luke 6:25 Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Luke 6:26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Verses 24-26 list temptations of the Christian: money, power, recognition, men speaking well of us. The temptation is to compromise our position in order to be popular. We must not lose our initial hunger—we must hunger for truth and righteousness to the *end* of our course. There are times when the hearers should be pleased, but all of our discourses and words should not be given with that end in mind. Pleasing the hearers should not be the guide or pattern of our life.

“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” It is not good to be well liked by everyone. God is looking for those who speak unpopular as well as popular things. To espouse Jesus’ cause, no matter what our condition or station in life, will mean suffering and sacrifice and problems. Consider the rich man, of whom Jesus said, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” (Luke 18:24)—yet some rich men do. Riches are an obstacle to progress because of pride, honor, education, and money. The respect that comes from brethren and the world makes it difficult to be more than conquerors.

Luke 6:27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

Luke 6:28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

Luke 6:29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.

Luke 6:30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

Luke 6:31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

Luke 6:32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

Luke 6:33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

Luke 6:34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

Much practical advice is presented here. We are cautioned not to resist a robber. If we do resist, we are risking our life for money. If someone sues us in court and wins, we are to pay him. If a Roman soldier compelled one to walk a mile, the Christian was to walk two miles literally—or simply to acquiesce without grudging or grumbling. We are to submit to certain indignities, but not to others. Note: As we read through the advice, instruction, and admonitions, we should keep in mind not only that they are generalizations but that they must be balanced with other Scriptures.

“Bless them that curse you” means we are not to respond in like kind, but are to continue to be just and to do what is right. This advice is important whether the individual is a brother or a person in the world. We are to *reason* on these principles.

“Give to every man that asketh of thee.” This admonition does not mean to keep giving money over and over just because we are asked. Rather, it applies to one *in need* in the brotherhood. Jesus was giving generalizations. When one asks, our giving should depend on the *conditions* of the asking. We should be ready to sacrifice under *normal* circumstances, not under abnormal or repetitive circumstances.

If someone smites us on the cheek, we are to offer the other cheek. In other words, we are not to respond the same way but to submit.

“Pray for them which despitefully use you.” Especially in regard to the brotherhood, we should pray that those who despitefully use us will react favorably—that they will realize their wrong. Of course we do not love those who despitefully use us to the degree that we love an obedient disciple. In cases where the truth is at stake, we should defend ourselves. We are to submit, however, if we are privately or personally slandered and our ministry is *not being affected*.

Jesus frequently criticized the scribes and Pharisees, and he even criticized his own disciples at times. Similarly, there are times when we are to rebuke and, depending on the nature of the criticism, not forgive unless the erring one asks for forgiveness. We must be careful not to encourage an evildoer, slothfulness, irresponsibility, etc. If someone is able to help himself but just sits back and waits for a gift, we should not give to him. The point is not to encourage spongers.

Luke 6:35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

The general advice continues. We are to love *our* enemies, *not the enemies of God*.

“Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again.” We are to lend and do good with a pure motive, not with an ulterior motive or hoping for a corresponding favor. However, this advice does not mean that we are to lend randomly to just anyone who stops us on the street. Paul advises us to limit or refrain from hospitality to those who do not or will not work (2 Thess. 2:6,10-12).

“As we have therefore *opportunity*, let us do good unto all men, *especially* unto them who are of the *household of faith*” (Gal. 6:10). Our own families should not be deprived just because another is in need. However, as we have opportunity, we are to be *especially* kind to the household of

faith (the consecrated). Other Scriptures balance this verse.

“If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out” (Matt. 5:29). This statement is figurative; i.e., if we have a weakness along a certain line, we must deprive ourselves of the environment that would create or trigger those evil desires. “Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way” is the thought (Heb. 12:13).

In the present life, how is God “kind unto the unthankful and to the evil”? He sends the rain and the sunshine to all—to the good and to the evil (Matt. 5:45). Food grows for the just and for the unjust. Health, sanity, and employment are enjoyed by the good and the evil. However, the greatest kindness is that the Ransom will apply to all sooner or later. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The kindness that God shows the world is a *magnanimous* blessing of life, opportunities, and happiness. Hence one who commits suicide is reckoned insane.

Luke 6:36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

Be merciful as your Father is merciful. In regard to the world, the Father is merciful in *generalities*, but with the consecrated, everything is important. Their *whole life* is under His care. To the world, we are to follow the Golden Rule—doing unto others as we would have them do unto us—but with a fellow Christian, we are to do a lot more than just what justice would require.

Psalm 139:19-22 shows another facet. “Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? *I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*” David was speaking under the guidance of the Holy Spirit when he said he hated God’s enemies. There is “a time to love, and a time to hate” (Eccl. 3:8). We are to love *our* enemies but not *God’s* enemies. David hated *God’s* enemies with a “perfect [controlled] hatred” because they *opposed* God. True Godlike love contains hatred. It was said of Jesus, “Thou hast *loved* righteousness, and *hated* iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Heb. 1:9).

Luke 6:37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

The Apostle Paul says we are immature if we do not judge under certain circumstances, but we are not to be hypercritical (1 Cor. 6:2,3). Many go through life seeing no good in anything except perhaps themselves. They are always cynical. Others are unbalanced in an opposite direction; that is, they are always bubbly but have no standard. We need the school of Christ for knowledge and understanding.

Consider 2 Chronicles 19:2, “Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.” The lesson is that God’s wrath is upon any of the consecrated who would help a consecrated individual who has become ungodly. The Lord’s Prayer brings out a principle: “And forgive us our debts [trespasses], as we forgive our debtors [those who trespass against us]” (Matt. 6:12). We can forgive those who trespass against *us*, but not those who trespass against someone else or against God.

“Judge not, and ye shall not be judged.” If we have a hypercritical disposition, it will boomerang on us. Individuals who habitually criticize are thorns, thistles, and brambles. A tree is to be judged by its fruits. A good tree brings forth good fruit; a bad tree brings forth corrupt

fruit (Luke 6:43-45). Therefore, we do judge under proper circumstances.

We are to “condemn not” as a habit, but sometimes condemnation is in order. For example, there are times when an elder *must condemn* or he will be charged with that responsibility, just as a shepherd is charged with the responsibility of the sheep under his care. The apostles Paul and John named dangerous individuals—false brethren—who were to be avoided because they spread pernicious doctrines that undermined faith.

Liberty is *instructed* freedom, whereas license is unbridled, ungoverned freedom, which tends toward anarchy. The Scriptures give us the happy medium.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

If one is generous in spirit but within the guidelines of Scripture, he or she will be blessed accordingly—either in the present life or in the next life or both.

Luke 6:39 And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

Jesus addressed these questions to the scribes and the Pharisees, who were called “blind guides” and “dumb dogs” in regard to their lack of knowledge of Scripture (Matt. 23:16; Isa. 56:10). They were supposed to be the intelligent religious leaders of that day. True, they were learned—far above the public in knowledge—but what kind of knowledge? It was book knowledge and not according to Scripture. Jesus said, “If you knew the Word, you would not ask this question, for the Word speaks about me. Moses spoke of me” (John 5:46,47 paraphrase). But the scribes and Pharisees could not see Jesus as Messiah, even though he gave many examples.

Luke 6:40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

Verse 40 is a warning that the Christian will never exceed or even equal Jesus in thinking, word, and deed. Papacy assumed such an attitude by changing Scripture, by changing times and seasons.

A disciple “shall be perfected as his master” (King James margin). The Christian is not to think of himself as being above his Master, for he is still a pupil and will *never* come up to the level of Christ himself, who is perfect. But as a Christian matures, his resemblance to Christ in both doctrine and conduct becomes more discernible. He becomes *like* or *as* the Master but not equal to him.

Luke 6:41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Luke 6:42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother’s eye.

A “mote” is a speck, a splinter. A “beam” is a plank, a log. This verse does not mean we can never correct anyone on any matter, for a brother can counsel a fellow brother. The point is not to be hypercritical. Some who have a *large* fault criticize others who have a *little* defect. The

defect may be discernible by others, but it is small in comparison to the large fault in the one attempting the correction. Another example is that one who is a talker and not fervently serving the Lord may try to correct one who has a small fault but is prayerfully trying to serve the Lord with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength. Certainly we could all find a fault in each other if we looked for it. The same is true of doctrine. It is like the blind leading the blind for one with a log to try to correct one with a speck.

“Thou *hypocrite*, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother’s eye.” Verse 42 is not saying we should not take the mote out of a brother’s eye. *IF* the Christian who has the beam in his own eye gets rid of it, then he can correct the mote in others, for he is then more mature and better able to help a fellow brother. Many of us have planks in our eyes when we first come to the Lord.

Comment: Sometimes the tendency is to see planks in ourselves when we first come to the Lord and think everyone else is perfect and on a pedestal.

Reply: As we mature and study the Word, we become more discerning regarding some who have difficulty in coming up to the standard.

Luke 6:43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Luke 6:44 For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. Stated another way, the mouth is an index of the heart, and *habitual* words reveal the disposition of the individual. A statement or two does not indicate one’s heart condition, but *cumulative* words do. A good tree brings forth good fruit; a clear spring, clear water. Men do not gather figs from a bramble bush or grapes from thorns. Likewise, an isolated inappropriate act is not a heart indicator. Verses 41-45 pertain to the *general tenor* of life.

Luke 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Luke 6:47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like:

Luke 6:48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

Luke 6:49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

The “house” pictures character. A house built on the earth, or sand, is superficial, whereas a house built on rock represents a determined effort. Both individuals profess to be Christians, but one is merely a hearer of the Word while the other is both a hearer and a doer. To listen to the Word and then try to apply its lessons in our life constitutes “house” or character building.

Those who dig *deep* into Christ will get not only everlasting life but *abundant* life, that is, immortality. To build on earth only—not digging down to the rock foundation, Christ—ends in destruction. Hence a mere superficial belief into Christ is not enough, for faith without (character) works is dead (James 2:17). We are to dig down deep into Christ, the foundation, to know what God’s will is—and then *obey*. That is hearing and *doing*.

Matthew 7:21-27 is the parallel account. A portion of the text reads, “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” “Iniquity” is lawlessness. In other words, if one does not study and obey the Word, he is not adhering to the law of God but is following his *own* way and his *own* will. Great evangelists may have no reputation in heaven despite their following down here. They may do great works but not *God’s* works.

Luke 7:1 Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

Luke 7:2 And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

Luke 7:3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

Luke 7:4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

Luke 7:5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

Luke 7:6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

Luke 7:7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

Luke 7:8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

Luke 7:9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Luke 7:10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

When Jesus went to Capernaum, a message was brought to him by the “elders of the Jews” that a certain centurion’s servant was dying. The centurion was probably Cornelius. A “centurion” was a Roman soldier with 100 soldiers under him (the word “century” means 100). The centurion hoped that Jesus would heal the sick servant, who was “*dear* unto him.” The centurion had a good heart; he was not just a man of imperialistic authority but tenderly appreciated those who faithfully served him.

Being a Gentile, the centurion wanted to send *Jews* to Jesus as his representatives. Since the

elders considered the centurion “worthy,” they were glad to carry the message to Jesus. A Jewish proselyte, the centurion loved Israel and had built a synagogue.

The elders *beseached* Jesus. Hence there was an emotional involvement. Out of appreciation for the centurion, they felt Jesus should listen to the message and heal the servant. They besought Jesus to *instantly* hearken unto them and to come *quickly* before the servant died.

When Jesus neared the house, the centurion sent friends to him with the following message (paraphrased): “Lord, do not trouble yourself to come any farther, for I am not worthy to have you enter my house. That is also why I did not come to you myself. [What *great humility!*] Just give the word and my servant will be healed. I know this because I am a man of authority, and when I give an order, it is carried out.” Jesus marveled at the centurion’s words and said, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in [all] Israel.” Jesus was showing the priority of faith that the centurion had. The servant was healed and made whole that “selfsame hour” (Matt. 8:13).

Matthew 8:5-13, the parallel account, gives the impression that the centurion *personally* approached Jesus and spoke to him, and that he *personally* told Jesus he was not worthy to have the Master in his house, but that is not the case. His sending the elders and then friends as *his representatives* and *mouthpiece* was as if he himself were speaking. Perhaps Luke wrote his account to correct a possible misunderstanding.

Comment: This is a good example to keep in mind to refute the Trinity. It was the same situation with the Heavenly Father. Very often the Logos would speak for Him, but Scripture records the words as if God Himself were speaking. Comparing this incident in Matthew and Luke helps to clarify the relationship between God and the Logos.

Luke 7:11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

Verses 11-17 pertain to the widow of Nain. Still in the Galilee region, Nain was south of Nazareth and Mount Tabor, on the border of Judea.

Many disciples and *much* people went with Jesus. The day before he had been in Capernaum, which means they all walked about 25 miles that day. To walk that distance meant the disciples and people had an *intense* interest in what Jesus was doing.

Luke 7:12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

In the late afternoon, Jesus noticed a funeral procession. The burial had to take place before sundown. “Much people of the city” were commiserating with the mother, a widow, who had lost her only son.

Luke 7:13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

Luke 7:14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

Having compassion on the grieving mother, Jesus said, “Weep not.” When he touched the coffin, those carrying it sensed he wanted them to stop. Then he commanded, “Young man, arise!”

Luke 7:15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

The dead son sat up and began to speak. What a shock! Here were *much* people in a funeral procession *weeping*. Then came a command to “Arise,” and the dead son *sat up and spoke*.

Luke 7:16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

A holy fear came on all when they saw such POWER. The people said, “A great prophet is here among us. God has visited His people.”

Luke 7:17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about.

News was broadcast of what Jesus had done. He performed his miracles according to principle, and God’s providence arranged for the death of the widow’s son to occur the day Jesus got to Nain. The miracle emphasized Jesus’ *power* as God’s messenger to the human race.

Jesus healed those in different stages of death:

1. The centurion’s servant was near death.
2. Jairus’s daughter had just died.
3. The widow of Nain’s son had died earlier in the day.
4. Lazarus had been dead for four days, and his body was decaying.

The *progression* of raising the dead taught faith in Jesus’ power. If he could raise Lazarus after four days, then he can raise those who have been dead for 4,000 years.

Luke 7:18 And the disciples of John showed him of all these things.

Luke 7:19 And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

Luke 7:20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

Luke 7:21 And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

Luke 7:22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.

Luke 7:23 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

John the Baptist was in prison. He was the very one who had announced Messiah and felt unworthy to loosen his shoe (sandal strap). Many were influenced by John and thought he was Elijah the prophet, yet John deferred to Jesus: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Notice, the one who had so *boldly* proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah—and who had been instructed by God that the one upon whom the dove alighted at the time of baptism was Messiah—*now*, in prison, questioned whether Jesus was truly the Messiah. What is the lesson? Even the *most faithful* of the Lord’s people can have moments of discouragement when they are tested to the core, but they receive a strengthening subsequently if they do not give in to the

testing and surrender their faith. Another lesson: When God puts something on our heart to do, we should *do it—regardless* of who the person is. John rebuked Herod and ended up in prison. We may have a similar experience.

John the Baptist did not question that Jesus was a prophet, but was he the Messiah? If so, why wasn't Jesus setting up his Kingdom? John was also reminding Jesus of his circumstance in prison and that he would appreciate being released.

When John's two disciples asked Jesus, he did not answer but told or signaled them to stay there and observe. For the next several hours, Jesus did many miracles while they watched. Then Jesus spoke to the two disciples, reminding them of what he had done, and he told them to go back to John and tell all they had just seen: the blind receiving sight, lepers being cleansed, etc. Jesus ended his message with a personal thought for John: "Blessed is he who does not stumble because of me"; that is, "I am the *true* Messiah, and the *things I do* testify to this fact."

Imagine John's disciples seeing the miracles and then being told, "Tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached"! True wisdom was behind such a response.

Luke 7:24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

Luke 7:25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

Luke 7:26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

Luke 7:27 This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Luke 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Jesus judiciously did not flatter John the Baptist in the presence of his two disciples. He first let them go back to John to tell of all the miracles they had seen and to deliver the comment "Blessed is he who is not stumbled over me." Then Jesus commended John the Baptist. Another reason for not speaking in the disciples' presence was that John's faith had to be tested to the full. The greater his test of faith with his rising above it, the greater the crystallization of his character and the reward.

Did the people go out to see "a reed shaken with the wind"? No! This was a negative rhetorical question. A reed that is shaken by the wind has no backbone. The people did not go to the wilderness to see one with a putty-like character. Moreover, did the people go out to the wilderness to see someone gorgeously clothed and impressive to look at? No! They went out to see the one they had heard about who looked like Elijah the prophet. Both wore a leather girdle and were in the wilderness. The people were familiar with the prophecy at the end of the Old Testament: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5,6). The people thought Elijah would literally come back, for they knew a whirlwind had taken him

up and he disappeared. Furthermore, when translated, Elijah had been down by the Jordan River, the area where John was subsequently.

The people knew “Elijah” would have a *strong* message and warning about the great and dreadful day coming. Hence they did not go to the wilderness to see one with rich clothing or a soft character speaking smooth things. When they heard John the Baptist was exhorting to “REPENT!” they thought he was the one Malachi had prophesied about. However, his imprisonment looked like a defeat, for no longer could he warn the people to repent. Many concluded that John was not great after all, and Jesus was counteracting that thought.

If the people had meditated on Jesus’ words, they would have been prepared to accept him despite his crucifixion. John the Baptist was a great prophet in spite of his imprisonment. Jesus was the Messiah despite his crucifixion.

Q: Will John the Baptist be higher in rank in the Kingdom than Moses and David, for example?

A: No. We must weigh against the *whole* Word of God the statement “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist” (Matt. 11:11). First, *Jesus* was born of a woman and he was greater. Second, Jesus did not say that John the Baptist was the greatest prophet *ever* born, but that of the *current* generation, there were none born of women greater than he (except Jesus). That is why John was chosen above the twelve apostles. The best man had the privilege of announcing Messiah.

Matthew 11:11 continues, “He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he [John the Baptist].” Another point needs clarifying. John the Baptist was the best man available at that time to announce Jesus, but *after* the Holy Spirit worked in the lives of the apostles, they surpassed John. In other words, the *end product* of Paul, Peter, John, etc., was better than John the Baptist because a new age opened in which there was begettal to *sonship*. The apostles were given MUCH more information for building character than John the Baptist. John had *natural* talents of faith and character and humility—more than the others—but when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and the others lived and died for Jesus, they ended up greater than John in character development because they had a better schooling. And of course when final destiny is considered, the least of the glorified 144,000 will exceed the greatest of the Ancient Worthies.

Paul explained this philosophy—that the potter (God) can take clay and make a vessel as He chooses. So when God chooses one to have a greater future than another, we should not ask, “Why do you do that?” It is not a question of Justice, for *Mercy* chose us when we were still filthy in sin. If the gospel had gone *eastward*, most of the 144,000 would be Asiatic. It is not to *our* credit that we were called.

Luke 7:29 And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

The people who were baptized by John were in agreement with his message, which was a message from *God*. John was merely the messenger. If one respected the messenger and was obedient to his counsel, it was not because of the messenger (who was merely a *channel*) but because of the One who had sent him. In other words, *God* was honored and glorified by the acceptance of the messenger He sent.

Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Jesus’ baptism was not for the remission of sins; rather, it was a *new* picture. In *humility*, the *perfect* Jesus asked John to baptize him. Later the Apostle Paul rebaptized some because they

had accepted Christ but had been baptized only with the baptism of John. When they were rebaptized with understanding, they got the Holy Spirit.

Luke 7:31 And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

Luke 7:32 They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

Luke 7:33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

Luke 7:34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

Luke 7:35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.

Jesus had been saying that John's baptism was successful in preparing a people. John's mission was to "prepare the way of the Lord," and he did. He did not convert the nation, but he prepared a *nucleus* for the Lord, a *remnant*. Now Jesus continued to talk about John the Baptist. "Whereunto then shall I liken the men [scribes and Pharisees] of this generation?... They are like unto [empty-headed, immature] children sitting in the marketplace."

John came as an ascetic, denying himself. That was one extreme, but he was not good enough for the scribes and Pharisees. Then Jesus came in the other but very reasonable extreme, "eating and drinking [wine]" with moderation, but he, too, was criticized. The scribes and Pharisees exaggerated, "Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber." Those who were critical and had the wrong heart condition failed to recognize Jesus.

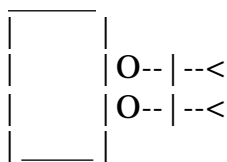
John the Baptist did not eat man-prepared food—he ate locusts and honey. Moreover, he came clothed like Elijah, and the scribes and Pharisees said he was a madman. When Jesus came eating and drinking normally, they called him a glutton and a winebibber. Thus if one has a hypercritical attitude, it does not matter whom God sends, for the hypercritical individual will not recognize the messenger. Luke 13:34 shows it was the history of Israel to not recognize God's prophets. Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which *killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee.*"

"Wisdom is justified of all her children." One way to consider this verse is as follows. Jesus had just called the scribes and Pharisees unfit, empty-headed children. He was making a comparison, saying that in due time, there would be *true* children, who would be seen as the products of *true* wisdom. The worldly wise think we are foolish to study the Bible, that we waste our time. God will eventually make the worldly wise see that these supposed babes end up as kings in glory with Jesus and that their own "wisdom" got them nowhere.

True wisdom will be seen later when it comes to fruition and brings forth its children. God's Wisdom is the last attribute that will be appreciated by mankind because they cannot trace it at present. Time is required for wisdom to be "justified."

Luke 7:36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

A Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner. The Master was at the table in the usual reclining position, using his elbow as a prop with his feet behind him. The table was only a little off the floor.



Luke 7:37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

A woman, a sinner, who knew Jesus had been invited for supper, went to the Pharisee's house with an alabaster box of ointment. She had a plan to confront Jesus and pour out her heart to him.

Luke 7:38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Jesus was anointed three times. This anointing occurred in the beginning of his ministry; the other two anointings took place at the close of his ministry. Luke's account is chronological.

Although we have no clue, the unnamed woman might have been Mary Magdalene (Mary of Magdala). The depth of her emotions is stirring. Jesus would have heard her weeping and sobbing behind him at his feet. Then he would have felt her tears splashing on his feet and the hairs of her head wiping them. She kept kissing his feet and then anointed them with ointment.

Jesus was sensitive to the fact that the Pharisee host had not even extended the common courtesy of providing water for foot washing (verse 44). Jesus was no ordinary guest, yet even *ordinary* guests washed their feet. The Pharisee was wanting, and the woman fulfilled the role in a marvelous fashion. A woman's hair is her chief natural adornment, yet this woman humbled herself to wash his feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair.

Luke 7:39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

Observing all that was happening, the Pharisee concluded that if Jesus truly were a prophet, he would have known this sinful woman's background and thus would not have allowed her to touch him. (A Pharisee was considered defiled if touched by a sinner.) On the spur of the moment, Jesus compared the Pharisee and the woman to draw a wonderful, spontaneous lesson (verses 40-50).

Luke 7:40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

Jesus did not reveal his knowledge of the woman's background until after he had given a little sermon. (Incidentally, the Pharisee's name was Simon, and there are several Simons in the New Testament: Simon Peter, Simon the leper, Simon Zelotes, this one, and others.)

The Pharisee called Jesus "Master" in a patronizing way, and the invitation to dinner could have been extended out of curiosity. In any event, the invitation was not too sincere, or more respect and courtesy would have been shown.

Luke 7:41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

Luke 7:42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

Luke 7:43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

Jesus told of a man who had two debtors. One debtor owed 500 pence; the other, 50. Each pence was the equivalent of a day's wage. Thus both debts were considerable, but the 500 was *ten times* greater.

Jesus asked the Pharisee, "If both were forgiven their debts, who appreciated the creditor more?" Simon answered, "*I suppose* the one forgiven the most." (Simon humored Jesus.) Jesus replied, "That is correct."

Luke 7:44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

Luke 7:45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

Luke 7:46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

Luke 7:47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

Luke 7:48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

Jesus dramatically turned to the woman but kept talking to Simon. "Simon, see this woman? I entered your house. You were negligent, and the woman was considerate." There was a *marked contrast* between the two.

The ointment was *very costly*—worth perhaps a year's salary. And in her remorse, the woman humiliated herself for her past sins. She was very sincere. No doubt she had heard some of Jesus' sermons and greatly appreciated them. When she learned that he would dine at the Pharisee's house, she came to serve him.

Jesus said further to Simon, "Her sins are forgiven, though many." Jesus' words show he had known about her past all along. "She loves much. To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Jesus pointed out the Pharisee's shortcoming and then said directly to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

Luke 7:49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

Other scribes and Pharisees at the table said within themselves, "Who is this who forgives sins also?"

Luke 7:50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Luke 8:1 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

Luke 8:2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

Luke 8:3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

Verses 1-3 summarize what had been going on for some time. The "glad tidings of the kingdom of God" are not spelled out in the Gospels, for primary importance was given to urging and encouraging discipleship. The glad tidings of the Kingdom, healing, etc., were of secondary importance.

With all the apostles being male, it is nice, from a sister's point of view, to see women being singled out here. In various ways, they ministered to Jesus "of their substance." Since Joanna was the wife of Herod's steward, we know that even in Herod's household some responded to the gospel.

Luke 8:4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

Luke 8:5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

Luke 8:6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

Luke 8:7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

Luke 8:8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

In the Parable of the Sower, the "sower" was Jesus, and the "seed" was his message, or word. The kind of soil, or ground, the seed fell on represents the heart. Jesus' sowing produced four results, that is, *varying* degrees of response. Only the fourth result, or category, prospered fully and brought forth the desired fruitage. The gospel message can be heard with joy but evaporate almost immediately or later on, being trodden down by other people or sources (family, friends, the Adversary, and so forth).

1. The fowl of heaven take trodden-down seed and devour it. "Fowls of the air" (birds of prey) picture spiritual powers aligned against the one trying to make a decision to follow the Lord.
2. When seed falls on a rock, there is not enough soil for proper growth and rooting. As the seed is sown, it goes into the ears of the hearers. How the hearers respond is shown by the four categories. In this case, the "rock" indicates a rock heart, a heart without humility.
3. When seed falls among thorns, it is choked out by the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches.
4. Seed is received into a good heart and prospers.

Comment: The parable shows how the world (thorns), the flesh (rock heart), and the devil (birds of prey) can keep one from truly hearing and/or making his calling and election sure.

After giving the parable, Jesus *cried aloud*: “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” He must have stated the parable in a pretty loud voice in order for “much people” to hear him, but now he gave *great emphasis*: “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear what has just been said!*”

Luke 8:9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

Luke 8:10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Luke 8:11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

Luke 8:12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

Luke 8:13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

Luke 8:14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Luke 8:15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

The common denominator is that *all hear*. The difference is in the *degree of response*. Again the four categories are discussed.

1. *Almost immediately* the devil takes away the message, the seed.
2. *For a short while*, the word is received with joy, but temptation causes it to cease.
3. The seed *progresses a little further* but is then choked with weeds and thorns. (Hence there is no fruitage in the first three categories.)
4. The seed falls on “good ground” (a good and honest heart). Such individuals are receptive to the word, obey it, and bring forth fruit with patience, which takes *time*. And literally, time is required for fruit to mature each year.

Note that a fuller explanation was given to the disciples who *inquired*. To such (to those who inquire), “it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.” The principle is expressed in the following two Isaiah texts: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD” (Isa. 1:18). “If ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come” (Isa. 21:12). This last context pertains particularly to an inquiry regarding prophecy.

In proportion as we draw near to the Lord, He draws near to us and rewards and blesses us. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matt. 7:7). In proportion as we become the Lord’s disciples, heed his counsel, and keep inquiring, we will be blessed. Seeking and inquiring should *both precede and follow* consecration.

Luke 8:16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it

under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

Luke 8:17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

This simple illustration is self-evident but important. The purpose of a candle is to provide light that is *seen*. To put the light under a bushel (to cover it) defeats the purpose. If the light is put under a bed, the room is not illuminated, just the small area under the bed. Lesson: We are not to keep our light secret. We should not be afraid to witness to others.

Some hide the light because they are afraid of what it may reveal. For example, it may reveal an inconsistency of doctrine or of moral behavior. The tendency of the fallen flesh is to cringe and withdraw from the light. Darkness hates the light—and vice versa.

Luke 8:18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

“Whosoever hath [*used*], to him shall [more] be given; and whosoever hath *not* [*used*], from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.” Whoever faithfully uses the light that he has will be favored with *increasing* light.

Luke 8:19 Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

Luke 8:20 And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

Luke 8:21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

Many were around Jesus, listening to his discourse, when word came that his mother and natural stepbrothers were outside and wanted to speak with him. Jesus did not drop everything and rush to his mother and brothers. Instead he replied, “My mother and brothers are those who hear the Word of God, and *do* it.”

This incident proves that the Virgin Mary should not be idolized as the mother of God, that we should not go to her as the Mediatrix to get the attention of Jesus, who in turn will get God’s attention so that our sins are forgiven. Mary is thus put in her proper role. Jesus did not dishonor her but showed it is just as important to feed those who come to him as it is to respond to those who are related to him.

Luke 8:22 Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

Luke 8:23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

Luke 8:24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

Luke 8:25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and

water, and they obey him.

When the storm came up, the disciples thought in a natural fashion. Jesus was asleep on a pillow in the stern of the boat as waves splashed into the boat and began to fill it. Realizing that if the storm continued, the boat would sink, they awoke Jesus, saying, "Master, Master, we perish!" He arose and rebuked the wind and the water. Calm ensued. Then he rebuked the disciples: "Where is your faith?" In other words, he instructed those who were already his disciples of the need to *strengthen* their faith and to be *strong* soldiers of the Cross. They were afraid and in awe, wondering at such authority.

This incident, where Jesus was *in* the boat *with* the disciples, was designed to stimulate them to reason on, think about, and analyze Divine Providence. The next time a storm arose, Jesus was on a mountain and the disciples were *alone* in the boat. Thus he was giving them *progressive* instruction, and again he chided them for little faith. Finally he ascended to heaven before their eyes and was absent from the earth according to physical sight. But he still controls the situation, as shown by Matthew 28:20, "I am with you *always*[s], even unto the end of the world [age]."

Luke 8:26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

Luke 8:27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

Luke 8:28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

Luke 8:29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

Luke 8:30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

Luke 8:31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

Luke 8:32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

Luke 8:33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

Luke 8:34 When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

Luke 8:35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

Luke 8:36 They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

Jesus had originally instructed his disciples to get in a boat to go to the other side of Galilee. Now they were there, in the country of the Gergasenes (Gadarenes). As they prepared to land,

a possessed man on shore beseeched Jesus not to torment him. Verse 29 says Jesus had previously started to command the demon in this man to come out. The man was possessed by a legion of demons (several thousand), but this one particular demon was the spokesman, the leading evil spirit. The possessed man did not know Jesus was the Son of God, but the demon did. The demon spoke through the medium of this man's body. The demon did not want to be extracted from the individual, and he knew Jesus had this authority.

This individual had a past history. Because of his madness and because the people in that region feared him, they bound him in chains repeatedly, but he kept breaking them and tearing off his clothes. He went naked. The people did not want him in the city, so his only option for a "residence" was one of the cave tombs. (There were two possessed men, but Luke recorded only the one.)

Jesus addressed the demon doing the speaking: "What is your name?" Answer: "Legion," meaning he was the spokesman for many demons. Spirit beings can crowd into an individual just as volumes of information can be stored on a computer microchip.

Saying the demons did not want to go out into the abyss, the demon spokesman asked if they could enter a herd of 2,000 swine. (Demons can possess animals, humans, and inanimate objects.) Jesus permitted this, and the devils went out of the man into the swine, who "ran violently down a steep place and into the lake," where they drowned. What was the demons' purpose? They were vengeful and spiteful. By killing the swine, they knew repercussions would come on Jesus from the owners of the swine. Being angry when they saw 2,000 swine carcasses floating in the water, bloated, they would expel Jesus.

Of course Jesus knew in advance what would happen when he allowed the demons to go into the swine. One reason he agreed was to provide an education for us regarding "spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). When we take a stand for the Lord in consecration, if it were not for our guardian and helper angels, the fallen angels would snuff the light and life out of us.

The villagers saw the man, now normal, out of whom Jesus had cast the demons. He was sitting quietly at Jesus' feet, clothed (not naked) and in his right mind. They were afraid.

Luke 8:37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

Luke 8:38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

Luke 8:39 Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

Luke 8:40 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.

The narrative shows the mood on both sides of the Sea of Galilee: fear on the Gadarene side and eagerness to hear Jesus on the other side.

The Decapolis was a district east of the Jordan River containing ten cities. Many Jews lived there plus others. Even some of the Jews raised swine (just as some were tax collectors).

When the cured man wanted to follow Jesus, he was told, “No. Go back to your own area and tell what great things God has done for you.” Sometimes those in foreign lands who become Christians want very much to come to the United States where there is more fellowship, but Divine Providence keeps them in their homeland to witness and testify there. For example, when the Ethiopian eunuch was converted, he went back to Ethiopia and testified (Acts 8:38,39). And Ethiopia subsequently had many Christians in the early days.

What a testimony to see this man now in his right mind! John Bunyan was a reprobate, but when he turned to the Lord, he wrote *powerfully* and had wide distribution. In *Pilgrim's Progress*, he wrote in story form of the perils and trials of a Christian.

This healed man did become a follower of Jesus, even though he could not physically accompany the Master. Otherwise, there would be a violation of the thought Jesus gave in Luke 11:24 that when an “unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.” In other words, if the man did not accept Jesus, he would be *more susceptible* to being repossessed. The Pastor suggested the man was being discouraged from following Jesus, but it was merely that he was to *testify in that region as a follower of the Master*.

Although the Lord knows how we will react under certain circumstances, he gives us the circumstance so that we will be developed and grow—if we react favorably.

Q: What is the fear of the deep, or the abyss?

A: It is the fear of not having a medium to operate through. The demons in *tartaroo* desire to have mediums as tools which they can manipulate and communicate through to work their mischief and evil. These were incorrigible demons.

Luke 8:41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

Luke 8:42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

Jairus, “a ruler of the synagogue,” was probably a Pharisee. His only child, a daughter, was dying, so he prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and begged the Master to go to his house and heal her. Jairus may not necessarily have approved of Jesus' teachings, but certainly he had seen and/or heard of Jesus' ability to heal. Hence this incident may well illustrate the extremity to which a father will go for his dying daughter; that is, out of desperation, he sought out the Master and fell down at his feet in full view of the public.

Jesus was en route to Jairus's house when the multitude thronged and jostled him. This heightens the account of the woman with the 12-year issue of blood who touched him subsequently.

Luke 8:43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

Luke 8:44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

Jairus was very anxious to have his daughter healed, but first, the multitude slowed Jesus down by thronging him—and now there would be a further delay because of this woman. Jairus knew others needed help, but he must have experienced a feeling of impatience in regard to his

own daughter. The woman's faith was so great that just *touching* Jesus' garment effected her cure.

Luke 8:45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

Luke 8:46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

When the multitude thronged and jostled Jesus, he did not ask who was touching him, but when the woman touched him, he inquired because he had felt virtue (strength) go out of him. He knew from previous experience that a loss of virtue meant someone had been healed.

Although Jesus got weak and fatigued when he healed many people, as a *perfect* man, he recuperated with a night's rest. Nevertheless, this temporary loss of strength was a test as to whether he would continue to heal hundreds of people when a cost was involved. Despite the cost, he *healed them all*, thus proving his sacrificing nature.

In answer to Jesus' question "Who touched me?" the disciples said in essence, "What a foolish question with all these people around you!" But this exchange left an impression on them when followed by Jesus' statement "Somebody has touched me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." When the woman confessed she had touched Jesus, the disciples then knew that such a thing had happened and that strength really had gone out of him.

Luke 8:47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

Luke 8:48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

It is interesting that the woman was healed without personally asking first. Jesus said she was healed because she exercised faith. In these cures, faith was exercised either by the individual or by someone asking on behalf of the individual (for example, a parent, a friend, or a relative) or as a result of prayer.

Obviously, the woman heard Jesus and the apostles talking, and when she "saw that she was not hid, she came trembling" and fell down before him. Then she declared, so that all the people heard, why she had touched Jesus and how she had been healed immediately. Because the physical ailment was not visible, the woman's testimony was necessary so that all would know of the miracle. Her testimony proved that Jesus was right in saying someone had touched him and virtue had gone out of him. Notice that she was made "whole," that is, *completely* cured.

Luke 8:49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

One came from Jairus's house saying, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Master anymore." Jesus heard this report through the commotion of the crowd. At this point, Jairus would think it useless to have Jesus continue on to his house. His heart would have dropped.

Luke 8:50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

Jesus *immediately* spoke with *authority*: “Fear not.” His words would have had a calming, stabilizing effect on Jairus. “*Continue your belief and your faith*” is the thought, for Jairus’s faith could have been shattered after he had so humbled himself. “Fear not: [continue to] believe only, and she shall be made *whole*.” In other words, the daughter would not just be revived with the dying process still manifest, but she would be made completely well.

Luke 8:51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

Jesus permitted only Peter, James, John, the father (Jairus), and the mother to go into the house where the dead daughter was. Notice that Jesus was selective even among the apostles.

Principle: In *judgment* there is to be no partiality, but different degrees of *zeal and affection in serving God* are correspondingly rewarded. Not only were Peter, James, and John ahead of the others in character, zeal, and pleasing the Lord, but in addition, they needed special instruction, for they would be leading proponents of the truth and, hence, special targets of the Adversary.

Luke 8:52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

Others, including mourners, were weeping and bewailing the daughter’s death (Matt. 9:23,24). Before Jesus entered the house with the select few, he said, “Do not weep. She is not dead but sleeps.” Actually the daughter was dead, but Jesus was teaching the lesson that her case was not hopeless. There was the hope of resurrection—she was not extinct in Second Death. With Lazarus, the words were reversed. First, Jesus said, “He sleeps.” When the apostles thought this meant Lazarus was resting well, Jesus said plainly, “No. Lazarus is dead!” That account, coupled with this one, straightens out the matter, for Jesus was telling the truth in both cases. The Bible often makes a seeming misstatement until we study it out. For example, Ephesians 6:12 says, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Well, we *do* wrestle against flesh and blood, but not against them *only*.

Again Jesus spoke with *authority*, not just commiseration. He was going to show the saving power that he had and why he could say (later) to Martha, “*I am the resurrection, and the life*” (John 11:25).

Luke 8:53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

Those outside ridiculed Jesus. Their reaction just heightened the miracle.

Luke 8:54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

Jesus put all out of the house except the select five (verse 51). A favorable environment is conducive to the most spirituality. In the opposite vein, in a seance the presence of one who got there innocently and prays to God for help can thwart the attempt to communicate with the fallen angels. In Nazareth, Jesus left and did not heal because of the scorn and unbelief of the people.

Taking the dead daughter’s hand, Jesus called to her, “Maid, arise!” In Luke 7:14, when Jesus healed the widow of Nain’s only son, he touched the bier and said, “Young man, arise!” It is as if Jesus were *addressing the dead*. John 5:28,29 reads, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.” Jesus’ voice will penetrate the grave, the tombs—and the dead will arise!

Instead of just touching her hand, Jesus actually took the daughter’s hand, for she needed food

and nourishment when she revived.

Luke 8:55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

Luke 8:56 And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

The daughter revived and arose *immediately*. Jesus commanded that food be given to her. The parents were immobilized in astonishment (as stone). Had she not arisen so quickly and stood up, the others might have thought she was just in a coma and not really dead. The parents were to tell no one, but word spread anyway.

Luke 9:1 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

Luke 9:2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

Jesus sent the twelve apostles out on a mini or abbreviated gospel tour. They were to do as he did: preach the Kingdom of God and heal the sick. They would thus be exercised in faith and religious duty.

In giving them power and authority over devils and diseases, Jesus must have blown or breathed on them (John 20:22) to visibly demonstrate the granting, or imparting, of an *invisible* power—and to show that the power came from him (i.e., from God *through* him).

On another occasion, Jesus sent out 70 with the same commission. By sending out only the Twelve here, Jesus showed there was to be a separation—the Twelve were not just ministers of the Word, but *as apostles*, they were *special teachers*. Their teachings were the teachings of Christ, and their public pronouncements or writings, plus the Gospels, comprise the New Testament. The apostles had special authority.

Luke 9:3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

Luke 9:4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

Luke 9:5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

Jesus instructed the Twelve to go as they were and not to take anything additional with them, that is, no walking stick, no suitcase, no money, no food, no extra coat. (Later, on another occasion, Jesus told them to take additional items—Luke 22:35,36.) They were to go out, throughout Israel, with confidence and faith in his instructions.

If those in a city or a house were not responsive, the apostles were to “shake off the very dust” from their feet for a testimony against them. In other words, for emphasis, the apostles were to demonstrate the rejection of a favorable opportunity as well as to say it. Conversely, as the expanded Matthew 10:5-14 account shows, if the apostles were favorably received, a demonstrative “salute” was given—a *blessing*.

One lesson was obedience. As the apostles obeyed, they saw that they could cast out demons and heal diseases. This power gave them confidence in Jesus’ words.

Comment: Because the heart of Judas was wrong, this experience could have contributed to his ambition to precipitate the setting up of the Kingdom and thus have power.

Reply: Yes, it could have promoted an evil desire in him. Being able to use the power of the Holy Spirit to heal brought guilt to Judas when he subsequently betrayed Jesus. We can see why Judas's condemnation was so severe, why he will not get life at all.

Luke 9:6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

The apostles preached the gospel and healed "every where," lacking nothing.

Q: Did the apostles experience virtue going out of them when they healed others?

A: No.

Comment: The difference was that Jesus had to be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Being perfect, if virtue had not gone out of him, he would not be able to sympathize as fully with the fallen human race (Heb. 4:15). On the other hand, the apostles or any others have enough of the infirmities of this world—they know what it is to be physically impaired.

Reply: Being perfect in health and vitality, Jesus would have to feel a weakening when he healed. The healing cost him something, whereas an imperfect person gets fatigued just doing ordinary things.

Luke 9:7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

Luke 9:8 And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

Luke 9:9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

This "Herod" is not the same individual as the Herod in Luke 3:1, who issued the decree for all babes two years of age and younger to be killed. "Herod" is a title.

With the various speculations as to who Jesus was, we can see that he was an object of conversation and wonderment. His ministry was so outstanding that the people thought perhaps he was an ancient prophet. Of course at the close of his ministry, he was despised and rejected. At that time, he was meek and did not answer, but during his ministry, he spoke authoritatively, rebuking evildoers, etc. People obeyed his instructions because they sensed he was different and because he spoke with authority and power.

Herod desired to see Jesus, and he did just before the Crucifixion.

Luke 9:10 And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

Luke 9:11 And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

When the apostles returned, they told Jesus of their experiences, and he took them aside

privately, by boat, to a desert place at Bethsaida. Their mission had lasted perhaps a month, and they had been so busy that they did not even have leisure time to eat (Mark 6:30-32). Now Jesus wanted them to rest awhile.

The people, seeing Jesus depart, ran around the shoreline to meet him when he docked. He had intended to rest with his apostles, but instead he received the people (Mark 6:33).

Luke 9:12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

Luke 9:13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

Luke 9:14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

Luke 9:15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

Luke 9:16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

Luke 9:17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

(For information on the miraculous feeding of the multitude with five loaves and two fish, see the commentary on Mark 6:35-44.)

Luke 9:18 And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

Luke 9:19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

Luke 9:20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

Luke 9:21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing;

Luke 9:22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

After a time interval, Jesus and the disciples were at Caesarea Philippi, to the far north (Matt. 16:13). Jesus was praying and the apostles were nearby. When Jesus finished, he asked, "Who do the *people* say that I am?" Several answered, one after another: "John the Baptist." "Elijah." "One of the Old Testament prophets."

Jesus then asked, "But who do *you* say that I am?" Peter responded quickly, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (see Matt. 16:16-20, the parallel account). Jesus replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." If God had not previously enlightened Peter's mind that Jesus *truly is the Messiah*, he would not have known. To positively know is in itself a miracle.

Peter was not yet Spirit-begotten, but God gives some information before we consecrate. After

consecration, our minds are opened to receive much more. And at Pentecost, the apostles did not just receive one truth, but their minds were opened to all of Jesus' prior words. His words, as well as the Old Testament prophecies, began to make sense.

A human instrument may be used to enlighten us, but it is *God* who miraculously enables us to understand. We know this because Satan blinds the minds of the people lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine unto them (2 Cor. 4:4). The whole world lies in the wicked one. Sometimes we forget this fact because the truth is so reasonable. We ask, "Why can't others understand? It is so plain!" But Satan has a powerful blinding influence, even upon nominal Christians to a large extent. To have the blindness even *partially* removed to *know* that Jesus is the Messiah is a miracle.

Jesus charged the apostles not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. And then he said, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day." Probably the apostles could not quite grasp this statement. They had just confessed through Peter that Jesus was the Messiah and would be expecting him to set up the Kingdom soon. Instead his words indicated the *opposite*. Jesus' words show he had a lot of information in advance, and he felt it important to state his rejection at least a year before his death.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus was quite popular. True, the priesthood criticized him and tried to trip him up, but they were the exception. The people followed him. Opposition was not that apparent until the close of his ministry. When he went to Jerusalem the last time, the scribes, Pharisees, and high priests were planning to kill him, and the opposition became more and more manifest. Therefore, the "rejection" Jesus mentioned in verse 22 was not by isolated individuals but by the Sanhedrin—a *company*. When Jesus had that kind of opposition, the multitudes were not with him. In preparation for his crucifixion, he was led to trials at night and before dawn, when the common people were not around. Here Jesus was warning his disciples that a turning point would come. Peter sensed this, for he later rebuked Jesus, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee" (Matt. 16:22). But Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Luke 9:24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

Luke 9:25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

Luke 9:26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

Then Jesus addressed them *all*, probably looking at the face of each one. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." These were very sobering words indeed! After having just prophesied of his own suffering and death (verse 22), Jesus mentioned *daily* cross bearing and the necessity to literally give life if the occasion requires. The one who "saves" his life will not get life. The test for divine nature is very *high*. We must *daily* bear our cross, as well as to deny ourselves some things. We must redeem our time and make sure that what we are doing has Jesus' approval.

Sometimes *daily* cross bearing leads to literal death. We lose our life *daily* for Christ in that we try to bring our thoughts into subjection to the mind of Christ, but there comes a time in the life of many Christians when they must *physically* suffer death. Down through history, when many who had followed Jesus for years were faced with the stake, they recanted and went to the nominal Church. Fear can paralyze. If we *pray earnestly* at the time of special trial, necessary strength will be given. Some who may not seem to be strong Christians can be staunchly faithful when the chips are down—they can be *courageous like a lion!* We must develop mature Christlike characters.

“For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels.” There are degrees of denial where one might go into the Great Company or, worse, into Second Death. Jesus took the latter situation here. “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it... For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?”

If we lose *this* life, we gain “divine nature” life. If we save *this* life, we lose eternal life—period! Some just hide or back off to avoid going into the danger zone. Such will not be Little Flock if the time and circumstances dictate a losing of life. To those who have cringing flesh, the Great Company is all they can hope for (Heb. 2:15). Those who recant lose all life. **DO NOT DENY THE LORD AND HIS TRUTH!**

Jesus will be ashamed of the Great Company class, for they are ashamed of him and his words. The Great Company will not be individually confessed before the Father. Note, however, that although they shrink back because of fear, they *do not deny*.

Jesus was preparing the apostles for sobering experiences that lay ahead.

Luke 9:27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

This startling statement led to the erroneous conclusion both after Jesus’ resurrection and in the early days of Paul’s ministry that some of them would die and some would not die before the establishment of the Kingdom. Peter in his second epistle and the Apostle John in his Gospel provided clarification years later.

Luke 9:28 And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

Jesus went up into Mount Tabor to pray. He took the same three with him: Peter, James, and John. Incidentally, Mount Tabor is quite high. Therefore, energy and sacrifice were required for Jesus to climb to pray and for the three to climb with him.

Luke 9:29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.

“The fashion of his countenance was altered”; that is, Jesus’ face shone like the sun. An illumination, a radiance, emanated from his face. This incident, which is reminiscent of Moses’ face when he came down from Mount Sinai, is another of many likenesses between Jesus and Moses in fulfillment of the prophecy that God would raise up a prophet like unto Moses from among the Israelite brethren (Exod. 34:29; Deut. 18:15,18).

Jesus’ face shone, and his garments turned white and “glistened” as with diamond dust or shiny

sequins. The apostles saw the transformation from ordinary clothing, which occurred while Jesus was praying.

Luke 9:30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:

Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared and began talking with Jesus. Matthew 17:9 says this appearance was a *vision*—an important point! (Fallen angels can also create visions such as the one of Samuel that King Saul saw through the witch of Endor.) The thought in verse 27 is as follows: “Some standing here [Peter, James, and John] ... shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God [in pantomime *through the vision* of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah].” Of the three, Jesus was the only real personage.

Luke 9:31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious attire and spoke of Jesus’ decease.

Luke 9:32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

Peter, James, and John were drowsy, but they could hear the words and even see Jesus’ glistening garments. In other words, they were in a stupor, so the words did not penetrate (see verse 45). This can happen to us too.

Comment: Sometimes either before or just after consecration, we are sheltered from experiences going on right around us. Later on, we realize what has happened.

Luke 9:33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

Peter blurted out, “Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias [Elijah].” The experience was so awesome that Peter felt he had to say or do something, but his remark was completely irrelevant. Imagine making dwelling places for visionary figures!

Luke 9:34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

Luke 9:35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

As Peter spoke, a cloud came and covered them on the top of the mountain. It enveloped them. Then, like the voice of a *giant* organ, came the *reverberating* words: “This is my beloved Son: hear him!” In the dark cloud, these resounding words left an indelible impression. They were a rebuke to Peter, for he knew not the impropriety of his words.

God’s voice was like the voice of a giant waterfall—a MIGHTY but low tone (Ezek. 43:2), stern and serious. It had such an effect on the apostles that they dared not tell others at that time (“in those days”—verse 36). Also, Jesus charged them not to tell (Matt. 17:9).

Jesus would have been in the middle, between Moses and Elijah, to show a chronological aspect. Moses, on the left, pictured the Ancient Worthies, and Elijah represented the Church in the flesh, or the present life. “Moses” spoke of the *coming* Messiah, who must suffer. Jesus was in the middle. Then “Elijah” told how Jesus *did die*. “Moses” spoke prophetically of Jesus. “Elijah”

spoke of prophecy fulfilled in regard to Jesus.

Luke 9:36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

When “the voice was past,” other things had disappeared too. Moses and Elijah were gone, and the thick cloud had suddenly vanished. Moreover, Jesus’ garments were back to normal.

There was wisdom in having three individuals witness this vision, for with only one or two witnesses, they might have thought they were dreaming, especially since they were heavy with sleep. Nevertheless, they “kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.” The three would have talked a lot among themselves, but they did not discuss the vision with others until sometime later.

Peter, James, and John were all blessed by having a personal appearance of Jesus after his resurrection. He appeared to each alone (1 Cor. 15:5,7). John saw him on the Isle of Patmos. In addition, Paul got a glimpse of Jesus as one born out of due time—something like the “glistening” here and the shining, but *much brighter* so that it blinded Paul.

Jesus, Moses, and Elijah all fasted for 40 days and 40 nights, and their bodies were not found. The latter is a clue that the Ancient Worthies will have a spiritual resurrection after the Kingdom. The time will come when their humanity will be lost forever.

Peter, James, and John were eyewitnesses of Jesus’ majesty, or Kingdom glory, on the “holy mount” (Tabor), the Mount of Transfiguration. In 2 Peter 1:16-18, the apostle explained that the vision on this holy mount was what Jesus referred to when he said some of them would not die until they had seen the Kingdom of God coming with power and glory. In other words, the three saw a *representation* of Jesus’ Kingdom glory.

In 2 Peter 1:19, the apostle contrasted this awesome vision with the Word of God, the latter being *more important* and *more sure*. “We have also a *more sure word of prophecy*; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” No writings of man are to be compared with God’s Word. And notice, Peter called the Bible the “word of *prophecy*.” This word of prophecy, the Word of God, which we are to take heed unto, *is not static*. In addition to essential basic truths, there are other truths that shine more brilliantly as time goes by. The light unfolds progressively. Peter was warning us not to be mesmerized by a certain experience so that it becomes our gospel. We are to know and study the *whole* Word. The Bible is more sure than a visual experience, more sure than what the three apostles saw and heard. If a vision instructs differently than the Word, the vision is false. We must square *all teachings* with the Word.

Luke 9:37 And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

Luke 9:38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child.

Luke 9:39 And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

Luke 9:40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

Luke 9:41 And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

When Jesus and the three came down from Mount Tabor the next day, “*much* people met him.” The man had to raise his voice to get Jesus’ attention and to be heard above the crowd. In desperation for his only son, he besought Jesus for help.

The crowd probably hushed as the conversation continued. “Lo, a spirit seizes my son so that he suddenly cries out.” The seizures were like epileptic fits, which the Adversary takes advantage of to cause vile words to come out of the mouth of the victim. “The demon tears him so that he foams at the mouth, and the demon bruises him, leaving him almost dead.” The attacks came in great spasms. “Your disciples [the other nine] could not cast out the demon.”

Apparently, there was not enough time for *much* fasting and prayer, for maybe under that circumstance, the demon would have been exorcised. The demon was so entrenched that a mood had to be created. Repetitive prayer and fasting are sometimes needed. Some prayers are answered as we are praying, some a day later, some years later.

Jesus then said to the apostles, the man (the father), and the “much people” he was addressing, “O faithless and perverse *generation*, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you?” He was expressing tired frustration: “How long shall I endure this situation of lack of faith?”

There was a reason behind Jesus’ frustration. Being perfect mentally, morally, and physically, he knew instantly how to handle any situation. But that very perfection among imperfect men could lead to frustration. Jesus’ remark gives great credence to Paul’s statement that God made “the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10). To be Captain of the salvation of both the Church and the world, Jesus had to be touched with a feeling of man’s infirmity, and to do that, he had to come down here and suffer among imperfect men and to bear their infirmities. If Jesus had not been made flesh and gained this polishing experience, he might get impatient with individuals of the Church or the world and give them up too quickly. (There is a time when patience should be terminated, however.) In the incident when Jesus and the apostles were in the boat during the storm on the Sea of Galilee, he rebuked them by saying, “O ye of little faith” (Matt. 8:26). Like the apostles during his ministry, we are sleepy and need prodding.

It is to the man’s credit that he went to Jesus for a cure for his son, but he expected Jesus to do everything. Healing was the reward for the *exercise of faith* on the part of the individual. Moreover, many went to Jesus just for the loaves and the fishes, and not to be instructed and to know the Word. They went for selfish purposes: food, shelter, cures, popularity, etc.

Luke 9:42 And as he was yet a-coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

While Jesus was still coming down the hill to a level area, the demon violently attacked the child. This ferocious attack proved to the onlooking public the power of Jesus when he effected the cure. Jesus both (1) rebuked the demon so that he left the child and (2) healed the child—perhaps lifting him up and healing his bruises. The point is that the child himself received some type of restoration.

If parents or grandparents had dealings with fallen angels and their occult powers, the child has a genetic weakness that the demons can capitalize on. The weakness can be healed over time, but the afflicted one should confront it forthrightly. To be healed, one may have to humble himself and call on brethren for prayer (and fasting). The demons can give us many mental battles. The Adversary takes advantage of weakness.

A little child, who has no moral responsibility, can be born with a weakness that Satan

capitalizes on. In fact, the demons look for a human instrument, for they get a vicarious satisfaction either in using a person as a medium or in making a person look ludicrous. The spirits laugh uproariously. Or the demons may get people to do obscene things. It is wise for the consecrated to obey the Vow and to have *nothing* to do with occultism.

Sometimes the demons operate on a person who is not morally responsible because he has done nothing wrong to encourage them. The demons gain entry because of a weakness or a sickness in the individual.

This incident of healing is at least the third time already in the Gospel of Luke where Jesus healed an *only* child: Jairus's daughter, the widow of Nain's son, and the son here. To think of an only child being so miraculously healed is both touching and poignant.

Luke 9:43 And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

Luke 9:44 Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

“They [the disciples and the crowd gathered there] were all amazed at the mighty power of God.” Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said, “Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.” What was the subject matter? Jesus' *death*. In this same chapter, Moses and Elijah in a vision on the Mount of Transfiguration had spoken of Jesus' *decease* (Luke 9:31). A little earlier Jesus had said that the Son must be crucified (Luke 9:22). These sayings were recorded, but other remarks, not recorded, could have been made as well. Jesus wanted the sayings to *sink down* into their ears. He also could have meant, “My time is short, so listen closely to what I say from now on.”

Luke 9:45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

But the disciples did not understand these sayings; that is, they did not *totally* understand. The fact that “they feared to ask” Jesus about the saying indicates they did not want to dwell on the theme of his death.

Since they did not fully understand and were dull of hearing, why did Jesus even say, “Let these sayings sink down into your ears”?

1. Later, in retrospect, these things were brought to their remembrance.
2. To be forewarned is a principle with God's people in both Old Testament and New Testament times.
3. It is a lesson to us to be alert for dispensational truth, and yet dispensational truth will not be opened until the due time.

In other words, even though the disciples did not understand the sayings at the moment, the Holy Spirit later opened their minds to remember what he had previously said. The Holy Spirit is called the spirit of “remembrance” (John 14:26). However, since the Holy Spirit cannot later call to remembrance things we have never studied, those who are derelict in searching into certain principles that are important—prophetic or doctrinal—will not have these things in their memory banks to be recalled. Hence it is important to pay attention *even if we do not understand*. We must struggle and make the effort. This has been true throughout the Gospel Age, but especially with regard to dispensational truth.

Luke 9:46 Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

Luke 9:47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

Luke 9:48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

Here, after a little time interval, was an abrupt change in subject matter. Jesus had said he would die, and now came an argument regarding who would be the greatest of the disciples. The argument shows they did not have much sympathy for Jesus' situation, and they did not want to ask questions and explore the matter. From Jesus' perspective, he had to be patient and reason that his followers were imperfect and dull of understanding. The death sentence works in the human race. Nevertheless, he would have felt dismay at their lack of concern.

When this subject arose, Jesus taught a lesson—in spite of what he felt personally. He took a child and said, “Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.” The abbreviated Luke account is supplemented by the Matthew and Mark narrations. “Except ye be converted, and *become* as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one *such* little child in my name receiveth me” (Matt. 18:3-5). Jesus was addressing his disciples, so he was not talking about the actual child but about the necessity of having the condition of *humility* such as a little child would have in looking to his parents for instruction. We are to be childlike in humility and meekness but *not* in understanding. Children frequently mimic their parents as we should mimic Jesus. We are to be *teachable* like a child.

In arguing who should be greatest, the disciples were diverting their attention from listening to Jesus and from contemplating his words. They should have used every possible moment to learn all they could from him. As pupils, they should have been attentive to his words and instruction.

Another point. If we are disputing who is greatest, we are not thinking much about the more humble Christians, the “children” we are to receive in Jesus' name. We might bypass one the Lord really favors for one with more charisma and eloquence. Also, brethren are at different stages of development. If we measure another by *our* level of understanding, perhaps we are correct at the moment, but a little later that one may breeze right by us in development in truth. Hence nobody can be high-minded. Therefore, an important work is to help one who has less understanding. Most of Jesus' fellowship was with those who responded and were very zealous, but he did not neglect the others. Even here he was trying to teach a general lesson on humility.

“He that is least among you all, the same shall be great[est].” “He that is least” in what way? “And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you” (1 Cor. 12:21). Whoever seems to be the least important member of the body has his place with the Lord. *All* of the body members are needed. In fact, the one who seems to be least among us might be the one the Lord esteems most.

Not only should we recognize the area or quality in which a brother excels, but we should recognize that the brother is superior to us in that respect. We are to prefer one another in honor. If we are superior to a brother in one respect, he may be superior to us in another respect. Having that attitude keeps us from being heady or high-minded, for we do not know

where we or he stands with the Lord. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Phil. 2:3). Esteeming one another better than ourselves, preferring one another in honor, is a *general* rule, for with certain issues or areas, it would be *wrong* to remain quiet, thus thinking we were preferring our brother. Also, if a deficiency in a brother is *obvious*, we cannot pretend it does not exist.

Jesus was saying, “Do not spend your time thinking about who is greatest. That is not the way to be a Christian.”

Luke 9:49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.

Luke 9:50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.

John, who was still a natural man at this time, changed the subject. He was following Christ, but he had not yet received the Holy Spirit. Paul said of babes in Christ, “You are yet carnal. I need to teach you some of the elementary things that you should already know. How can I teach you the deep things when I have to rehearse to you the simplest and most basic truths?” (1 Cor. 3:1-3 paraphrase). We should be past the carnal, babe-in-Christ stage if we have been several years in the truth.

Comment: John had just heard what Jesus said about “whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me.” Perhaps the words reminded him of an incident that had occurred earlier when he did not “receive” one who was casting out devils in Jesus’ name. Then he mentioned the incident to have Jesus critique it. In fact, if the incident troubled John’s conscience a little, he would want to bring it up.

Reply: John may have done this and felt he was responding properly, but he did not get the lesson. He missed the point.

Comment: John felt that those who followed the Master were better than others.

Reply: Yes, and that happens all the time in the Christian church. For example, often when an evangelist exhorts the people for funds for his work, it is as if *his* work is the *only* work. The implication is that in proportion as one supports *him*, that individual is in favor with the Lord. Such an attitude is being high-minded. Each one thinks he is heaven’s favorite.

John’s temperament as a “son of *thunder*” is seen here. In time, however, this characteristic was monitored and controlled by the Holy Spirit. When so harnessed, this trait is an asset.

Q: Please explain Jesus’ statement “Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us” (Luke 9:50) versus “He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth” (Luke 11:23).

A: These two texts are opposite in statement but not in meaning. They are easier to understand if the order of each is *reversed*.

Luke 9:50

Of one who was casting out devils in Jesus’ name, the Master said, “He who is *for* us is not against us.”

Luke 11:23

The scribes and Pharisees, an *enemy* element, said Jesus had the spirit of *Beelzebub* in casting out devils. Jesus replied, “He who is *against* me is not with me. He who scatters does not gather with me and is not with me.”

Luke 9:51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

Luke 9:52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

Luke 9:53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

Luke 9:54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

Luke 9:55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

Luke 9:56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

This incident took place the year of Jesus' crucifixion, about six months before he would have to be in Jerusalem for the final Passover. Jesus sent messengers ahead into a village of the Samaritans to make preparations for him. They were sent some time in advance, for other Gospels show that things happened during the interim. In other words, it was no mere 24 hours in advance.

When the disciples saw Jesus' behavior, they sensed that he was almost nervous about not being sidetracked or delayed from going to Jerusalem. They could see that he was determined to get there on time. (He knew the hour and the day he must die, as well as the month and the year.)

The Samaritans did not receive Jesus because "his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem." When James and John saw the reaction of the Samaritans, they asked, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias [Elijah] did?" Specifically, what did the Samaritans do that prompted James and John to wish fire would come down from heaven and destroy them? When Jesus' determination and anxiety to get going to Jerusalem became apparent, the Samaritans washed their hands of him. Hospitality meant a great deal in the Mideast, so for Jesus not to accept their hospitality was a great offense. Since the Samaritans had expected him to stay awhile, they were upset when it was obvious that he was leaving. But to have the Samaritans destroyed for this reaction was highly improper. Once again the spirit of the sons of *thunder* was manifested. James and John needed training, and the Holy Spirit subsequently channeled their energies in the proper direction.

When the Samaritans saw that Jesus was anxious to go, they reciprocated by withdrawing their friendliness—the relationship turned sour. James and John felt they were being loyal to the Master, and they were loyal to his person but not to his teachings. A spirit of loyalty motivated them, but their good intentions were not properly channeled.

Jesus rebuked James and John: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." That Jesus comes to save men's lives is a general principle. In Ezekiel 33:11, God said, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." It is necessary that the incorrigibly wicked die, but their death is not a pleasure to Him. Justice decrees the penalty.

Q: Would the wrong-spirited response of James and John be comparable to clergy who

condemn some to hellfire?

A: Yes. Some of the clergy have condemned an individual to hell because of refusal to accept a particular teaching.

Comment: Another example of this wrong spirit would be Trinitarians who do not consider us Christians. We at least acknowledge that they are Christians.

Luke was thinking more about Jesus' death. Therefore, he did not include all the personal details that Matthew has but concentrated on the last six months to one year of Jesus' life. Incidentally, the Samaritans, with their mixed-marriage background, believed in part of the Old Testament but in their *own* way.

Luke 9:57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

Luke 9:58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Three interesting incidents follow. In the first incident, the man could easily say, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," for words are cheap. Jesus responded by counseling or warning him to count the cost. Jesus did not have a fixed residence. He traveled throughout the nation and probably at times slept in the field with a stone for a pillow.

Luke 9:59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Luke 9:60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

Now came a second incident. This time Jesus said, "Follow me." The man replied, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." Jesus then said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." The man was not just asking to attend a funeral, but probably his father was in ill health and he wanted to stay and take care of him for six months or even longer.

The world is already dead in trespasses and sins, so Jesus was saying to let the living dead bury the dead dead. Also, there may have been others in the family who could take care of the father. For this man to follow Jesus, he would have to forgo caring for his father and get his instructions from the Master *direct*. Our situation is different, for we follow an *unseen* Master. It is proper for us to bury the dead, as long as doing so does not conflict with conscience and our service for the Lord.

The lesson for us is that the Lord comes *first*—ahead of mother, father, husband, sister, etc. Anyone who loves family more is not worthy to be called a disciple. Jesus was testing the individual back there. The man gave an excuse instead of really following the Master. This incident shows the importance of *priorities*.

Luke 9:61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

Luke 9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

This is the third incident. Another said, “Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say good-by to my family.” Jesus replied, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” Any extenuating circumstances were omitted. In contrast, we recall that Peter dropped his net and *immediately* followed Jesus.

This account accentuates the one in verses 59 and 60, which entailed a longer period of time. To say good-by is quick, yet even that short delay was not approved. To review:

- Case 1 (verses 57 and 58) - no prior commitment
- Case 2 (verses 59 and 60) - a prior commitment and a desire to linger awhile
- Case 3 (verses 61 and 62) - a prior commitment and a desire to linger briefly

When John Mark was traveling with Barnabas and Paul, he abandoned them in the midst of an itinerary, or circuit. Therefore, when Mark wanted to go along on the next missionary journey, Paul refused him. Uncle Barnabas insisted that Mark be allowed to go, but Paul adamantly refused. As a result, Barnabas and Paul separated, and Mark went with his uncle. Many feel Paul erred in being so firm and in sharply disputing, but he was *right*. The dispute and refusal jolted Mark to see his fault, and eventually he was reinstated.

When Jesus said to the apostles, “Follow me,” their immediate reactions distinguished them from other disciples. Being responsive and alert, the apostles recognized Jesus’ status. Their reactions showed they were a wise choice, Judas being the intentional exception.

Jesus’ statement that the one who looks back after having put his hand to the plow is unfit for the Kingdom reminds us of Lot’s wife, who looked back when fleeing from Sodom and Gomorrah. Of course she pictures a Second Death class. Jesus’ words in verse 62 are a warning before that stage is reached.

The *nature* of the “looking back” determines whether one goes into Second Death. Many of the consecrated have experiences where family ties force them to make certain decisions. In the confusion as to what course to follow, a babe in Christ may dillydally, whereas a more mature Christian should see more clearly what is involved.

Lot’s wife “looked back” when the judgments of Sodom and Gomorrah were visible and *actually occurring*. The family had to be *pulled out* of the wicked city. Then Lot’s wife, being sorry to leave those conditions behind, looked back in spite of the warning not to do so and was turned into a pillar of salt. In the antitype, there is a greater degree of responsibility in that kind of looking back than in one who is a new convert in need of advice.

The terseness of Jesus’ statement shows the value of positiveness or decisiveness in thinking and action. Temptation is eliminated when one does not parley, for the natural heart can deceive the Christian. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”; that is, the old man reasons against the new creature (Jer. 17:9). We are to take a decisive step when we sense the right.

Luke 10:1 After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

Toward the end of his ministry, Jesus appointed 70 and sent them out in pairs, with two going to each house, family, or city. Thus he had 35 destinations in mind—quite extensive coverage. His intellectual capacity and great administrative ability are seen in this mathematical, orderly procedure—just as when he fed the multitudes by fifties. Since the Lord sent the 70 to places where “he himself would come,” we know that he had at least 35 places yet to visit before his crucifixion.

Jesus' method shows the wisdom even today of going two by two to witness or colporteur. There is strength in going together: prayer before starting, encouraging one another, assisting each other with Scripture, giving advice, helping each other out of temptation, etc. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 reads, "*Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*" In times of discouragement or perplexity, one can help the other—and even from the standpoint of protection.

Luke 10:2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

The "Lord of the harvest," the Lord of the vineyard, is God. We pray to the Father.

Some may think they are the only ones to do the Lord's work. An exclusive clique, they are not interested in having other co-laborers enter in. Without this added instruction from Jesus, the 70 might have thought they were the only ones commissioned as laborers. Others would not have been encouraged, and the 70 would have remained a small group. Jesus was indicating they should look for converts and hope those converts would develop. He was saying, "This is not to be a fixed small body. True, the number of apostles is set at 12, but there are to be many, many disciples."

A teacher of the Lord's Word should try to encourage those being taught so that they, in turn, can teach others. In time, those being taught might excel over the teacher, and that would be good. A teacher should transmit the information he has.

Jesus was discussing the harvest of the Jewish Age, which lasted until AD 70. A nucleus was to be harvested. Jesus first instructed the 12, and now the 70, what their responsibilities would be during their lifetime. "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few." Jesus would die in AD 33, so laborers were needed.

Acts 6:2-4 reads, "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." The apostles were both preaching and waiting on tables until deacons were appointed to do the latter work. The apostles needed physical strength and time to collect their thoughts, so the deacons, doing temporal work, helped the spiritual.

Luke 10:3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Jesus' disciples were humble people, guileless and naive. These are good qualities. In the beginning, we are supposed to desire the sincere milk of the Word so that we may grow thereby and be able to eat meat and then discern between good and evil. Therefore, Jesus' disciples were like little lambs going out into the world.

Luke 10:4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

"Carry neither purse [money], nor scrip [suitcase, that is, additional clothes], nor [extra] shoes." We would not use this method today, but it developed faith at that time, while Jesus was present with them at the First Advent. (Jesus changed the advice at the end of his ministry.) The 70 had specific locations to visit, and Jesus wanted them to go immediately, not delaying to

collect money or clothes to take along. He meant business, for he intended to follow up at these locations shortly. In other words, the 70 were to prepare the way for Jesus to come.

The 70 were not to stop and converse with anyone en route. They could say hello, but they were not to stop. The account in 1 Kings 13 shows this advice was given in the Old Testament too. A prophet was sent to rebuke King Jeroboam. The prophet was told to go and return direct, without turning aside to eat or drink. He was faithful going but disobeyed coming back when an old man asked him to his house for food, saying the Lord had so instructed. As punishment for disobeying a direct command from the Lord, a lion slew the prophet. What is the lesson? When Scriptures on a particular issue are very clear-cut, we are *not to temporize or bend them* to mean something else. It is true that we are to compare Scripture with Scripture, but when temptations arise, we are to act decisively. We must stop an evil thought *before* it is entertained. The Scriptures are not rubber bands that can be stretched one way or another. Once the meaning is seen, it is very dangerous to alter the intent in any way. The Book of Revelation says that adding to the Word of God brings plagues (a judgment of some kind) and subtracting brings a worse penalty: Second Death. We are not to play games with the Lord's Word. Being a teacher of the Lord's Word entails great responsibility. A teacher (and all of us) should be dedicated, as far as possible, to grasping *principles*.

Luke 10:5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

Luke 10:6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

Verses 5 and 6 show the attitude in which they were to approach a house. They were not to have a chip on their shoulder, and they were to go with hope, with a degree of optimism, for the Lord was sending them to particular places. Moreover, they were to have faith that they would be provided for. If they were not received, their "peace" would return to them.

Luke 10:7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

They were to stay in one house, and not to go from house to house for hospitality. In other words, they were to accept hospitality according to the Lord's providence, recognizing that the house opened to them was appointed by the Lord to be their temporary residence. The advice applied to *this particular* mission. Under other circumstances in other times, Christians properly went from house to house, for the advice regarding their mission changed after Jesus' death. "Do not feel bad about staying longer, for the laborer is worthy of his hire" was Jesus' advice back there at that time. Elsewhere we are told not to overstay, to put a knife to our throat, to take a lower seat, etc., but the circumstance here was providentially arranged (Prov. 23:2; Luke 14:10).

Luke 10:8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

Luke 10:9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

When the 70 were received into a city, they were to accept the hospitality offered. And they were to reward their hosts by healing the sick.

"The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." A better translation is, "His royal majesty is among you." In other words, "the King of the Kingdom [Jesus] is coming." The "Kingdom" will consist of rulers, and Jesus, as King of kings, is choosing disciples who are to be the kings

and priests under him. He was saying, “Since I am here, the Kingdom is nigh, and if you respond, you will be blessed accordingly.”

Luke 10:10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

Luke 10:11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

If a city was not receptive to a pair of disciples, Jesus would not go there. Shaking off the dust was a ceremonial act to show a cutting off.

Luke 10:12 But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

Luke 10:13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

Luke 10:14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

Luke 10:15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

Jesus had already gone to Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, so the 35 pairs of disciples were being sent elsewhere. He foresaw that the people of Tyre and Sidon would have repented and accepted his message if he had visited them and performed the miracles that were done in the Galilee towns. Moreover, the repentance would have been so thorough in these heathen cities that the inhabitants would have worn sackcloth and ashes. Jesus’ statements show the prejudice that existed in regard to his background: his being a Nazarene, the circumstances of his birth, and the fact he was not a priest of Levi.

Luke 10:16 He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

Verse 16 is another verse that refutes the Trinity.

Luke 10:17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

The 70 sent out two by two to the various destinations that would be part of Jesus’ coming itinerary now returned with joy, saying, “Even the devils are subject unto us *through thy name*.” The 70 had this power on this occasion but not permanently. The devils were cast out in Jesus’ name, showing that evil spirits can be exorcised with faith and in Jesus’ name under proper circumstances.

Luke 10:18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Jesus responded to their enthusiasm at casting out demons by saying, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” In other words, the 70 saw devils being cast out of human beings, but Jesus saw Satan, the *chief* of the devils, fall as a bright shiner from heaven. Satan’s fall from heaven took place when he sinned a sin—when he tempted Eve and lied to her. “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from *the day* that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Ezek. 28:15). The principle is that *sinning a sin* is different from just having an evil thought go through the mind. Satan sinned when he told Eve she would not die. These thoughts were in his mind

before he committed the act, but the act was the sin. From that time on, Satan was confined to earth's atmosphere, for God's holy will has always been done in heaven and sin is not tolerated there. The earth is an exception, for it is like an observatory. What has happened on earth with the permission of evil will be a memorial for all future generations ever created anywhere. God has temporarily permitted evil for a reason. The lesson for us as new creatures is *not to entertain evil thoughts, for if we do, they will be expressed in time.*

Verse 18 is proof of Jesus' preexistence. He had to be a spirit being previously in order to witness Satan's fall. Incidentally, in fireworks displays we sometimes see a bright light descending. That phenomenon is like Satan's fall. Two messengers to the Church are likened to stars falling: Arius and Wycliffe.

Luke 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

The serpents and scorpions are figurative. Similarly Paul fought with figurative beasts at Ephesus, meaning evil men who were enemies of God (1 Cor. 15:32). Jesus was saying that as new creatures, we will not be hurt by God's enemies.

Luke 10:20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Concentrating on their power could have developed pride in the disciples, whereas the source of their joy was to be their covenant of consecration and their hope to be of the Little Flock. The same principle is expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:8-13. Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge shall fail but not faith, hope, and love—especially love.

The names of all who are born are entered into the Book of Life, but when one consecrates, the name is transferred to a different chapter—to the “high calling” section. One can drop to the Great Company chapter or be completely blotted out, erased, in Second Death.

The “church of the firstborn ... [whose names] are written in heaven” includes the Great Company (Heb. 12:23). Likewise, verse 20 is not restricted to the Little Flock, for all who consecrate can potentially be of the Very Elect. The marathon race must be run as if there is only one prize. Some burn out by getting fanatical in a very strange way earlier in the race. Jesus said, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). We should pace ourselves and use reason. It is more important to be in God's family than to have prestige, a title, money, etc. We are to keep ourselves in the circle of God's love, “looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 21).

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

Jesus talked to the Father in audible prayer, thus giving us insight into another facet of God's character. When Jesus witnessed the joy of these 70 humble ones, he saw God's wisdom in choosing those who are poor in spirit but rich in faith. Not many wise, noble, or mighty are called. The “wise and prudent” of this world are usually self-satisfied.

Luke 10:22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

It is a miracle to really know who the Father and the Son are. Trinitarians are confused, and of course the world does not know (Matt. 16:17).

Between God and man is Jesus, and Jesus, knowing who are being drawn by the *Father*, arranges providence so that he comes in contact with those individuals. We are begotten by the Word of *God*. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are channels, but the *Father* selects the Bride. Nevertheless, it is Jesus who removes the blindness caused by Satan (2 Cor. 4:4).

Luke 10:23 And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

Luke 10:24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Jesus addressed his disciples, “Blessed are your eyes that see. Many *prophets and kings* have desired to see what you see and hear what you hear.” Compare 1 Peter 1:10-12. *Prophets and angels* inquired and desired to know the things revealed to the Church. We are very blessed to have these truths revealed to us. God appreciated Daniel’s zealous inquiries and attitude and called him “beloved,” but his day was not the due time for a full revealing.

Luke 10:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

The lawyer’s motive was wrong: he was trying to *tempt* Jesus. The lawyer was sitting and then *stood up* to become the focus of attention when he addressed Jesus. He wanted to find a flaw or weakness in Jesus’ reasoning so he could have a debate.

Under *normal* circumstances, the lawyer’s question would be a proper and humble one: “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” In Luke 18:18, a rich, young ruler asked Jesus the same question but from a right motive. Here the lawyer wanted to trap Jesus.

Luke 10:26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

Notice, Jesus answered the lawyer’s question with another question: “What is written in the Law, and how do you understand it?” In other words, “What is *your* answer? What does the Law say?”

Luke 10:27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

The lawyer gave a thought-out answer, a prepared answer that seemed to be very zealous.

Luke 10:28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Jesus replied, “You have answered correctly. Love God with all your mind, heart, soul, and strength and your neighbor as yourself, and you shall live.” First, he put the lawyer on the defensive by making him answer, and then he said, “This do and you shall live.” Jesus even complimented the lawyer by telling him he had answered correctly. This should have ended the matter, but the lawyer persisted in his wrong motive.

Luke 10:29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

Trying to justify himself, the lawyer asked a second question: “Who is my neighbor?”

Luke 10:30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

Luke 10:31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

Luke 10:32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

Luke 10:33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

Luke 10:34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Luke 10:35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Luke 10:36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

Jesus' ability to control the situation here and many other times during his ministry shows he could have defended himself at the time of his crucifixion. With his wisdom, he could have confused and confounded his opposers, but he purposely went as a sheep to the slaughter because it was the due time for him to die.

“Lawyers” were a learned element of Jewry, part of the elite class along with the scribes and Pharisees. Lawyers were “experts” on the Law and other matters.

Jesus gave the parable and then turned around and asked the lawyer another question. “Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?”; that is, “Which of these three was neighbor to the victim?” The “three” were the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan. Why did Jesus use these three? The Samaritans were held in reproach by the Jews. Because they had a mixed background, the Jews did not regard them as authentic. Jesus, not coming from the tribe of Levi—let alone from Aaron’s lineage—was looked down upon by the religious leaders and elders of the nation.

If this question were asked today (“Which of these three was *neighbor* to him who fell among thieves?”), many would think of the neighbor as the recipient instead of the one who extended the kindness. But that is *not* what Jesus was saying. A *social gospel* is wrong.

With the three, Jesus kept going down in prestige: priest, Levite, and then Samaritan. When the priest saw the victim, he passed by on the other side. When the Levite saw the victim, he looked at the victim and then passed by on the other side. The priest saw the victim but did not want the *responsibility*. And this man was not a drunk; he was not suffering because of his *own* wanton ways. Set upon by thieves, the man was injured and needed help, so helping was an obligation the priest should have accepted. When the Levite looked, he may have mentally debated whether to give assistance, but he, too, passed by.

In contrast, the Samaritan was very compassionate. He bound up the victim’s wounds, pouring in oil and wine; put him on his own beast; brought him to an inn; and took care of him, even staying overnight. The next morning the Samaritan gave the innkeeper two pence with the

instruction to take care of the victim, and he offered to pay anything extra that was not covered by the two pence. The Samaritan was the despised one, considered dangerous because of mixed religious beliefs. The priest and the Levite had the Law and the prophets. Only the Samaritan showed mercy, however.

Wine is an antiseptic. Oil is a soothing or healing agent, an unguent. Since working 12 hours from sunrise to sunset brought one penny—a day's wage for labor—the two pence represented two days' labor, which was a lot of money back there. The two pence were to pay for the victim's stay at the inn until he was fully recovered.

Luke 10:37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

The lawyer answered, "The one who showed mercy on the victim [that is, the Samaritan]." Jesus replied, "Go, and do likewise." Although Jesus' words were few, they were powerful and full of meaning.

Spiritual interpretation: Jesus was the good Samaritan. Many times he bound up "wounds" at his First Advent with literal healing. Spiritually speaking, a person's wounds are "bound up" when his sins are forgiven at the time of consecration. The oil that soothes is the Holy Spirit of enlightenment and comfort. "Wine" symbolizes doctrine, the joys of the truth. With regard to the oil, for example, knowing that the doctrine of hellfire is erroneous brings comfort. The two pence picture 2,000 years, the length of the Gospel Age. "When I come again" (verse 35) refers not to the 1874 *parousia* but to the very end of the age when Jesus is ready to deal with mankind.

The majority who followed Jesus at his First Advent followed for the "loaves and fishes" (the material benefits) and to witness miracles. They liked the excitement and novelty of the miracles. And today some are enamored with the truth but do not want to go further and commit their lives.

The "inn" represents the Holy condition, where the Christian is taken care of in the present life. It is a place of safety and security, spiritually speaking. The "host" is God, to whom Jesus paid the two pence, the Ransom (or purchase) price, which the consecrated need for 2,000 years so that they are sustained in Jesus' absence.

The parable is a *double* picture: for the Church first and then for the world of mankind. Jesus preached to the multitudes, not just to the Little Flock. (It is up to each individual how he reacts to the message.) The two pence paid for those who consecrate in the present age. On the other hand, the world has also benefited from the gospel, for the gospel has done much to break the yoke of feudalism, dictatorships, etc. In a general way, knowledge of the gospel has led to people (the unconsecrated) demanding their rights.

The lawyer's original question was about the neighbor. He replied, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Then he asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered with the parable, showing that he, as the good Samaritan, was the neighbor. Therefore, Jesus was giving a double lesson: "*Love me. I am your neighbor.*" And also show mercy, just as the Samaritan (neighbor) showed mercy to the victim."

Luke 10:38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

Luke 10:39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

Luke 10:40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

Luke 10:41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

Luke 10:42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

It is to Martha's credit that she received Jesus into her house, but her complaint about Mary's not helping received a gentle rebuke. Although good points are seen in both of them, two depths of appreciation for the Master are shown. No doubt Mary did help on other occasions under different circumstances. There is an important lesson here for the Christian. Many think that service is *the* gospel. And one does need service to be a Christian in good standing, but the priority should be on *sanctification*, on dealing with one's own character. The guidelines for character are in the Bible. Therefore, we should search out advice in the Word on how to live our own life before we run to serve others. First, we are to bring ourselves under control and know the teachings of the Word. Service is a vital factor but not *the* factor.

Comment: Verse 39 says that Martha had a sister "which *also* sat at Jesus' feet." In other words, Martha was interested in Jesus' words too.

Reply: Jesus chose this occasion to teach a higher lesson and not necessarily to say Mary was above Martha. However, Mary did something Martha did not do—she anointed Jesus with oil of spikenard, which was worth a year's salary. Mary poured the oil on Jesus to show her appreciation of his teaching. Mary seems to be higher than Martha, but it would be nice if *both* are in the Little Flock. Mary's sense of devotion was deep. There have been some remarkable women.

Luke 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. John the Baptist's disciples did not pray "Our Father" but "Almighty God," "Jehovah," etc., and the prayers were for repentance.

Luke 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

Luke 11:3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

Luke 11:4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Jesus taught them the Lord's Prayer. First comes a recognition of the Father, a hallowing of His name, and then an asking that the Kingdom will come, so that the Father's will might be done on earth as it is now done in heaven.

"Give us day by day our daily bread" is better translated in the King James margin: "Give us for the day our daily bread."

"Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us." Matthew 6:12 is better: "Forgive us our debts [or trespasses], as we forgive our debtors [those who trespass

against us].” The same Greek word was translated “for” in one case and “as” in the other.

“Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.” The thought is, “*Abandon us not in temptation.*” Depending on the nature of the trial, the thought can be, “Deliver us from the evil one [Satan].”

Although the remainder of the Lord’s Prayer is spurious, the sentiment is correct. In John 14:13,14 and 15:16, Jesus said to ask in *his* name.

Luke 11:5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

Luke 11:6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

Jesus began with a hypothetical situation. One who had no food on hand went to a friend at midnight and asked for a loan of three loaves of bread for a visitor. Hospitality was a must in those days.

Luke 11:7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

The friend refused and gave excuses.

Luke 11:8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

Jesus was saying that *importunity* would cause the friend to change his mind and give the three loaves of bread. Hence importunity is important in prayer—if the prayer is in harmony with God’s will.

An understanding of human nature is seen here. A person went to the house of a friend and made a request. At first, the request was refused because the friend was settled comfortably for the night with his children. (This could be the initial response in a real-life situation.) Eventually, however, the friend got up to help—his conscience bothered him.

Luke 11:9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Luke 11:10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Ask, and it shall be given unto you.

Seek, and ye shall find.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

This is a true principle, generally speaking, but of course we must ask in harmony with the Lord’s will. If we know our request is according to His will, we should keep asking. The answer may be delayed to make us ask more and more, to test the sincerity of the prayer, or to develop more sincerity in the prayer and make it more in depth.

To ask, seek, and knock shows perseverance but also *progression*. Asking does not take as much effort as seeking, and seeking does not take as much effort as knocking. If we know the request is proper, we can increase the *intensity* of the asking. We can “come boldly unto the throne of grace” (Heb. 4:16).

Many do not pray—they do not ask—even though they desire something proper. We should utilize the *privilege* of prayer. We are not to be discouraged if the first prayer request is not answered. As we importune and plead and progress in intensity of desire, we approach nearer and nearer to the answer or reward of that prayer.

Luke 11:11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

Luke 11:12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

These verses are still related to the Lord's Prayer in the beginning of the chapter. Notice the qualification: "*IF A SON...*" Only the consecrated have the real privilege of prayer, with a guarantee of being heard one way or the other.

Jesus used natural illustrations. If a son asked his father for bread, a fish, or an egg (small requests that are *necessities*), his father would not give him a stone, a scorpion, or a serpent. However, the higher lesson is of a "son" asking the Heavenly Father. These verses are an invitation to prayer.

The asking does not just pertain to spiritual things. We are living in a very affluent period of time, but many Christians down through the Gospel Age were concerned with getting daily food—the barest of food. Under those circumstances, it would not be amiss to ask for temporal necessities. But, on the other hand, if our chief desire is the Kingdom of heaven—if we seek that *first*—we are told the other things will be supplied. We can still ask, however, but we should be sure our thoughts are mainly along spiritual lines or our prayer may be inhibited.

Verse 13 raises the request to the higher level. "If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him" (paraphrase). Those who hunger for spiritual things will be fed and get a good answer.

Luke 11:14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

Jesus cast out a devil of one made dumb by it. When the devil was cast out, the person spoke. Jesus' subsequent sermon was based on this miracle. When he exorcised the *invisible* demon, the people could see a *visible* change in the person. On another occasion, Jesus said, "You cannot see the wind, but you know it exists by the effect it has on certain objects."

Luke 11:15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

Luke 11:16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

The scribes and Pharisees (other Gospels include them) ascribed evil motives and/or tempted Jesus concerning the miracle. Some accused him of using an occult power to cast out the demon, saying he possessed the *chief* of the demons (a *more powerful* evil spirit) in order to be able to cast out the demon possessing the man.

Luke 11:17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against

itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

Jesus knew their thoughts. They must have been murmuring on the side, trying to disparage and contradict his influence—even though he did the miracle *right before their eyes*.

Luke 11:18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

Luke 11:19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

The exorcising of evil spirits was done by a few others in Israel (not frequently, though, or the people would not have gone to Jesus). “By whom do your sons cast them out?” Jesus asked. (And this is true today—there can be legitimate exorcisms *in Jesus’ name*. However, we must know the circumstances in order to properly evaluate an exorcism.) The critics accused Jesus of using demon power but did not so accuse their own sons. In other words, they made allowances where it suited them. Jesus did *many, many* miracles, so for the scribes and Pharisees to react this way shows *much* envy over his popularity with the masses. How *small* was their thinking!

The power to make one dumb exists along both holy and unholy lines. Zacharias was struck dumb by God until John the Baptist was born and named. Ezekiel was made dumb and could speak only when the Holy Spirit caused him to do so. Therefore, we must evaluate each situation.

After witnessing such a miracle, the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign from heaven (verse 16). They wanted to see *visual action*, not just the effect of the miracle. In verses 17-26, Jesus answered his detractors (those accusing him of using Satan’s power as well as those wanting a sign).

Jesus said that Satan’s kingdom, a house, or even Satan himself cannot stand if divided against itself. He was saying that their logic was *unreasonable*, thoroughly *inconsistent*. What Satan does is to his *own* advantage. If he performs a miracle, it is to further his *own* cause, and such was not the case with the demon who was cast out. Satan *hates* Jesus, and the only way he would popularize Jesus would be if he got greater gain out of it *for himself* as a devil. Mark used statements, not questions, so his account is clearer that the reasoning of the scribes and Pharisees was fallacious.

“Beelzebub” means “lord of the flies [or bees or hornets],” all of which are annoying. A king of Egypt was called “the fly” and a king of Assyria “the bee” (Isa. 7:18). *Supernatural* power is needed to direct a horde of flies for a specific purpose. Satan is the “prince of the power of the air” both spiritually and naturally, for Jesus had to rebuke the wind and the waves when they beat on the boat on the Sea of Galilee.

At the time of the First Advent, many demons were cast out, and demon possession was generally recognized as such. Medical advances today have eliminated a number of diseases and weakened conditions that predisposed people in the past to demon possession. At present, demon possession is more prevalent in countries that are backward medically. Satan has the power of death; that is, he takes advantage of depraved desires of the flesh. The whole world lies in the Wicked One.

To assess the legitimacy of healings, we must know the circumstances. If done en masse, they are probably not legitimate. Also, if they honor an institution or an individual, they should be viewed with suspicion. Some who have given their minds over to Satan have received

miraculous cures.

The lying signs and wonders (miracles) at the end of the age will honor the froglike, unclean spirits coming from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. These “spirits” (doctrines) will be of *demons*. Overall, the lying miracles will advantage Satan and his cause.

Luke 11:20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

Jesus said he was casting out devils with the “finger of God.” He was saying in effect, “I cannot be casting out devils with the finger of Satan. Your reasoning is wrong. Therefore, I have to be using the finger [or *power*] of God, and you are receiving a witness. The one who will head this Kingdom of God is before you, and you do not recognize him.”

The term “finger of God” is used in Exodus 8:19. When the magicians could no longer duplicate the plagues, they said of the fourth plague, “This is the finger of God,” meaning it was accomplished by *God’s power*.

Here in verse 20, Jesus used the expression “finger of God” to mean that the miracle he had just performed—his casting out the demon—was but a *small* example of what will be done in the Kingdom. Then the whole hand and arm of God will be used. He was saying, “This is only a *small fragment* of God’s power, a small sample of what can and will be done.”

“The kingdom of God is come upon you.” Another translation of the Greek is, “His royal majesty is in your midst.” Since Jesus will be the King of the coming Kingdom, verse 20 can be either left as it is or translated, “If I cast out devils with the power of God, then the King of God is come upon you.”

Luke 11:21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

In other words, “As long as Satan keeps his personal headquarters, or capital, in earth’s atmosphere, his goods are in peace.”

Luke 11:22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

Of course the “stronger” is Jesus. The fulfillment of this verse is future when Jesus will overcome Satan, take his armor, and divide his spoils. Satan’s “armor” would be his fellow associates (the fallen angels) and his capabilities to do evil. His “spoils” are the people, the subjects underneath his control and influence.

Luke 11:23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

This verse is easier to understand if the order is reversed: “He that is against me is not with me.” Although Jesus was referring to the scribes and Pharisees, he also stated a general principle. Those making the accusation and those demanding a sign were against Jesus.

Luke 11:24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

This verse contains some literal truth. When an unclean spirit “is gone out of a man,” he walks through dry places, seeking rest. Finding none, he decides to return to the same man. When we consider the number of fallen demons and the number of those down here possessed with demons, there is a shortage of human contacts. (The “house” for a fallen angel is a human

being he can possess.) A *legion* of demons was in one man. If there were enough human subjects, each demon would want his own house, his own puppet, completely at his disposal. The exorcised unclean spirit's difficulty in finding a subject is described as walking "through dry places."

Luke 11:25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

Returning to the man from whom he was dispossessed, the unclean spirit found him "swept and garnished."

Luke 11:26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Then the unclean spirit took seven even more wicked unclean spirits and entered into the same man. The man was now worse off than before the exorcism.

This principle applies to the consecrated too. If, through gross sin, the consecrated lose the Holy Spirit, they are worse off than prior to consecration, for they are specially targeted by the Adversary. How great is that darkness! (Compare verse 35 and Matthew 6:23.)

If a demon is cast out of a person and the person stays empty instead of becoming occupied with God's Spirit, or power, the empty "house" is an invitation for evil spirits to enter. In fact, because of the weakness, the person is *more liable* for spirit possession and control than he was originally, that is, prior to any occult control. Stated another way, for a person who is the recipient of such a miracle, the contrast is so great that if he does not humble himself and consecrate to the Lord, he is more vulnerable to demon possession than he was before. It is like a person being healed, forgetting, and continuing to do evil. The individual is momentarily happy, "swept" clean of disease, but what does he do about it? *Sinning against light after being delivered* puts one in a worse state than when originally possessed.

We are reminded of the ten lepers, only one of whom came back to thank Jesus. If one who is healed does not have a very thankful heart, that is not a good indication of his character. How would the Kingdom make a difference to such an individual? His very destiny would be jeopardized.

Several lessons can be gleaned from verses 17-26, as follows:

1. The expression sometimes heard today that Satan is casting out Satan should not be used, for it is a misappropriation of the parable.
2. The exorcised individual is in danger if he does not drastically change his life.
3. Being schooled in the Law, the scribes and Pharisees considered themselves blessed to have more intelligence than the common people. However, their background and their positions of prestige and influence gave them a feeling of superiority. When they reacted *unfavorably* to truth manifested in Christ, their characters deteriorated. How hardly shall they escape damnation in the Kingdom Age!

Luke 11:27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

Luke 11:28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

This incident, which occurred on the same occasion, momentarily stopped Jesus' sermon. A woman, moved by Jesus' words, interrupted him and said enthusiastically, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." In other words, "What a wonderful mother you have!" But Jesus' answer gave the proper perspective: "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and *keep it*." Jesus' words were a rebuke to those who heard the Word of God and criticized it.

Here is another example—at least the third—where the Scriptures refute Roman Catholicism's worship of Mary. (1) When Jesus turned the water to wine at the marriage in Cana, he said to his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" (2) When Mary and his stepbrothers were outside and wanted to speak with him, he said, "My mother and brothers are those who do my Father's will."

Luke 11:29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

Jesus continued his sermon. Earlier in the chapter when he cast a devil out of a man, we were informed that two classes of detractors witnessed the miracle. One class accused him of using Satan's power (verse 15), and Jesus refuted that accusation. Now he began to refute the other class, that is, those who tempted him, asking for a sign from heaven (verse 16).

As Jesus discoursed in reply, more and more people congregated until they "were gathered thick together." Then he said, "This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet."

To ask for a sign in itself was not wrong—if their hearts had been right and under other circumstances. After all, Israel was given to signs, and God granted many. Here, however, the motive was *evil*. The sincerity of the question was the determining factor. Sometimes people like to raise an inflammatory issue just to liven up a discussion, but that is a superficial reason and not a proper heart desire to know truth. Here the people had just seen a *miracle* performed, but they wanted a sign from *heaven*, something even more dramatic. Jesus would give no sign except the "sign of Jonas the prophet."

Luke 11:30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

Jonah was on a ship in the Mediterranean when an unusually severe storm arose—in fact, so severe that those on board thought the ship would sink. They felt a guilty party in their midst was the cause of the storm. When Jonah confessed, they threw him overboard. The storm ceased, and a "great fish" prepared by God swallowed him alive (Jonah 1:17). After parts of three days and nights, the "whale" regurgitated Jonah onto dry land. (Jonah had been told by God to go and preach repentance to the Ninevites, but he deliberately went in the opposite direction. He thought he had righteous indignation, for Nineveh was like Sodom and Gomorrah.)

Jonah was a type of Jesus. His experience in the belly of the whale prefigured what would happen to Jesus—that he would be buried for parts of three days and nights and then be resurrected. And within a year, this very thing did happen to Jesus.

Luke 11:31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Luke 11:32 The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

The “queen of the south” is the queen of Sheba, who traveled from Ethiopia, Upper Egypt, the “ut[ter]most parts of the [civilized] earth,” to Israel to see and hear about Solomon, whose fame had spread (1 Kings 10:1-8). When she returned, she said, “The *half* was not told me”; that is, Solomon’s wonders *far exceeded* the reports. This was Israel’s golden age.

Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was founded by Nimrod, “the mighty hunter before the LORD” (Gen. 10:9-11). “Nin” of the name Nineveh means “fish,” and the Ninevites worshipped the fish god. In history, God has pictured certain noble people as truly honorable. One of them was righteous Noah. But as so often happens, a great person can be idolized in time, and after Noah’s death, he came to be regarded as a god. “Nin” comes from “Nun” and “Noe” (Noah), who was saved in the Ark.

Jesus used two illustrations: the queen of Sheba and the Ninevites, who repented at Jonah’s teaching. The queen of Sheba may have been a little skeptical until she saw with her own eyes Solomon’s great wealth and wisdom. Jesus said that both the queen of the south and the men of Nineveh would “rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them [the Israelites who rejected Jesus, for in so doing, they rejected one greater than either Solomon or Jonah].”

What is the final point Jesus was making? Both Solomon and Jonah were types of Jesus and both were great, but Jesus was greater. Verse 31 about the Queen of Sheba emphasizes *wisdom*, and verse 32 regarding Jonah emphasizes *repentance*. If those who heard Jesus speak had truly recognized his *wisdom* through the *proper heart condition*, they would have *repented*. The Jewish nation at large rejected Jesus.

The repentance of the Ninevites was predicated on some groundwork by the Lord. Jonah, a *lone* individual, entered the city as a stranger and preached, “Repent! Repent!” However, prior to his entry into Nineveh, a report reached the inhabitants, who worshipped the fish god, that Jonah had been swallowed by a whale and three days later spewed out alive onto dry land. Since Jonah’s experience fit their tradition about “Nun,” the fish, they thought he was a messenger from God.

Verses 31 and 32 prove that the dead will be resurrected, for Jesus said the Queen of Sheba and the Ninevites would rise up in judgment with the current generation, that is, the generation living at the time of the First Advent. Since the Queen of Sheba and the Ninevites had died centuries before, Jesus was indicating that all will be raised in the judgment period—yet future. The judgment of Jesus’ critics will be less favorable than the judgment of those who never heard him in person or saw his miracles. Lesson: There is responsibility for light received.

Luke 11:33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

Luke 11:34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

The purpose of a candle is to give light, so its light would not be covered. Neither should we hide our light.

The eye should be “single.” In other words, we should have the single goal or purpose of serving the Lord. The eye is a symbol of intelligence, but there is right and wrong intelligence.

We are to look for knowledge and understanding in the right direction. The Matthew account says that we cannot serve both God and mammon. If both eyes are focused on God, the eye will be “single”; that is, our primary goal will be to serve Him.

Luke 11:35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

Luke 11:36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

Jesus equated these verses to the miracle he did in casting a demon out of a man (verse 14). Jesus used the man as an object lesson, likening him to the body politic of Israel, the nation, the “generation” who was rejecting him. His work in cleansing lepers, healing the sick, raising the dead, preaching the gospel, etc., was like casting out demons in the nation of Israel. However, these works did not produce real repentance. When a person or nation is “swept and garnished” and nothing constructive of the Lord is put in place of the former sins, a problem is inevitable. The people saw great light but did not respond. Lesson: We should seek light (truth and understanding) and then take heed lest the light that is in us become darkness.

Luke 11:37 And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

Luke 11:38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

Luke 11:39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

Luke 11:40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

Luke 11:41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

Luke 11:42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Luke 11:43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

Luke 11:44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

As Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee who probably lived nearby invited him to dine. Jesus went to his house, and when he sat down to eat, the Pharisee was surprised that Jesus had not washed before dinner. No doubt Jesus intentionally did not wash, and he knew exactly how his host would react, for washing was a religious ritual for the Pharisees. (Of course Jesus washed normally—but not hypocritically, not for show.) He deliberately ignored the custom in order to teach a lesson—and what a strong sermon he delivered! Jesus could read the Pharisee’s thoughts and could see the expression on his face. (Note: To be polite, we sometimes honor a custom, and this is proper as long as conscience is not violated.)

The host was a *single* Pharisee, but Jesus directed his remarks to the Pharisees (*plural*), to a *class*. He was saying, “You are just like the rest of the Pharisees. You clean the outside of the cup, but

inwardly you are full of wickedness.” That was a powerful comment for a guest to make to the host.

Many have the wrong impression of Jesus. They do not realize that much of what he said was not gentle but *strong*. However, all of his words were *constructive*. If he punished with the tongue, the purpose was to awaken the individual to the wrong. Jesus gave logic, explaining what was wrong and what was right.

“Ye fools!” he called the Pharisees. Jesus’ sermons got more powerful as the time for his death neared. He knew the Pharisees would put him to death. When Stephen gave his sermon, the scribes and Pharisees were like ravening wolves wanting his death.

“Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?” God made the *outward* laws (such as eating only clean animals), but He also made the *inner* requirements of justice and love. Tithing was *outward*—outwardly pleasing—whereas love was from the *inner heart*.

The scribes and Pharisees ceremonially wiped off the outside of the cup with a light flick of a cloth, but the inside of the cup, which was more important, was not cleaned. Extending the lesson, Jesus was saying, “Man himself is a vessel. The inside of the vessel is the intent of the heart. A person can be outwardly clean but inwardly wicked.”

“Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” The Pharisees were very exact on *tiny* matters but ignored alms for someone in need. The small mind concentrated on little things and passed by the weighty things of God, which are much more important. They strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel (Matt. 23:24). Jesus was saying that it was fine to be strict on small matters, but there were more important things.

“Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.” Paraphrased, “Woe unto you, Pharisees! for you love the best seats in the synagogue and homage in public.” They loved the adulation and inordinate respect they were getting. This was PRIDE. They should have been servants to the people instead of being exalted over them.

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.” Paraphrased, “Woe unto you, hypocrites! You are hidden graves *unseen* by those who walk over them.” Jesus also called them “whited [seen] sepulchres” (Matt. 23:27). In other words, the Pharisees were rotteness, deterioration, and decay inwardly, and those they instructed were unaware.

Luke 11:45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

Luke 11:46 And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

Luke 11:47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

The lawyer walked right into the trap. He said, “Master, you reproach us also.” Then Jesus gave another powerful sermon. Paraphrased, “You lade men with grievous burdens but do not touch the burdens yourselves with even one of your fingers. Woe unto you! You build the graves of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.” The lawyers and their fathers were

responsible for killing the prophets.

Jesus was saying, “The upper strata of society are, to a large extent, leeches.” What good they do is usually for self-aggrandizement. This is the story of mankind. Kings, for example, build “monuments” to self by oppressing the people.

Luke 11:48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

Luke 11:49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:

Luke 11:50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

Accumulative guilt is passed down until the time comes for an explosion that cleans the slate. When the judgment is due, it weighs heavily on those then living. However, when the responsible individuals come up in the resurrection, they will be held accountable for what they did willfully. Hence having the judgment at the end of the Gospel and Jewish ages does not mean those of other generations escape. They may escape judgment in the present life but not in the next. “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men[’s sins] ... follow after [with judgment occurring in the Kingdom]” (1 Tim. 5:24).

Luke 11:51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

Zacharias was John the Baptist’s father. He cannot be the usually referenced Zechariah, for that prophet lived too early and there would be a big gap in blood guilt up to Jesus’ day. Moreover, Zacharias was a priest, so he would be “between the altar and the temple.”

Luke 11:52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

Paraphrased, “Woe unto you lawyers! You take away the key of knowledge. You do not enter yourselves and you keep others from entering.” This verse shows the responsibility of leaders (lawyers, scribes, Pharisees, etc.). Not only were these leaders astray themselves, but they were leading others astray.

Jesus used the Pharisee and the lawyer as representatives of a class or culture. They tried to undermine Jesus’ teachings, yet they could perceive that he had a greater depth of teaching and understanding than they did. Rather than encourage those under them to seek Jesus for knowledge and help, they tried to stop the knowledge.

Luke 11:53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:

Luke 11:54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

Verse 53 reveals that other scribes and Pharisees were present at the dinner table. All were being addressed by Jesus. Now they were getting angry and wanted to trip him up, but he stayed under control and parried everything they said.

Luke 12:1 In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of

people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

The *Diaglott* says that “myriads” (ten thousands) of people were gathered together to hear Jesus—so much so “that they trode one upon another.” It would be like tens of thousands gathering in a square or plaza except that this setting was the countryside.

Jesus “began to say unto his disciples first of all”; that is, verse 1 is the *beginning* of what Jesus had to say to his disciples on this occasion. See verse 22: “And he [Jesus] said [further] unto his disciples.” Jesus was primarily concerned with his small number of disciples, not with the great multitudes. Most speakers would consider this a golden opportunity to address great crowds, but not Jesus. He wanted to instruct those with a true hearing ear who would follow him through hardships and who *hungered* for truth. In contrast, many were mere curiosity seekers. Jesus did not intend to ignore the multitudes, but first things first.

“Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” Hypocrisy is sin, and this is the same principle as the previous chapter where the Pharisees and lawyers were trying to tempt Jesus. They might have appeared very learned and religious, but they were hypocrites. After the meal at the Pharisee’s house, Jesus went outside. The Pharisee had an ulterior motive in inviting Jesus.

Why did Jesus especially caution his disciples along this line regarding the supposed religious leaders of the nation—those who were so respected? *Ostensibly* their teaching was based on the Law of Moses, the Word of God, but many traditions and customs were so mixed into their teaching that there was confusion as to what was Scripture and what was man’s word. Teaching should be in harmony with the Bible. Customs and formalism were hypocrisy—for example, the Pharisees made a great show of washing their hands and criticized Jesus for not doing likewise (Luke 11:38). Thus Jesus was saying, “Beware of the intrusion of *men’s* thoughts, which are not in harmony with Scripture.” “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8). “Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” (Matt. 15:6). The traditions of men can nullify the commandments of God. Those of Berea were more noble because they first paid attention to what Paul said and then went home and searched the Scriptures *daily* to see if his teachings squared with Scripture.

Luke 12:2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

Luke 12:3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Everything covered shall be revealed; everything hidden shall be known. Those things spoken in secret will be proclaimed from the housetops. In regard to those who profess one thing publicly and do another privately (which is hypocrisy), their words and actions are recorded for future revelation.

Earth is the beginning of God’s physical creation; it is an object lesson for the everlasting future. Jesus came *here* to show the way of life and truth. God is looking for those who exercise faith in an *unseen* God and believe in the written Word and follow its instructions. Future generations in the universe—planets in other solar systems will be populated—will hear of earth’s experience with the permission of evil.

These verses are two of several Scriptures that imply people’s lives are being recorded. Earth’s story will be an eternal history lesson. Hence it would be such a blessing to be one who has

pleased the Lord and not one who comes forth to shame and contempt. Of course some things will be censored, for the criticism will be *constructive*.

Luke 12:4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

“I say unto you *my friends*.” Imagine Jesus’ intonation! It was probably very touching. “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.” Many Christians have literally been put to death for their faith, especially by Papacy. Once they are dead, the persecutors cannot physically afflict them anymore. In fact, in death, some have a great influence, such as the apostles and the messengers to the Church.

Luke 12:5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Jesus was saying, “I will forewarn you whom you should fear. Fear *God*, who has the authority [*Diaglott*] to cast into hell [Gehenna, Second Death]; yea, *reverence Him*.” In other words, “Do not fear those who may kill the body, but reverence God, who alone has the decision for each individual regarding life or Second Death.” Fear *God* because *He* holds in His hand the destiny of all created beings. If he says a person is worthy of Second Death, that is the final decision.

Jeremiah 19:5 shows that God never had the thought to burn people alive. “They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, *which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind*.” There is no literal hellfire. Anything put in Gehenna is totally destroyed in oblivion, not burning for eternity. At the time of the First Advent, garbage was burned up and destroyed in the Valley of Gehenna in Jerusalem, so Gehenna became a symbol of a death from which there is *no resurrection*. When the human race is called forth from the grave, from the *sleep* of death, it will be like an alarm clock ringing and awakening them to start a new day.

God has allowed Satan to be a trial to the human family, to test people, especially the consecrated, as in the Book of Job. The ones whom God will honor in the *next* life must perform in *this* life. “If we *suffer* [with Christ now], we shall also *reign* with him” (2 Tim. 2:12).

The fear of *man* is a great snare. We must be sure to follow *God*, not man. Respect for man takes the form of not wanting to hurt the feelings of others. Sometimes family enters in. We may do something we know is wrong because not doing so would hurt someone’s feelings. We should weigh each experience and figure out how to best handle it according to the *Lord’s* instruction. There is danger in compromise. Fear of man takes the form of (1) fear of totalitarianism (fear of a bully) or (2) having so much respect for someone that we fear we will disappoint him or her.

Luke 12:6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

Luke 12:7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Verses 6 and 7 are idioms and not literal, although five sparrows, a common bird, could actually be sold for two farthings back there. The lesson for the consecrated is that every detail of their lives is noticed and does make a difference to the Lord. “The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth” seeking those who fear Him (2 Chron. 16:9). A book of remembrance is being written about those who speak often of God and fear Him (Mal. 3:16). He has guardian angels and other instrumentalities to keep Him informed. Nothing escapes

God's attention. Even in the deepest dungeon, He knows our plight. Although His particular charge is the consecrated, everything else is under surveillance too. Otherwise, something could happen to thwart His purpose. God has to know in advance in order to safeguard His interests. The whole world is being monitored at the present time, even the sparrows. God is cognizant of all that is happening. He does not literally count the hairs on our head, but He surveys everything. Both God and Jesus have X-ray eyes that see everything external as well as internal (that is, the heart condition). The Holy Spirit searches the very marrow of the bone.

Luke 12:8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:

As the consecrated witness for Christ, they are being observed. If they are not ashamed of Jesus now, he will not be ashamed of them in the next life. One's life is made up of, say, 100,000 acts. What an individual is trying to do can be seen, even if the work is imperfect. The trend or disposition can be seen—whether he really is ashamed of Jesus, whether he looks for opportunities to witness, etc. Beyond the veil, Jesus will openly commend those who are loyal to him and confess them before the holy angels.

Luke 12:9 But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

This verse does not necessarily refer to Second Death, but at the very least, it does indicate a failure to make the Little Flock.

Luke 12:10 And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

“Whosoever ... blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven [but will receive stripes].” Many do not really know or think about what they are saying. For example, they curse if they hit their finger with a hammer. Such language, which the media encourages, would be excused among the *unconsecrated*. However, those with understanding and knowledge who *deliberately* blaspheme against the Holy Spirit are not forgiven but must receive corresponding punishment.

A combative spirit can be disciplined for good by the Holy Spirit. The apostles Paul and Peter are examples of zeal being properly harnessed by the Holy Spirit.

Luke 12:11 And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

Luke 12:12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

If we are brought before a magistrate because of the truth, we should not premeditate what we will say on that occasion. However, we are to prepare daily, individually, *beforehand*.

Luke 12:13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

The one addressing Jesus recognized his authority but in an irrelevant area. Nevertheless, Jesus marvelously turned this inappropriate request into a lesson. He had just been discussing serious and important issues, so this interjection broke his train of thought. A *Reprint* article indicates that this person may have wanted more than his due inheritance.

Luke 12:14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

Jesus actually is a judge but not over such trivial matters. He addressed his mother as “Woman.” Here he addressed the individual as “Man.” The inheritance should have been divided properly according to the Law.

Jesus turned this mundane matter into a lesson (to be seen subsequently); namely, we should not make temporal matters the priority in our lives.

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

The word “abundance” indicates covetousness on the part of this party who was asking for his inheritance. Perhaps he was a man of means and did not need the inheritance, even though it was due him. He had enough.

Jesus then drew a general lesson in a parable about a man with abundance. The Parable of the Rich Fool covers verses 16-21.

Luke 12:16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

Luke 12:17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

Luke 12:18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

Luke 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

Luke 12:20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

Luke 12:21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Through verse 18, nothing is really wrong. If one has a quantity of crops, he can store them properly. The problem was that the man had greedy motives. To be business-minded is one thing, but to be covetous is wrong.

Verse 19 reveals the individual’s intention. He had stored crops for many years, and now he wanted to live idly—to take “ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” He concentrated on worldly or temporal things, being interested only in the present life, whereas the Christian should be thinking of the future.

Jesus may have paused at verse 19 to indicate something was lacking, namely, an interest in the future and God. Then came the lesson: “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided [stored up]?” The term “this night” can be considered the length of an individual’s consecrated life. At “night,” the life expires here on earth for the consecrated one. Or “this night” can be considered the length of the Gospel Age.

The party who built the barns was very *self-centered* and greedy. He was storing up for *himself*, not even for his children (as in a will). He was thinking of acquisition and the enjoyment of acquisition *now*.

“So is he that layeth up treasure for *himself*, and is not rich toward God.” We cannot serve God and mammon at the same time.

Luke 12:22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

Luke 12:23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

Luke 12:24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

In regard to what we eat or wear, Jesus said to “take no [anxious] thought for your life.” We must take *some* thought—for example, to wear modest clothes—but we should not be oversolicitous about food and clothing. Jesus’ words are related to the covetousness of the rich fool in the preceding parable.

“Life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment [clothing].” The destiny of the soul is more important than the food we eat now. The resurrection body we hope to be clothed with is more important than present clothing. We are to lay up treasures in *heaven* (the future life, the life and body *there*), not here on earth (Matt. 6:19,20).

“Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap and have no storehouse, yet God feeds them. How much better you are than them!” (paraphrase). In other words, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). Sometimes we get the necessities of life and sometimes more than that. Incidentally, for the raven, God provides carrion (dead and diseased animals, which the Jew could not eat), but the raven does not store up or hoard.

The lesson is not that we should do no work. Some have sponged off other brethren, and some have even begged. We should not do either but should provide modestly for ourselves. Paul’s advice about spongers was that if they do not work, they do not eat (2 Thess. 3:10). Of course incapacitation is another matter.

When Paul needed food, he worked as a tentmaker, and then he did not work again for a while. But that method would not work for a married man with children. The point is that we must be good stewards *according to our situation and circumstances*.

Luke 12:25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

Luke 12:26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

A cubit is 18 inches. In some cases where there is a medical problem, one can add 6 or 10 inches by having plastic rods inserted but not 18 inches. By taking “thought,” one certainly cannot add 1 1/2 feet of stature.

Luke 12:27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

“Consider the lilies: ... Solomon in all his [man-made] glory was not arrayed like *one* of these.” “Lilies,” a general term, are common wildflowers of the field that grow without special planting or planning. If examined microscopically, they show more thought, beauty, and skillful design than *man-made* products. Things made by God far exceed what man manufactures. Jesus may have been in a meadow at this time and pointed to some “lilies.”

Q: If verse 23 about the life and the body is expanded into the future, can we likewise apply this verse to the future? If faithful, we will receive an actual robe of righteousness.

A: It could be. Jesus may have been subconsciously thinking of the lily of the valley and the rose of Sharon as mentioned in the Song of Solomon. There the “lily” is the Church in the flesh, and Jesus is enamored with this class in the present life. The antitypical Solomon sees in the lily class the potential of a Bride. “I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters” (Song 2:1,2).

Jesus was comparing the literal Solomon and the literal lily and then drawing spiritual lessons. The literal Solomon failed because of the riches that stole his heart, his many wives, and his love of horses. Their very *abundance* led him astray. He had pomp and glory emblematic of spiritual things, but the type became polluted. The riches perished.

Luke 12:28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

“If God so clothes the transitory grass, how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?” (paraphrase). This verse reminds us of God’s awareness of the sparrows, which are sold for a farthing. But *how much more* is our Heavenly Father aware of us! He is cognizant of all that happens.

The little flowers (“lilies”) grow profusely in the field intermingling with the grasses. Both are cast into the oven.

Luke 12:29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

Luke 12:30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

Luke 12:31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

“Seek not what you shall eat or drink; do not live in careful suspense. Your Father knows you need these things, so instead seek the Kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you” (King James margin and paraphrase). In other words, the necessities will be supplied. Temporal things will be “added” to the spiritual things we are hoping for. We have spiritual hope, blessings, and fellowship, but of course we do need some food and clothing. Therefore, Jesus was saying, “In addition to the wonderful blessings of the hope of the high calling, which are worth more than anything on earth, temporal things will be added.” He was addressing those who have anxieties on temporal matters.

Consider the Apostle Paul, who hungered, was three days in the deep, and had other extreme experiences that kept him from literally getting “bread” *each day*. Likewise, the Christian might not literally get daily food during certain periods of his walk, but overall he has temporal provisions (even if somewhat meager).

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

“Do not have anxious care, little flock.”

Luke 12:33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

Jesus was not saying we should impoverish ourselves, but what is extra should be sold and used for the Lord's service. Principle: If we have two coats, we should give one away. This admonition was especially true in regard to the brotherhood. Not long after Jesus uttered these words, the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem experienced privation, and Paul had to collect donations to send back to them.

In verse 15, Jesus stressed the *abundance* of possessions, so that would be a condition here as well. We are to sell and give alms of our abundance. There is nothing wrong in building barns if the motive is proper. However, the Christian should not hoard for the future on earth but with his surplus should think of those who are less fortunate.

“Bags which wax not old.” Our spiritual bag is in heaven. We are to lay up treasures in this heavenly receptacle, which is like a hope chest beyond the veil. Laying up heavenly treasures pertains to making friends of mammon (the things of this world) and doing good deeds (which builds good character and brings compensation beyond the veil for things sacrificed).

Luke 12:34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Our treasure will be where our heart is.

Luke 12:35 Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

Luke 12:36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

Verses 35-40 give a parable of a master returning from a wedding to watchful, enthusiastic servants. “Let your loins be girded” means to be ready for travel and action. Our “lights [are to be] burning” so that we can see, *especially prophetically*. The lesson is to be ready for the returning Lord and watch for him—to watch prophecy and be concerned about the signs of the times. We are to be like men who wait for their lord to return from the wedding so that when he comes and knocks, we will open unto him *immediately*.

Remember, this is a *parable*. The point or lesson is NOT that we are to wait here, on this side of the veil, for the wedding of The Christ to take place and that Jesus then returns after the wedding. Rather, the lesson is the *readiness and desire* of the household servants to welcome back their master. The servants were to *watch, be ready, and open the door immediately* upon the master's knock. Being unprepared and failing to answer the door would indicate negligence and slothfulness. Jesus was pointing out the importance of prophecy as an element of Christian character and growth. Our lights are to be burning in the dark night, as we look for the “return” of our Master.

In verses 37-40, the picture changes. In a literal situation, the master would not serve his domestic servants. That very fact proves these verses have a spiritual application.

Luke 12:37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Verse 37 refers to Jesus' invisible return in 1874. “Servants” (plural) were commended for watching and searching the Scriptures in regard to his return. As time went on, Pastor Russell was singled out as the overall or general steward to dispense the truth.

Luke 12:38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

“Blessed are those servants” who eagerly watch. Jesus’ servants were to watch not just for his initial return in 1874, but they are to *keep watching* for prophetic unfoldings right down to the end of the Gospel Age.

“If he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch” suggests that there are *mathematical watches*, as in the “Prophetic Time Parallels” chart on page 288 of *The Keys of Revelation*, which aligns the three watches with other end-of-age types. Those in the proper attitude keep watching and are blessed accordingly. An attitude of eagerness and anticipation is needed in order to make progress and receive understanding.

Luke 12:39 And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

This verse pertains to the invisible rapture of the feet members. Jesus (the “thief”) is coming to take the Lord’s jewels, and subsequently he will break into the “house” (the personal headquarters) of the “goodman” (Satan). If Satan could, he would frustrate God’s plans, but he does not know the date. The suggestion is that the “third watch” will be the time of the rapture and breaking into Satan’s house. During the fourth watch, the world will have its experience of trouble ending with the sun rising at 6 a.m. In the first watch, Jesus came to feed his servants.

Luke 12:40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

The invisible spiritual rapture, when Jesus comes to take the Bride home for the wedding, will take place “at an hour when ye think not.”

Luke 12:41 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

Verse 1 of this chapter said a crowd was gathered around. Then in verse 22, Jesus began to direct his remarks to the disciples. In the middle of these remarks, Peter interjected this irrelevant question: “Lord, are you speaking this parable just to us or to all?” (Peter was probably a little confused about the meaning of Jesus’ words to the disciples. Later, when he got the Holy Spirit, he understood.) Jesus ignored Peter and continued on with the same discussion but gave it a little different thrust.

Luke 12:42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?

Luke 12:43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Luke 12:44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

Notice the contrast between “servants” (plural) in verses 37 and 38—a *pluralistic* blessing—and “servant” (singular) here—a *singular* blessing. Verses 42-44 refer to an *individual*, not a class.

The “faithful and wise” one was not a dictatorial ruler but a general steward. The fact that the “lord” made the steward “ruler over all that he hath” does not mean the Pastor had 100 percent of the truth and light on *all* subjects. The thought is that he had a *general stewardship* over the household of faith as the most prominent dispenser of meat in due season *for that*

period of the Harvest. He gave the “portion” of meat due in *that season*.

Many truths he brought forth were “new” in that they had not been spoken on since the apostles’ day. Bro. Russell was “faithful and wise,” but he was not an apostle. Verses 42-44 indicate his ministry would have the Lord’s blessing in a particular way that the ministries of contemporary servants did not have. In other words, the Pastor was on a higher level.

The mention in verse 38 of the possibility of Jesus’ coming in the second or third watch indicates that there would be false expectations of his return in the first and second watches and that he would come in the third watch to take the feet members. The completion of the Church was anticipated on definite dates. The *parousia* and the future invisible spiritual rapture are contrasted in verses 37-44 as follows:

Verse 37: *parousia*
Verse 39: binding of Satan

Verses 38 and 40: rapture
Verses 42-44: *parousia*

Jesus said he would make the faithful and wise servant a steward (not a literal ruler) “over all that he hath” (“over all his goods”—Matt. 24:47). Some have erroneously felt that if we question anything, we have a wrong heart attitude, but the *Volumes* are *studies*, which means *participation, questions, and analyzing* what is presented. The important thing is to recognize the studies as being a blessing. Pastor Russell used simple questions, on fundamentals only, as criteria for those who would be elders. Have the *Volumes* been a blessing? We should grant one another a degree of flexibility and *liberty of reasoning* on the Scriptures.

The test has been along two lines or extremes: (1) On the one hand, some, in disappointment over the lack of fulfillment of certain events at a particular date, have discarded present truth altogether and gone elsewhere, usually back into the world. Our attitude in approaching the *Volumes* should be to “prove all things” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21). If we are about to discard a doctrine, we should stop and ask: What would giving up this doctrine lead to? Would the consequences be dangerous? (2) On the other hand, some have, in essence, worshipped the man Pastor Russell by giving his words an infallible thrust.

The word “cometh” in verse 43 refers to the *parousia*. For 3 1/2 years, the Pastor and others earnestly searched the Scriptures. These mature Christians recognized that young Russell had greater understanding and truths, so in humility, they made him the study leader.

Back to verse 41. Why was Peter’s irrelevant question even included in Holy Writ? The inclusion was providential. Although Jesus ignored the question, it causes the reader to interrupt his train of thought just long enough to make the distinction between “servant” (singular) and “servants” (plural) and between the *parousia* and the rapture.

The Rapture

The feet members will be caught away at the end of the age to meet the Lord in the air. This event will be an *invisible spiritual* catching away, for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 15:50). The corpse will remain, but the spirit, or life, will be caught away.

An important aspect of the rapture is that it will be collective. The sleeping saints were raised in 1878. Since then—that is, between 1878 and the future rapture—individuals who have made their calling and election sure have been caught away one by one as they have died. But at the end of the age, the remaining feet members will go in a company, collectively, at the same time, from wherever they are throughout the earth. “Then we which are alive *and remain* shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:17). The Elijah class will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Luke 12:45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

Luke 12:46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

Q: Is the “coming” of verse 46 the rapture or the *parousia*? This verse has been given a past fulfillment with Judge Rutherford, but couldn’t it also have a future application?

A: The Pastor, the “wise” servant who *remained* “faithful,” used the “evil servant” texts in Luke 12:45-48 and Matthew 24:48-51 as a warning to himself lest he get high-minded or too possessive of the truth. Both accounts imply a fulfillment of the “evil servant.” However, Luke 12:47,48 is a little broader, suggesting more than one evil servant and punishments differing in degree according to willfulness, while Matthew shows only one evil servant.

Q: If “the lord of that servant will *come* in a day when he looketh not for him,” wouldn’t there have to be an evil servant *yet future* pertaining to the *rapture*? Judge Rutherford was on the scene *after* the *parousia* began, but he died *before* the rapture, so isn’t there yet a future fulfillment?

A: Yes, the Luke account has a double application. Luke draws a practical principle, suggesting there can be more than one unfaithful (evil) servant, whereas Matthew zeroes in on a particular individual. In other words, a *teacher* who is really *promoting* this wrong thought could go into Second Death, but those who accept the teaching can come to their senses and have certain experiences at the end of the age and end up in the Great Company.

In St. Louis, Judge Rutherford got brethren to make vows: “Let us all raise our hands and make a vow this day to never read any other literature than that which is published by the Society.” The vow was completely out of order—in fact, it was a *snare*—but he was a persuasive speaker. We should read only that which is beneficial, and if the literature from a particular source starts to become harmful, we should stop reading it. We must beware of things like this vow, even when done on a minor scale, so that we will not raise our hands on an emotional basis. Each of us should maintain a measure of reserve regarding what we hear or are taught. The admonition is to search the Scriptures and *accept only that which we can prove*.

Q: If we make a foolish vow, do we have to keep it?

A: That depends on the vow—we have to measure everything.

Q: For example, would the vow put forth by Judge Rutherford for the consecrated not to read any literature except that which came from the Society have to be kept?

A: The Scriptures say that when we vow a vow unto the Lord, we must not be slack to perform it. However, there are several factors to consider. For instance, if a nun made a vow to the Roman Catholic Church, thinking it was to Jesus, and then subsequently got her eyes opened in regard to the truth and real consecration, she could break the vow. Martin Luther had that struggle. The point is that under such a circumstance, one could keep his vow *to the Lord* and yet leave the institution. Only his vow to the institution would be broken.

A vow is important. Therefore, before a vow is taken, it should be carefully and prayerfully considered.

Q: Back to the vow under Judge Rutherford. If one made such a vow, would he be obliged to keep it?

A: Breaking the vow would be the lesser of two evils.

Q: Also, if the vow was made to the Judge rather than to the Lord, wouldn't that make a difference?

A: Yes. The point is that to get the prize of the high calling, we have to run the race with a little thinking. Mistakes regarding vows can make us fall into the Great Company—or lower if the mistake is more serious. We are judged on our decisions. Beware of statements containing “never” or “always.” Do not make an unwise vow out of emotion. However, it does make a difference whether a vow is made before or after consecration. Jephthah made a rash vow and had to keep it (Judges 11:30-40). The principle enunciated in verse 48 applies to vows. “He that knew not [he that made an unwise, rash vow], and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.” The individual would get stripes but not as many as the one who knew better.

Luke 12:47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

Luke 12:48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Principle: The servant who *knows better* but does wrong will incur much greater punishment (“many stripes”) than the one who *does not know* and misdirects others in regard to watching prophecy. The latter is beaten with a “few stripes.” These two verses show the importance of knowledge. When one sins against *light*, the sin is proportionate to the *degree* of light possessed. However, other Scriptures show that a *willingly ignorant* condition is not approved of the Lord either, for the greater the light and the *faithfulness to that light*, the greater the reward. Responsibilities increase with light, but so does the honor if faithful, for the tests are more severe. Such individuals are especially a target of the Adversary.

Thus the Luke account instructs us in regard to the proper attitude. “Stripes” occur on this side of the veil, that is, in the present life. The teaching element incurs greater responsibility—and one does not have to be an elder to teach. In many classes, sisters teach by their comments.

Our consecrated life is composed of a *series of acts*, an *accumulated attitude*. Which one of us has not sinned since consecration—and even with a certain degree of knowledge? We do not know how the Lord views these individual acts or how He will view our life as a whole in the final analysis, so we should not be overconfident of making the Little Flock. The longer we are consecrated, the less we should be convicted of being most pleasing to the Lord. We should always have a degree of nervousness that we might have done something better, and yet the Apostle Paul said, “I judge [condemn] not mine own self [into another class]” (1 Cor. 4:3).

Luke 12:49 I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

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

Luke 12:51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

Luke 12:52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

Luke 12:53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

These verses are strong but enlightening. To follow the policy of peace at any price is wrong. Jesus' words "Blessed are the peacemakers" apply only if principle is not violated (Matt. 5:9). Some think we should keep quiet with regard to certain doctrines, prophecies, etc., because they are divisive, but they are divisive only when harped on repeatedly. If one who has another doctrine is sincere, we should not press him continually, for he has to be persuaded in his own mind. The hope is that in time, he will come to see the truth. In other words, we should not force the issue.

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division." Jesus was saying, "I have come to cause *division*, not peace, over the *truth*." Truth principles are not to be compromised. By nature, we should be peaceable, but if truth is violated, we must speak out.

"I am come to send fire [general trouble] on the earth [with regard to truth]." For example, family divisions occur: father against son, daughter against mother, etc. Such divisions are rewarded *if they are for the truth*. To advance, one must sometimes come out from a relationship.

When Jesus said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" he was referring to his death. In other words, he had to be faithful unto *death*. In order to please the Father, Jesus experienced division and "fire."

Notice that verse 53 does not say that husband shall be divided against wife or vice versa, although of course this can happen. The reason for not mentioning this particular division was that Jesus *did not want to encourage* a division between husband and wife.

Luke 12:54 And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

Luke 12:55 And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

Luke 12:56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

Luke 12:57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

Verses 54-57 were addressed to the people, the Israelites. Why did Jesus call them "hypocrites"? What is the "time" that they did not discern? Jesus was referring to his presence at the First Advent—the "time" of their "visitation" (Luke 19:44). Messiah was present among them, but they did not recognize him, *even though they were professedly God's people*. The same principle applies today to nominal Christians, to those professing to be God's people, who do not recognize Jesus' Second Presence and conditions here at the end of the age. The people were (and are) not reasoning properly. Those professedly the Lord's should be aware of the signs of the times.

"Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" In other words, "If you could judge

what is right, you would recognize me as Messiah.” These people made an effort to come to hear Jesus, but *why* did they come? Mere curiosity? To see if he was the Messiah? If for the latter reason, why couldn't they judge the matter rightly? Jesus said elsewhere, “If you find it difficult to accept me, at least discern my works. My many miracles should convince you and be a sign.” It was said of him, “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). Thus even his words would have convinced them if their hearts had been right. The proofs were there if they had only reasoned properly. Therefore, curiosity was the overwhelming motive.

Jesus contradicted much of what the religious leaders were saying, so the people heard two opposing lines of thought and should have been able to recognize him. The religious leaders taught *man's* thoughts rather than the Word of God.

Another barrier to the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah could have been the sacrifice involved in being a disciple—what one must give up. Knowledge brings responsibility, and sometimes that causes a mental block.

Luke 12:58 When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

Luke 12:59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.

In this context, “thine adversary” is the one in the right; that is, he is the victim. Two people are going to the magistrate to have a dispute settled. The guilty one is to agree with the innocent “adversary” he has wronged. Matthew 5:23,24 says, “If ... thy brother hath aught against thee; ... first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Of course if the situation were reversed, it would be wrong to agree, for we should not support or acquiesce to a wrong principle. Matthew 18:15 treats the opposite situation: “If thy brother shall trespass *against thee*.”

Comment: There is the principle here that the “very last mite” has to be paid. For any of the consecrated in the Gospel Age who get life, the scales of justice have to be balanced by the end of their walk in the flesh.

Reply: If the wrong is not requited, justice at least demands that there be a balancing to the last mite, as it were. (A “mite” is the smallest coinage, even smaller than the farthing. The widow cast her two mites into the treasury—Mark 12:42.) God watches us carefully to see what our infractions are. Either injustices have to be paid, or forgiveness has to be extracted in a way that the injured one finds satisfactory.

God is the “judge” in the final analysis. Jesus was using a homey illustration that an ordinary person could understand. He was showing the reasonableness of an “out-of-court settlement.” The “officer” is Satan or any means the Lord uses to bring the individual to his senses. “Prison” is the trial or the circumstances used to wake up the erring one.

Lesson for the consecrated: If we should have to go with a brother we had wronged to the ecclesia for a class trial, the advice is to give diligence that we might be delivered from him lest the ecclesia hail us to God—to His judgment—and He deliver us to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

Luke 13:1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

The Jews were sacrificing in harmony with the Law (perhaps on one of their feast days) when

Pilate ordered his soldiers to go into the Temple precincts and massacre a number of Galileans. As a result, the blood of the Galileans “mingled with their sacrifices.”

The Jews were restless at this period of time, wanting to be free of Roman bondage. Historically, Pilate was ruthless in putting down insurrections, and the Galileans had a reputation for being unruly and given to insurrection. Therefore, when they went down to Jerusalem as a group, Pilate slew them randomly as a lesson to the nation. (The wrong had been done by others, but Pilate selected the Galileans to teach a lesson.)

Verses 1-5 express a deep fundamental principle.

Luke 13:2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

Jesus’ question implies that many things on this earth happen randomly and not because someone has especially sinned. (Only with the consecrated, generally speaking, are trials screened.) Jesus was saying that the slaughter of the Galileans was happenstance—as are tornadoes, earthquakes, and other acts of nature, for the most part. Only occasionally is there a law of retribution in nature.

A prevailing theory among some is that calamities occur because the individual did something wrong. Consider Job. As calamities came on him, his “friends” felt he must have sinned, but that was not the case. Some religious leaders teach that business prosperity shows God’s favor, but prosperity is not a true indicator. Health, power, and money are not necessarily the reward of either good or bad behavior—it depends on the circumstance. Some Bibles have as a caption at the top of the page “Calamities No Sure Sign of Sin.” Paul reasoned, “I have suffered more than any of you and I am an apostle.”

Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Luke 13:4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

The Jews slaughtered under Pilate’s order were worshipping in the Temple. The ones killed by the tower of Siloam just *happened* to be there. Although it is true that all are sinners, these individuals were relatively innocent. Their deaths did not occur because of some wrong they had particularly done.

Luke 13:5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Jesus made this statement twice (verses 3 and 5), that is, *after* the mention of each incident. In giving this deep principle, he was trying to show that those listening—and particularly the critical scribes and Pharisees—needed to correct their characters if they would get life. Jesus was referring to the resurrection of the just and the unjust in the Kingdom (Acts 24:15). The scribes and Pharisees had a wrong attitude and did not rightly judge. Therefore, if they maintain their critical attitude when they are resuscitated from the grave in the future and do not convert, they will go into Second Death.

Luke 13:6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

Luke 13:7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

Luke 13:8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

Luke 13:9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

Luke 13:10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

Verses 6-10 give the Parable of the Fig Tree, the “fig tree” being Israel. After three years, a “certain man” (God) looked for fruit on the fig tree and found none. He was going to cut it down, but the “dresser of the vineyard” (Jesus) said, “Let the fig tree live this year. Then if it bears no fruit, cut it down.” The implication was that about three years of Jesus’ ministry had expired and only six months were left. Time was running out for Israel to bear fruit, and God knew that the nation would not accept Jesus.

The fig tree was cut down (*rejected*) in God’s sight in AD 33, but *outwardly* it was not cut down until AD 69-70. The same principle applies to the closing of the door. The door will be closed from God’s standpoint first. Next, the ones who die and enter in will know the door is shut. Finally, events down here will reveal to the rest of the consecrated, still in the flesh, that the door is shut. And the same principle applies to mystic Babylon. First came the rejection from *favor* in 1878, but the *actual fall* is still future.

Luke 13:11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

Luke 13:12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

Luke 13:13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

Luke 13:14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

Luke 13:15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

Luke 13:16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

Luke 13:17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

A woman had such a severe infirmity for 18 years that she could not lift herself up. Being moved at the sight of her, Jesus called her to him. Notice that she had a “*spirit* of infirmity.” Acts 16:16 tells of a certain damsel who was possessed with a “*spirit* of divination.” The fallen angels were involved in both cases. Sometimes they cause illness for fun; they are *sadistic*, getting delight from the suffering of others. And that is why Jesus called the woman to him—he realized she was a victim of the fallen angels’ sadistic attitude.

Jesus loosed the woman from her infirmity. He laid his hands on her, and *immediately* she stood erect and glorified God. What a sight to behold! But the next reaction was *alarming!* The ruler of the synagogue cried out with *indignation*: “There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.” What an example of *depraved*

humanity! The ruler *witnessed* the power of God performing the miracle and yet reacted thus, inferring that if the woman had come to the synagogue on one of the six workdays, she might have been healed. No wonder Jesus said, “Thou hypocrite!” He then asked, “Doesn’t each one of you, on the sabbath, loose his thirsty ox or ass from its stall and lead the animal to water?” It would be a good sign if the ruler of the synagogue was ashamed of his words.

Jesus asked the ruler, “Ought not this woman, ... whom *Satan* hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?” Not all infirmities are of the Adversary, but this particular one was. The analogy of the ox being loosed from his stall to get water was specially chosen because the woman was loosed from Satan’s clutches to the spiritual water of refreshment and healing.

Luke 13:18 Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

Luke 13:19 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

Luke 13:20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

Luke 13:21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Jesus likened the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed and to leaven. Both are unfavorable. The “fowls” that lodged in the mustard tree included unclean birds of prey plus other kinds of birds; that is, the nominal Church includes both the consecrated and the unconsecrated (Rev. 18:2). And leaven has a *far-reaching* effect. A *little* placed in three loaves leavens the *whole*. The three loaves are faith, hope, and love—major doctrines that have been perverted, corrupted, and distorted. In these two parables, Jesus was showing that there would be a perversion of the *nominal* “kingdom of God.” Just as the tiniest seed grows into a huge tree, so a *little* seed grew up into a *great* system. In fact, more nations became converted to Catholicism than to any Caesar.

Luke 13:22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

Luke 13:23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

Luke 13:24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

The two parables tie in with these subsequent verses. The nominal Church will *seem* to be very large, but in the final analysis, *few* will get life as a result of the Gospel Age. The disciples got the point, and one asked, “Lord, are there *few* that be saved?” The answer was yes in regard to the high calling—and even in regard to the Great Company compared to the vast majority of tares in the nominal Church. The disciples realized the mustard seed and the leaven were unfavorable.

Jesus was en route to Jerusalem when this question was asked. He replied, “Strive [*agonize*] to enter in at the strait [*narrow*] gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Athletes who excel *agonize* in their sport because they push themselves to the *very limit*. The “many” who will not be able to enter in are the majority. This is especially true in principle in the beginning when the Adversary tries to discourage consecration and entering

the race for the prize of the high calling.

Verses 24-30 are a reminder of the Wise and Foolish Virgins Parable. Jesus did not answer the question (verse 23) directly but gave a parable, implying that few would be saved. If the question and parable are considered from the standpoint of the feet members and the end of the Church's course, the entering in would pertain to the marriage. There is a hard test in the beginning of our consecrated walk as well as toward the end. For example, Abraham had to leave his home country in the beginning, and later he had a severe test with Isaac.

An agonizing attitude is necessary to get through the narrow gate or aperture and thus make our calling and election sure. Jesus was referring to getting the prize of the high calling, to the marriage—to glory, honor, and immortality. *The agonizing attitude must be maintained and preserved.*

Luke 13:25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

Like the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, verse 25 is referring to the closing of the dispensational door at the end of the age. When the door is shut, many will want to enter in but will not be able to. Compare Matthew 25:11. Those who are refused entrance will not be recognized as Little Flock.

Luke 13:26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

After the door to the high calling is closed, those left behind will ask, "Have we not eaten and drunk in your presence [*parousia*], and have you not taught in our streets?" This parable has a personal application as well as a dispensational twist. The word "presence" (*parousia*) is significant in regard to the Harvest period.

Luke 13:27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

Jesus answered, "I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity [lawlessness]." Why did Jesus use the thought of "lawlessness"? Many set their own standards for the high calling, with a too generous allowance for making their calling and election sure. Those who are liberally minded lower the standard, whereas Jesus said to "agonize"—to put all our effort into making the grade in this *marathon* race. We must mentally gear for a *long* struggle. "Lawlessness" means not according to God's Word. The Master was saying (prophetically) to the Great Company, "The reason you were not successful is that you did not follow the rules of the race."

Matthew 7:21-23 (part of the Sermon on the Mount) is similar but, in addition, shows that *works* are stressed by the workers of lawlessness. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." No matter how great the works, we will not enter in unless we follow the rules. Luke shows that the Great Company will ask, "Haven't we sat obediently and zealously while you personally instructed us?" In other words, even if we zealously study and try to learn the truth, we will not be striving lawfully *if self enters in*. *It is imperative that we understand principles*. "If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. 2:5). Lesson: Obey

the rules of the race!

Luke 13:28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

One application is the Great Company, but there are other applications. For example, at the beginning of the age, Jews were trying to gain the prize of the high calling, but many failed because they mixed Judaism with Christianity. Faith justifies us (not works), but faith produces works. In addition, there is a personal application.

Tares will be thrust out of the Kingdom of God, and so will the Great Company. In the beginning of the age, the scribes and Pharisees, who prefigured nominal Christianity, were thrust out; they will not be in the Kingdom arrangement.

The Great Company will be lower in rank than the Ancient Worthies. Even during the Kingdom, when the Great Company has spirit nature, they will be lower. Hence the Great Company are “thrust out” in regard to the Kingdom proper. They are merely messengers, a rescued class, whereas the Ancient Worthies will be officials in the Kingdom, princes in all the earth, having a semi-administrative role. There will be a wide difference between the Ancient Worthies and the Little Flock, and a wide gulf between the Ancient Worthies and the Great Company in the final analysis.

Luke 13:29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

Mankind will have to go up to Jerusalem from all directions.

Luke 13:30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

The concept of the last being first and the first being last has several applications:

1. Jews had the first opportunity and lost it.
2. The tares (leaders) of Christendom are now first in honor, but they will be last in the Kingdom. The shame of the false leaders will continue throughout the Millennium.
3. The Little Flock is now last but shall be first.

However, the principle pertains primarily to attaining the Little Flock and can be stated thus: “The least shall be greatest, and the greatest shall be least.” The Little Flock—those who agonize to enter in and who enter lawfully by *obeying* God’s Word—will become the greatest. Those who enter do the will of the *Father*.

Luke 13:31 The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

The same day some of the Pharisees told Jesus to turn around and go away from the direction of Jerusalem. “Reverse your tracks. You are walking into a death trap.” This was true, but Jesus saw that Herod, the “fox,” was in back of the advice. Not wanting to have to make certain decisions, Herod advised Jesus not to come. If Jesus listened, Herod would be spared embarrassment. Also, the death of John the Baptist may have been on his conscience. Knowing that the chief priests wanted to murder Jesus, Herod realized they would seek his assistance.

Luke 13:32 And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

Jesus said in effect, “Behold, I must *work* today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected [completed].” Jesus was referring to The Christ, Head and body. In three antitypical days, The Christ would be complete. The Church has worked on Jesus’ behalf, as his representatives, down through the Gospel Age. Stated another way, Jesus has worked in and through the Church.

Luke 13:33 Nevertheless I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

Notice, Jesus now said, “I must *walk* today, and tomorrow, and the day following.” Verse 32 applies to The Christ, and verse 33 applies to Jesus personally. Jesus had certain objectives to accomplish and nothing would stop him, even though he was going into a death trap, as warned by Herod. *Jerusalem* was where he had to die. He was going there because he had to be available when the proper time came.

Luke 13:34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

Jesus was addressing the Pharisees.

Luke 13:35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Luke 14:1 And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.

Luke 14:2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

Luke 14:3 And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

Luke 14:4 And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go;

Luke 14:5 And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?

Luke 14:6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

Jesus embarrassed the lawyers and Pharisees by asking, “Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?” Considering this question to be a trap, they declined to answer. (Many will not buck orthodox thinking even in matters that pertain to truth.)

Jesus continued, “If one of your animals fell into a pit on the sabbath, wouldn’t you rescue it?” Again the lawyers and Pharisees refused to answer, even though they knew they would pull the animal out of the pit. Jesus was rubbing salt in the wound for their benefit. Hence a Christlike manner is not always gentle. Jesus spoke *strongly* to those who needed it, including his disciples (for example, he said to them, “O ye of little faith”).

Luke 14:7 And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

Luke 14:8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room;

lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

Luke 14:9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

Luke 14:10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

Luke 14:11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The “lowest room” would be the least honorable seating, or place, at a table. Jesus noticed that some walked in and chose the select places to sit. The wisest course was to sit at the lowest end of the table, for the host could always invite a person to a higher place. If the host did not issue such an invitation, so be it, but the embarrassment would be avoided of choosing a high place and then being asked to move so another could have the seat. Probably in this instance, someone wrongfully sat in the chief place, and the host had to ask him to move to give Jesus the spot. At any rate, Jesus used the hypothetical case of a wedding to point out a lesson.

“Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased [ultimately]; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted [eventually].” The reverse is true today. In the present life, aggressiveness gets ahead, but such actions and character will be a hindrance in the next age.

Luke 14:12 Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

Luke 14:13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

Luke 14:14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

The world usually invites selfishly and on the basis of like kind, issuing “elitist” invitations, as it were. “Birds of a feather flock together” is a common saying. Jesus was giving sound, practical advice for the world—but not for Christian fellowship. Christians should not have a mixture of fellowship with the world. If they do, they will not come off unscathed.

Luke 14:15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

Luke 14:16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

Luke 14:17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

Luke 14:18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

Luke 14:19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

Luke 14:20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

Luke 14:21 So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

Luke 14:22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

Luke 14:23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out unto the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

Luke 14:24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Now Jesus raised the conversation to a higher level. Out of all who heard him in the Pharisee's house, only one appreciated Jesus' words and said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Jesus immediately gave the Parable of the Great Supper, which is a reminder of the principle "many [shall] be called, but few chosen" (Matt. 20:16).

When bidden to enter the race for the high calling, one after another made excuses along temporal lines, so the master of the house told his servant to go out into the city streets and call the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. The "city" was the Jewish nation. When not enough Jews accepted, the master sent his servant into the highways and byways—that is, to Gentile lands—with the instruction "Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." "Compel" means to urge, to earnestly plead. None of those who were invited and refused will taste of Jesus' "supper." Only a few Jews responded, so the call went to Gentiles.

Luke 14:25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

Luke 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

Luke 14:29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

Luke 14:30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

Luke 14:31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

Luke 14:32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

Luke 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Jesus gave three prerequisites for discipleship, as follows:

1. **Love for the Lord has to be superior to love for family and self.** Our commitment has to

be definite so that even if a breach results, we will be loyal to the Lord and not submit should family wish us to go in an opposite direction. And we must love the Lord more than our own life. Stated another way, we must love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. “Hate” means to hate by comparison. Compare Matthew 10:37, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” Jesus is not calling those with average enthusiasm. He wants us to be *overcomers* based on *faith* in Christ’s power, protection, etc.

2. An individual must bear his own cross and follow after Jesus. In other words, each one has a particular problem when first coming into the truth as well as afterwards, and that problem must be borne patiently and faithfully. Jesus said to “come after me”; that is, “Follow my leading; walk as I walked.” We must walk in Jesus’ footsteps.

Two conditions are sometimes mentioned, of which the second is more advanced: (1) self-denial and (2) cross bearing. Self-denial, the negation of self, is necessary but not sufficient. There must also be cross bearing, following after Jesus. In other words, the Christian must do certain things. Many have the idea that the Christian just gives up something or does not do this or that, but the Bible has much instruction on *what to do*.

Jesus’ advice was to count the cost. One could look at this advice from a discouraging standpoint, but the intention was otherwise. Which one of us *in our own strength* would contemplate doing the Lord’s will? We have to exercise *faith*—something like Joshua and Caleb. Ten spies reported how big (like giants) the inhabitants of the land of Canaan were, whereas Joshua and Caleb trusted that the Lord would overrule. Thus two of the twelve spies gave an encouraging report. *Fear enlarges the difficulty*; it magnifies the problem. The Christian should be optimistic. If God says something can be done, *it can be done*, and we are not to weigh the situation from the standpoint of our own capability, even though the wording is somewhat like that here in Luke.

Jesus said that when contemplating building a tower, we should first sit down and consider the effort needed to construct it, for if we do not finish the tower, people will look at it and mock. The advice is not to rush into consecration without giving it consideration. Consecration is a marathon race. When we enter that race, we should realize it is a long haul—*unto death*. The race is not run in short spurts. Having some sense of the responsibility involved will carry us a long way. The evangelist who preaches Christ should be careful not to play on the emotions of individuals because emotions waver. We all have ups and downs. We should not be discouraged but should be realistic about what consecration entails. The Lord would not call one unless the individual could make his calling and election sure. Consecration is a *lifetime* commitment, and it is helpful to know in advance that consecration requires above-average effort. As shown by the illustration of the king having 10,000 men and the enemy 20,000—twice as many—the ones who excel in their consecration have the drive and the desire. They make the effort to supersede their normal capabilities. Lesson: Run to *win the race*, not to come in second or third. Exert the effort. Run as if there is only one crown. An attitude is being stressed here. If we have the desire, the Lord will prosper it.

Verses 32 and 33 are strong talk. Jesus was saying, “Do not compromise. Count the cost *first* so that when an enemy approaches, you will not compromise, putting peace ahead of purity.” “The wisdom that is from above is *first pure, then peaceable*” (James 3:17).

3. Jesus’ disciples must have the desire to forsake all that they have. We should examine ourselves and ask, “Am I really running the race with the hope of gaining the crown?” This question should be asked not only initially but repeatedly throughout our consecration. Two things can keep us from getting the crown: (1) dropping out of the race completely (a Second Death destiny) or (2) compromising (a Great Company destiny).

At the present time, the battle is chiefly within ourselves—conquering our own spirit. In times past, there were physical persecutions, and they will occur again in the future. We should gain inward victories now so that when outward persecution comes, we will zealously and enthusiastically wage an aggressive war against the evil.

If we do not have the right spirit, we are going to compromise and send out an “ambassage” for conciliation. In advance of consecration, we should ask, “Do I *really* want to do the Lord’s will?” We should search our own motives at the beginning, during the race, and at the end.

Luke 14:34 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

Luke 14:35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The purpose of salt is to season or flavor food. If salt loses its savor, it becomes worthless. Lesson: If truth and the zeal for truth are lost completely, the individual is worthless for that purpose—he cannot interest others in truth. Incidentally, Old Testament offerings were to include a pinch of salt, picturing *zeal*.

A Second Death class is shown here, a class who are good for nothing. Warning: Do not be lukewarm—the Lord does not want lukewarm Christians. He was saying in effect, “If you are lukewarm, you are not even a disciple.” Revelation 3:16 gives the principle: “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.” Then Jesus brought in the danger of Second Death as a watchdog; namely, salt that has lost its flavor “is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out.”

We are not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (Heb. 10:25,26). Paul was warning about the danger of Second Death, not to frighten us but to help us. Usually one does not suddenly go out of the truth; he glides out. In the Book of Hebrews, starting with chapter 2, Paul showed how one could slip little by little. Strong admonitions (barking) help to wake up the hearer.

“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” In other words, “If you have ears to hear, *hear this counsel!*” We will not even attain the Great Company unless we strive for the Little Flock. *This* is the age of testing, so to even get into the Great Company, we must *want* to serve the Lord in our hearts—and *do it!* Wishful thinking will not get us into the Great Company. *Effort* is required.

Luke 15:1 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

Luke 15:2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

In connection with Jesus’ *strong* lecture of chapter 14, the scribes and Pharisees missed the point and murmured, manifesting an evil heart condition. When sinners drew near, looking for counsel from Jesus and desiring cleansing, the scribes and Pharisees found fault. Because sinners wanted counsel, they said Jesus was a friend of sinners. The scribes and Pharisees *thought* they were without sin—they *thought* they did not need a physician.

Luke 15:3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

Luke 15:4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

Luke 15:5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

Luke 15:6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Jesus now began a series of parables to drive home the point of *lost and found*. The Parable of the Lost Sheep has several plateaus of meaning, two of which follow:

1. The number 100 signifies perfection. There was a time in God's universe when all sentient beings were in harmony with Him. Adam and Eve were created perfect and remained so for a little while, but when sin entered, one of the "sheep" (the human race) deflected. Jesus gave his life for the sheep.

2. Jesus' use of the term "lost sheep of the house of Israel" implies that some of the lost ones of Israel knew they were lost back there. It was better for them to realize their lost condition than to have a *false* confidence in their own righteousness.

A good shepherd is very much absorbed in caring for the sheep under his charge. He knows them all by name and hence realizes if one is lost. Moreover, a literal shepherd would probably tell his neighbors about finding a lost bleating sheep. He would bring it home on his shoulders with the legs pulled in on his chest.

There is joy in heaven over even one sinner who repents. The holy angels are intensely interested in what is happening down here, and they rejoice to see people trying to do God's will. It is humbling to think that when we made our consecration, the angels were aware of that commitment. (In the Kingdom, the Little Flock will likewise rejoice over those of mankind who consecrate.) Moreover, the holy angels are interested in the progress or decline of our consecration. And they want to understand prophecy. As prophecy unfolds down here, they gain understanding too. The first dispensation was under their control, but they could not rescue man from sin. Hence the interest of the holy angels is intensified as they see God's plan working out.

Principle: The shepherd's seeking the one lost sheep out of 100 shows that *quality* counts, not quantity or number. Another point: The 99 *thought* they were whole, just, and not in need of repentance (hence not "lost"). The class attracted to the truth are the poor in spirit.

Luke 15:8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

Luke 15:9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

Luke 15:10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Verses 8-10 are the Parable of the Lost Coin. A woman who had ten pieces of silver and lost one searched diligently for it. When she found the coin, she told friends and neighbors. In other words, the loss was felt and made known to others. In each instance, the angels knew of the

loss and then rejoiced when the one sheep and the one coin were found.

The strain of sympathy for others is a trait we must carry to eternity. And, correspondingly, if a brother goes into sin and truly repents, we should rejoice. Hebrews 12:1 tells us that “a cloud of witnesses,” the holy angels, are watching the consecrated. “Wherefore *seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses*, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”

The piece of lost silver is usually likened to the doctrine of restitution, but it is a little more than that. The lost coin is the doctrine or process of *restoring*, of restitution in the sense of *saving that which was lost*, rather than just a theoretical doctrine.

Luke 15:11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

Luke 15:12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

Verses 11-32 cover the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The father, who pictures God, had two sons, one of whom was the “prodigal son.”

In the *primary* application, the elder son represents the scribes and Pharisees; the younger son, publicans and sinners. There are two secondary applications: (1) The older son pictures the Jews, the nation of Israel, while the younger son portrays the Gentiles. (2) The elder son represents nominal spiritual Israel; the younger son, true spiritual Israel.

Luke 15:13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

With the younger son spending his living in riotousness, he aptly pictures the publicans and sinners at the First Advent. In contrast, the elder son, portraying the scribes and Pharisees, felt he had been faithful all along.

Publicans were Israelites who collected taxes for Rome, a foreign Gentile power. Their fraternization with an alien power had a pernicious influence on them. In this fraternization, not only did they collect tax money from their fellow Israelites, but many wrongfully collected more money than they should have. Beginning about 43 BC, Israel was under Rome, and Rome found it advantageous to hire Israelites to do their tax collecting. The publicans were paid a commission on taxes collected, but if they collected more than was expected by Rome, they kept the difference.

The elder brother’s attitude was that of self-righteousness. The scribes and Pharisees tried to live according to the letter of the Law, whereas the publicans did not, for the Law said they should not fraternize with foreigners. This was a powerful parable for the hearers.

The younger son took his inheritance to a “far country” (Rome); that is, he served Rome, an *alien* power. Even though the publicans stayed in Israel, they were “far” out of harmony with the Law. The Romans’ being especially in the Galilee region gave the Galileans a stench. Tiberias was the Roman resort center for the occupying army, so Jews who lived in that area sold goods to, and had commercial dealings with, the Romans.

When the Christian gives his all to the Lord at consecration, he becomes a steward of the Lord’s goods. Israel, as a nation, was consecrated to follow Jehovah. In proportion to their obedience, they would prosper, but they misused the stewardship. Hence going to “a far country” was separation from God through business dealings with a foreign power.

Luke 15:14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

Luke 15:15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

The fraternization of some Israelites with Rome progressed to the point where they became tax collectors. Galilee was called “Galilee of the Gentiles” or “Galilee of the nations.”

When a great famine arose, the prodigal son was brought to such an extremity that he “joined himself to a citizen” of the foreign power. The wording indicates more than just going into an alien territory; it suggests a commercial and possibly a marital relationship. The “citizen” would be one of the several Roman tetrarchs in charge of Israel at that time. The “swine” are a reference to the Gentiles, who ate pork, an unclean and forbidden meat for the Jews.

Luke 15:16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

This verse evokes our sympathy. In wasting his living and joining himself to a Gentile power, the younger son was brought to such poverty that he would have eaten husks fed to swine—but no one would give him any husks. He was starving. (Husks are the coverings, or pods, of ears of corn.)

Progression is shown. The younger son went off and affiliated with Rome and had a good time. Then he saw the need to join himself to a citizen for employment. But the pay kept decreasing until he was in dire straits and starving. Finally, when he was feeding husks to the swine but could not partake himself, he began to wake up to his situation.

The parable fits the situation in Israel, but there are moral overtones as well, for the publican was also considered a sinner. He was in disesteem for being a tax collector and then looked down upon as a sinner. Lesson: The true Christian can be looked down upon as a cultist, as one not fit for recognition by orthodoxy. Moreover, the “husks” the world has to offer do not satisfy the spiritual hunger of the Christian. Stated another way, the Christian starves in the world.

Jesus was criticized by the scribes and Pharisees for preaching to publicans and sinners, but the distinction is that *they went to him*; that is, *he did not go down to their level and fraternize in a sinful environment*. Publicans and sinners were attracted to Jesus’ message, which contained hope that the scribes and Pharisees could not offer. Luke 18:11-14 shows the self-righteous attitudes of the scribes and Pharisees.

Luke 15:17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

The prodigal son came to his senses. He was a *son*, but he observed that even his father’s *servants* were better off than he. The son was now willing to return to his father as a *servant*.

Luke 15:18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

Luke 15:19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

Luke 15:20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

Luke 15:21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

The prodigal son repented: "I have sinned against heaven and my father." Notice that he first recognized his situation, for if he returned home *without* these sentiments, there would not be proper repentance. *Confession* of the sin was necessary. The counterpart in the Gospel Age is for one to recognize that he is a sinner in a deplorable state. Then comes the desire to find God and have a relationship with Him.

Luke 15:1 through 17:4—more than two chapters—is a lesson on repentance. It is important to note the conditions of repentance that must precede forgiveness. *Before* the father ran to meet the prodigal son, the son confessed his sin privately. Then, after his father embraced him, he told his father he was not worthy to be called a son. But in the higher sense, God knows if a party is truly repentant. Thus the "father" ran and embraced the prodigal son, *knowing his contrition*. Remorse and repentance *must precede* forgiveness. The parable shows the need for repentance and confession of wrongdoing. The principle "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" applies to one with a contrite heart (James 4:8).

Comment: From the platform, it has been stated that the father could not know the son had repented when he saw him afar off. Therefore, when we welcome back the one who has sinned, we do not have to see repentance first. However, that reasoning is erroneous. We must think of the father as the Heavenly Father, who would know that the son had repented. Otherwise, there would be no point in having the prodigal son express repentant sentiments *before* returning home.

Reply: To show God knows the heart condition, we are made aware that the prodigal son repented and determined to return to his father as a servant, acknowledging his sins, *before the actual return*. In other words, the son's sorrow and repentance were very obvious.

Let us consider the parable from the literal standpoint, from the earthly level. Obviously, the father missed the son and desired him back. A literal father would not know of the son's repentant thoughts, but even from a great distance, he would see the change in his son, who formerly was proud, rebellious, and confident. The repentant attitude would show in his stooped shoulders, posture, and walk. His clothing would be ragged, and he would be thin. Thus the father could see that the son was broken in spirit. Verse 18 is inserted to show us that God looks for repentance *first*.

Another point. We are supposed to feed *an enemy* if we see him in real want. Because of his extreme need, we are to do this even if he has not repented. We would feed him because it is our duty to so treat a member of the human race, but we would not fraternize with him.

We should not be more noble than this parable. A person's return must be accompanied by repentance, by a truly broken spirit where he cannot look us in the eye or is in tears. Then the attitude is self-evident without words. To come back without signs of remorse is not repentance but might be just prudence or worldly wisdom; that is, the individual reasons, "If I cannot get something one place, I will just go somewhere else." The prodigal son came to his senses in the true sense—not only in regard to his pitiful physical condition but also as a son. That was much more than just wanting clothing and food.

Jesus came as the Good Physician to heal those who felt their need of being cured. He was not seeking the self-satisfied. Publicans may have been so desperate for money that they agreed to

be tax collectors for Rome. Tax collecting was seasonal, so they found themselves not only unemployed during part of the year but also in alien surroundings and wanting reinstatement to favor, even if they went to a lower level.

Comment: It is like the attitude of many who, prior to consecration, do not feel worthy of being called to such a high hope. But the Father encourages them little by little.

Reply: Yes, and here the father gave encouragement by running to the son, and kissing and embracing him.

Luke 15:22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

Luke 15:23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

The father told the servants to bring forth for the prodigal son the best robe, a ring, shoes, and a fatted calf to be killed and eaten. The symbolisms are significant. The “best robe” would be the robe of Christ’s righteousness. The ring symbolizes the covenant of consecration, and putting on the ring reestablishes the relationship. The shoes provide protection for the feet from contact with the earth; hence they symbolize the provision for asking forgiveness for shortcomings in our daily walk. The shoes can also picture a new standing in Christ Jesus. Just as each Tabernacle board had two tenons that fit into two silver sockets, representing the Old and New Testament, so the two shoes represent the Christian’s walk according to the Old and New Testament. The fatted calf symbolizes spiritual food, especially meat in due season—the rich supply of dispensational truth contrasted with the husks of the world, the want, and the famine. During the Harvest at the end of the age, *meat* is served from God through Jesus.

Luke 15:24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Formerly dead, the younger son was now alive; formerly lost, he was now found. The servants’ *merriness* shows they had the proper spirit, the spirit of the father. This verse reflects back to verses 6 and 10, which said there is *joy* in heaven among the holy angels when a sinner repents.

Luke 15:25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.

Luke 15:26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

Luke 15:27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

The older son had been working in the field, but as he drew near the house, he heard music and dancing. When he asked the meaning, a servant said that the younger son had come home and their father had killed the fatted calf in celebration.

Luke 15:28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

The older son, or brother, was angry—and so were the scribes and Pharisees. They resented the fact that Jesus’ message was being heard and appreciated by publicans and sinners.

Luke 15:29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither

transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

Luke 15:30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

Luke 15:31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

Luke 15:32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

All that the Heavenly Father had was available to the scribes and Pharisees *if they manifested the right heart condition*. They had the Law and the prophets, and they were teachers of the Law—everything was at their fingertips—but they failed because of self-righteousness. They adhered to the letter of the Law but not its spirit. The thought is, “All that I have is thine, too, if you will submit and come into the right heart condition.”

Comment: In the Kingdom, this parable will be meaningful to the present religious leadership, as well as to the scribes and Pharisees who were thrust out. Today some nominal Christians are angry at the thought of the world having an opportunity in the Kingdom, calling it a “second chance.” They think they should have the only reward for what they are giving up now, whereas the right attitude is to sacrifice joyfully.

Of course the parable does not mean that a true Christian can go into the world, live in riotous excess and immorality, and then be forgiven and *fully* restored. All the parables in this series (Luke 15:1 through 17:4) have to be studied to understand what the conditions of forgiveness really are.

The younger son can also picture nominal Christians who come to their senses, consecrate, come into present truth, and are thus rewarded. The self-righteous older son never got the fatted calf (dispensational truth) because he did not have the right attitude—but the truth was available, nevertheless. Moreover, he resented the merriment and fuss over the returned prodigal son.

Comment: Those in Babylon who are Spirit-begotten get two opportunities to come out. *If they respond*, the joys of present truth and closer fellowship with the Father are theirs.

Reply: Yes, God calls His people to come out of Babylon, but many do not heed that call and thus receive the plagues. All of the Lord’s people in the church systems hear the call at some time.

The greater proportion of the disciples were individuals of humble backgrounds, and many were from the Galilee area. They were not the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem (although some of the Pharisees did accept Jesus).

The prodigal son was restored to a former condition; that is, publicans and sinners, by receiving John’s baptism, were restored to typical favor under Moses’ Law. This made them amenable to (and thus more likely to accept) Jesus as Messiah.

Luke 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

The Parable of the Unjust Steward, which was addressed to the disciples, covers verses 1-13. At the First Advent, the “rich man” (God) accused the “steward” (the scribes and Pharisees) of

wasting His goods. As stewards, they had the Law and the prophets as well as positions of honor. The application of “steward” today would be the nominal Church leaders. In principle, the unjust steward can also apply to unfaithful Christians—and even to leaders in the present-truth movement, for they are in a responsible position.

Luke 16:2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

The rich man called the steward to give an account of his stewardship, saying he could no longer be steward. In other words, “If what I hear is true, you are not worthy to remain as my steward.” The fact that the steward was about to lose his stewardship puts the setting of the parable in the Harvest of both the Jewish and the Gospel ages.

Luke 16:3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

Luke 16:4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

The steward was worried: “What shall I do now that God is taking away my stewardship? I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.” The scribes and Pharisees were neither farmers nor businessmen, just as the clergy today are generally not trained for other work. With their titles (Reverend, Rabbi, etc.), menial work would require humility. The steward wanted the debtors to think well of him when he was put out of office.

Luke 16:5 So he called every one of his lord’s debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

The steward was shrewd. Having a little time before he was deposed, he called all of the rich man’s debtors and asked how much each man owed.

Luke 16:6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

Luke 16:7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

The unjust steward now tried to make the best out of the situation. Using wise psychology, he devised a way to get as much return for the rich man as each debtor could pay. The first debtor owed 100 measures of oil, so the steward said, “Sit down *quickly* and write [or pay] me 50 measures”—a 50 percent reduction. Not only did he have the debtor do the writing, but he implied that if the debtor did not pay quickly, then the next steward might require the full 100 measures. The second debtor also owed 100 measures—100 measures of wheat. This time the steward said, “Take your bill and write 80”—a 20 percent reduction.

The point is that each debtor had to pay *according to his ability*. The same is true with us. The robe of Christ’s righteousness makes up for our deficiencies. Some need more covering than others. Each Christian is to do his best. Then God (through Jesus) makes up the difference.

Luke 16:8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

The rich man *commended* the steward for doing wisely, “for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” The scribes and Pharisees had more “light”

than ordinary Jews who did not have access to the Old Testament scrolls (the Law).

As a class, the scribes and Pharisees did not take this constructive advice. Jesus offered a solution, but they ignored it. Had they listened, they would have been more merciful, but instead they continued to bind the people with traditions and burdens.

The same advice applies to leaders in the nominal system. When confronted with present truth, the clergy realize they will lose their positions if they accept it or deal kindly with its exponents.

Luke 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

Remember, Jesus was addressing his *disciples* when he gave this parable. He said to them, “Make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness so that, when you fail, they may receive [take] you into everlasting habitations.” One lesson: We are to learn how to use the temporal things of this life so that, when we die, we will have laid up treasures in heaven and be taken into the heavenly reward. “Mammon” would be this world’s goods, earthly riches. Our stewardship *now* has a bearing on our *future*. Galatians 6:10 is a pertinent text: “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19 also gives advice for the Christian to follow: “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Luke 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

We must be faithful and just even in little things if we would be faithful and just in greater things. If we are not faithful—if we unwisely use and love the mammon (riches) of unrighteousness—we will not receive the heavenly reward.

Luke 16:12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?

“If you have not been faithful in that which is another man’s [God’s or Jesus’], who shall give you that which is your own [crown]?”

Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Why is this principle stated two ways? “No servant can serve two masters: for either [1] he will hate the one, and love the other; or else [2] he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve [both] God and mammon.” Mammon should be subordinate to the interests of the new creature. Part of a hymn contains the words “Touch lightly the things of this earth”—they must be touched to a certain extent, but touch them lightly. James 4:4 says, “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” The principle is one of decisiveness: whether we serve God or mammon (the world, worldly friendships, etc.). Esau “despised his birthright” (Gen. 25:34). He did not really hate the birthright, but he put a higher premium on the temporal and thus did

not value it enough. By holding to the temporal, he “despised,” or loved less, the spiritual. He did cry later and want the birthright back, but he had already lost it.

But why does verse 13 state the principle two ways? A reversal is shown: Hate versus love, and hold versus despise. Esau *despised* his birthright and *held to* the mammon. Jacob *held to* (or treasured) the birthright and *loved less* the temporal. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). Jacob did this and later ended up materially wealthy.

Luke 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

The Pharisees had listened to the Parable of the Unjust Steward, and now they ridiculed Jesus because they valued money. Some of the Pharisees would have been rightly exercised, however.

Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

Jesus replied strongly, “You justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. That which men highly esteem is an abomination to God.” Not only were his words *instructive*, but he was trying to wake up the scribes and Pharisees, who were highly respected by the people. Their thinking influenced many. Some would accept Jesus only if their leaders did. (The same is true today in regard to the Second Advent and present truth.)

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

Jesus was saying, “The Law and the prophets were recognized until John the Baptist. Since that time, the Kingdom is being preached, and every man should press into it.” Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees that the Kingdom was in their presence: “I am the very embodiment of Kingdom hopes, and I am in your midst” (Luke 17:21 paraphrase). “I am wiser than Solomon” (Matt. 12:42 paraphrase). The failure of the scribes and Pharisees to see that a dispensational change was taking place ties in with the steward’s losing his stewardship in the parable.

Comment: A secondary application pertains to the nominal spiritual leaders during the Harvest. Just as John the Baptist announced Messiah at the First Advent, so the Pastor announced the Harvest message and the Second Presence. When the Harvest began, the Kingdom was preached with a new fervency, but Christendom’s leaders would not hear it.

Reply: At one time, Babylon was a golden cup in God’s hand, but the privilege has since been lost.

Luke 16:17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

Verse 17 shows the importance of God’s Law—it cannot go unfulfilled; *it cannot fail* (compare Matt. 5:17,18). The comprehensive Law of Moses, which is spiritual as well as material, includes judgment and prophecy. The Apostle Paul said that the visible is more transitory than the unseen, and the principles of the Law are unseen (2 Cor. 4:18). The tables of the Law *remained* in the Ark of the Covenant, whereas the golden pot of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded were removed.

Luke 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery:

and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

Matthew 5:32 gives fornication as the only condition or grounds for divorce, and it applies equally to both brothers and sisters. If *either* party commits fornication, the other is Scripturally free to remarry. (Of course death also dissolves a marriage.)

This literal lesson, or “commandment,” was also a dispensational lesson for the scribes and Pharisees. The Law Covenant dispensation was being changed to the gospel dispensation. Therefore, a Jew was not committing “adultery” to leave the Law of Moses and be transferred over to Christ.

Jesus continued to bolster the premise of the Unjust Steward Parable. Verses 16-18 refer to the Law and the prophets. When John the Baptist came, the last of the Law and the prophets, he pointed to Jesus as the new way. In other words, a new dispensation was opening up, and every man would have to *press* into it—would have to *exercise energy* in order to secure the spiritual promise, or prize. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, which follows, somewhat pictures this change of death to the Law and being made alive to the new condition. As a people, the Gentiles responded more favorably than the Jews.

The Parable of the Unjust Steward brought out the principle that no man can serve two masters. One cannot mix the Law dispensation of works with the gospel dispensation of faith. It is dangerous for a Christian to feel he is being justified under the Law. We study the Law to know God’s thinking, but we do not expect to get life by obeying it to the letter. Therefore, a change in dispensations was pending at the First Advent, as shown in the parable by the steward’s losing his stewardship. Those Jews who were wise handled the change properly and got a far greater blessing.

The parables of Luke 15 and 16 all center around a lost stewardship, coin, sheep, etc. In each case, whatever was lost was *found, restored*. Luke chapter 17 is tied in, too, in another way.

Luke 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

Luke 16:20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

The two chief characters are the rich man (the nation of Israel) and Lazarus, a beggar full of sores (Gentiles). The rich man was clothed in purple (kingly attire), for if faithful, the nation of Israel would have inherited the chief Kingdom promises. “Fine linen” signifies the typical justification that the nation received through the Day of Atonement sacrifices under the Law. (Incidentally, if the parable is considered on another level, the rich man represents the scribes and Pharisees, and the beggar pictures the publicans and sinners or the Samaritans.)

The beggar Lazarus was laid at the gate, full of sores and desiring favor—spiritual favor. He pictures an extreme condition of one who, unable to help himself, craves divine help, hoping for a crumb of favor from the rich man. There is a double lesson in this parable. Of the two, the Gospel Age application is easier to trace than the more parochial lesson about the Jewish nation in the first century. Another name for the rich man is Dives.

Luke 16:21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

Lazarus desired to be fed with crumbs from the rich man’s table. In his pitiful state, dogs came and licked his sores. In Matthew 15:25-27, a Syrophoenician woman importuned Jesus for a

blessing, suggesting that even dogs got crumbs from the master's table, and all she was asking for was a crumb. Jesus commended her faith.

If the dogs represent Gentiles, how did they lick the sores of Lazarus? The principle is shown with Elijah's being fed by ravens, which in antitype picture a sympathetic unconsecrated element. For example, if we say that Lazarus represented the Samaritans, then the dogs would be Gentiles who gave the Samaritans more consideration than their own people, the Jews, did.

The name Lazarus means "without help," and the definition fits not only the beggar in the parable but also the Lazarus whom Jesus raised. Both were unable to help themselves.

The rich man's "table" was the Law. We similarly say the Harvest table is filled with food (new and old), with all kinds of spiritual goodies.

Luke 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

The sequence is significant. The beggar died in AD 36, when Gentiles could die to their former condition and thus be accepted under the gospel of Jesus. "Abraham's bosom" is a condition of favor, the Abrahamic promise, being of the Isaac seed, inheriting the chief blessing. In AD 33, national favor ended for Israel; in AD 36, exclusive (or individual) favor ended for the Jews; and in AD 69-70, national polity ended. Stated another way, the rich man died in AD 69-70 and went into Diaspora, national oblivion.

The "angels" are the apostles. While exclusive favor to Israel ended in AD 36, the nation was still favored in that the apostles were Jews and they preached first in the synagogues of each city. The word "died" is used here as in Revelation 8:9 to signify dying to a former condition.

Luke 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

In "hell," the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. When the Jews were in Diaspora, they could see that the Gentiles were being favored. The Jews were surprised that Gentiles were being nurtured and taught in the promises made to Abraham and that they were searching for meaning and instruction in the Hebrew Old Testament.

Q: Could Abraham, who speaks as the parable continues, also be considered as representing the Heavenly Father? Jesus was in the Father's bosom. He was the Son of God's love, and the Gentiles were carried to Jesus.

A: The principle is the same.

Q: Do the Jews realize they lost favor?

A: Down through the Gospel Age, the Jews were persecuted, banned from employment, made scapegoats, called Christ killers, victimized in pogroms, burned at the stake, put in the arena with wild animals, tortured, etc. They had to be merchants because they could not own land. Of course they realized they were Jews, sons of Abraham, but they could not explain what was happening to them. They did not know why they had been dispersed in Gentile lands and why they were without hope, as pictured by the valley of dry bones (Ezek. 37:1,2). The "bones" represent the nation of Israel scattered throughout Europe. According to the Pentateuch, the Jews expected material blessings, but instead they were "in torments." And while they were having hard experiences, the Gentiles were prospering with their religion. (Incidentally, there

have been parallels between the experiences of natural and spiritual Israel down through the Gospel Age.)

Luke 16:24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Fundamentalists use this verse to prove hellfire, but Luke 16:19-31 is a *parable* showing the condition of the Jew down through the Gospel Age. “Fire” indicates persecution, and in their extreme experiences, the Jews have wanted a figurative drop of water to cool their tongues. The valley of dry bones received heat and scorching under the sun.

Luke 16:25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Luke 16:26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

The middle wall of partition, or separation, has been Christ. Blindness has happened in part to the nation of Israel “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,” that is, until the Church is complete (Rom. 11:25).

Luke 16:27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house:

Luke 16:28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

“Jeshurun,” a poetic nickname God gave to Israel, had to do with the nation’s “rich man” condition. If the Jews had known the Law and the prophets, they would have realized the rich man in the parable was their own nation. “Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked”; that is, the richness did not profit Jeshurun because of disobedience and a wrong heart condition (Deut. 32:15).

Now let us consider the details of verses 27 and 28. The rich man said, “Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, and Lazarus can testify to them lest they also come into this condition of torment.” The symbolism of the rich man representing Israel can be defined even further. Of the two divisions of the nation of Israel, the two-tribe kingdom of Judah was more favored. Moreover, the Israelites who returned from Babylonian captivity in 536 BC were almost all from the two tribes, as were the Pharisees and other Jews who heard Jesus give the parable and those who rejected and crucified Jesus. (The ten tribes had already been dispersed throughout Gentile lands centuries before.) Even most of the Levites at that time, who lived close to Jerusalem, were from Judah. Therefore, the rich man specifically represents Judah, the two-tribe kingdom. The chronology listing shows that Judah had five sons, and the rich man wanted to save them (1 Chron. 4:1).

Luke 16:29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

Abraham said, “The five brothers have Moses and the prophets. Let the five brothers hear them.”

Luke 16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

The rich man replied, “No, but if one went to them from the dead, they would repent.” One did actually go from the dead—Lazarus by name—but still they did not repent. In other words, the fact the beggar in the parable was named “Lazarus” is a reference to the Lazarus that Jesus would raise subsequently in the Jerusalem area. Jesus was on his way there now, so this parable would have been fresh in the Pharisees’ minds when the raising occurred. And even when Jesus himself was raised from the dead, the five brothers (Israel as a nation) did not believe.

Luke 16:31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Abraham said, “If the five brothers would not hear Moses and the prophets, they would not be persuaded even if one did rise from the dead.”

Luke 17:1 Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

Luke 17:2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

The words “offences” and “offend” refer to *serious* offenses and *stumbleings* committed by brethren. Woe unto the brother who stumbles another brother, affecting the latter’s standing with the Lord and causing him to eventually go out of the truth! If the *Lord* judges a brother to be responsible for the stumbling, that brother receives the same condemnation (Second Death) as the one who is stumbled.

It would be better for one to die by being cast into the sea with a millstone about his neck, for then at least he would be resuscitated from the grave. A stigma attaches to one who is put to death in this manner, for he does not receive a decent burial and the implication is that no one wants to see his remains. Although such a person feels the shame, it is worse to be responsible for a brother’s going out of the truth.

Sometimes one wrongfully says he or another left the truth because of a certain brother. However, that individual might just be trying to justify his own wrong course. Hence *God* would have to judge whether one brother stumbled another brother. The point is that a *proper* rebuke is not charged to the rebuker *regardless* of how the offender takes it. If a brother goes out of the truth following a slight offense, his departure shows he is *abnormal*.

The tribe of Dan is omitted in the Revelation 7:5-8 listing because it pictures a Second Death class. Genesis 49:17 calls Dan “a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.” In other words, one is responsible for a serious doctrinal deflection that leads others out of the truth.

Note: If one is properly disfellowshipped and then never repents and comes back, that is *his* responsibility, not the responsibility of those who disfellowshipped him.

Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

Luke 17:4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

Verses 3 and 4 prove that verses 1 and 2 pertain to the brotherhood. Jesus was talking to his disciples.

What is the situation here? If your brother trespasses against *you* (not against others or against the Lord), there is a responsibility to *rebuke*, and the condition for forgiveness is *repentance*. If he asks for forgiveness, forgive him. Depending on the situation—that is, in the case of a lesser trespass—a look may be all that is necessary to create repentance. A good example is when Peter humbly received Paul’s rebuke for dissembling and then later said in his epistle that Paul’s knowledge of Scripture was superior. Peter’s humility was commendable, especially since he was the chief apostle prior to Paul.

Conversely, we are not to rebuke where we shouldn’t. 1 Corinthians 13:5 says that love “is not easily provoked,” so if the matter is very slight and perhaps due to someone’s shortcoming, we should just overlook it. It is a judgment call. We are not perfect, and some days we do not feel as good as others and might be apt to rebuke when we should not.

We should not purposely aggravate the conscience of another. Paul gave the example of meat offered to idols. If eating such meat offends the conscience of a brother, then we should not serve it to him in our home, but we can eat meat offered to idols when the brother is not present. The point is to respect the conscience of another.

A trespass from a worldly person is not the same as a trespass from a brother. After all, we are to expect persecution from the world. Luke 6:27 says to “love [forgive] your enemies [of the world].” “Enemies” are not supposed to be brethren. Therefore, we should make a difference between the unconsecrated, who are blinded by Satan, and the consecrated. Backbiting by or among the consecrated is another matter. Note: An animated discussion is not backbiting. The spirit in which something is done is important.

We should rebuke a brother who commits a wrong against us. In other words, we are to forgive when the Lord says “forgive” and rebuke when the Lord says “rebuke.” To neglect to do either is just as serious. The rebuke helps to alert one to a fault.

Q: When Paul rebuked Peter, who was the sin against?

A: Peter was eating with Gentile Christians, and so were other Christian Jews. Then the door opened and Christian Jews from Jerusalem saw Peter eating with Gentile brethren. When Peter noticed the look of disapproval from the Jerusalem brethren, he immediately disassociated himself—he dissembled. Paul, who was at the same table, did not get up but went right on eating, knowing that what he was doing was Scripturally proper. Under other circumstances, a private rebuke might be proper, but not here because a wrong example was being set. If Paul had not rebuked Peter, he would have been remiss, for the brethren would have gone to their homes with a wrong principle. It was right to rebuke Peter openly, for in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female. Peter’s sin was against the truth, against all the brethren there. He received the rebuke humbly and learned the lesson well. The brethren from Jerusalem probably thought they were right and were obeying conscience, but they needed enlightenment.

If we realize we have trespassed against a brother, we should go to him privately, tell him what we have done, and ask for forgiveness. If possible, we should follow this procedure *before* we are rebuked. This would show a sensitivity to the Lord’s counsel.

A slander should be repented of and forgiveness asked. If the slander is circulated, it should be repented of publicly, as in a testimony meeting, for instance. If the trespass is done to or in the ecclesia, we should ask the ecclesia for forgiveness, whether or not all know of the trespass. And if we trespass against a brother, we should ask his forgiveness, even if he does not know of the trespass or slander. However, if we hear a damaging report against a brother from two

or three witnesses and it is a *public sin*, we do not have to go to him privately.

“If your brother trespasses against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turns to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him” (paraphrase). This instruction does not pertain to *serious sin*.

If the other party does not follow Jesus’ counsel in verses 3 and 4, this would be part of Christian suffering. Moreover, even though a brother repented, we would need faith and strength to forgive him if we were trespassed against *seven times in one day*. This situation could occur wherever there are close ties—in a family, a marriage, or an ecclesia.

The theme of repentance and the finding of that which was lost began in Luke 15:1 and still continues here.

Luke 17:5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

Luke 17:6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

Luke 17:7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

Luke 17:8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

Luke 17:9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

Luke 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

The apostles requested of Jesus, “Increase our faith.” Verses 6-10 tell what faith is and give the answer. (Incidentally, a mustard seed is a *tiny* seed, and according to Young’s, a sycamine tree can be a fig tree.) Faith is not credulity or confidence. Faith is *intelligent* understanding; it is *knowing*. Faith based on Scripture can say to the sycamine tree, “Be thou plucked up.” In other words, faith is based on God’s Word and instruction, on what we *know* must be done.

If, based on Scripture, we *knew* it was time (and the Lord’s will) for Israel to be removed, then we could say with certainty that Israel would be plucked up. Jesus had *faith* to say that the fig tree would wither and that Israel’s house was left unto them desolate. From the Scriptures, he *knew* Israel’s judgment was approaching.

In our imperfect condition, a grain of mustard seed is about our capacity for faith. Faith starts with the exercise of the mind toward God and His promises. We “see” the invisible by what is visible. We should keep in mind that the disciples were asking Jesus to increase their faith. Jesus’ answer gives one aspect of faith; other Gospels give additional aspects.

“I trow not” means “I believe not.” Servants who plowed or fed cattle all day returned from the field and prepared dinner for their master (Jesus). They ate afterwards. Did the master thank the servants because they did the chores commanded of them? No—and properly so. Likewise, even when the disciples did all that was commanded, their attitude should have been: “We are unprofitable servants. We have only done that which was our *duty* to do.”

Why did Jesus give this illustration of the “master” (himself) and the “servants” (the consecrated)? The servants worked diligently all day and came in from the field hungry and thirsty. However, their duties for the day were still not finished, for not only were they expected to serve dinner to the master, but they themselves had to wait until the master said they could eat. With Satan subverting God’s laws one by one, many would oppose this thinking today.

Serving the master was the *duty* of the servants. And so we are to serve Jesus until he says, “You can rest.” The presentation of our bodies is a *reasonable service* (Rom. 12:1). We are to wait for the “master” of the house. For example, a Christian master could free a Christian slave, but he did not have to. In other words, we, the servants, are to realize our station in life. Jesus did not want Christianity to be related to social reform and the redress of grievances, which many ministers stress. That work belongs to the next age. Now we are being instructed and are trying to learn (and imbibe) *God’s thinking*.

Natural picture: Servants worked from sunrise to sunset—12 hours a day. If they did not prepare supper for the master (and that was part of their duties), they were insubordinate. *Spiritual picture:* We are to do whatever the master (Jesus) says. If *he* says, “You may eat first,” we can eat, but to do so on our own would be highly improper.

The *principle* is illustrated by the Israelites. “They soon forgot his [God’s] works; they [provoked Him and] waited not for his counsel” (Psa. 106:13). In not waiting for God’s counsel, the Israelites went ahead and demanded certain things. Verse 10 says, “When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded.” The thought is, “When you have done all the things Jesus [or God] commanded on different subjects”—and especially here in regard to committing a trespass against brethren and in waiting for the Lord’s instruction.

In answering the disciples’ request to increase their faith, Jesus was saying, “First listen to my commandments. Then your requests will be made more intelligently, and you will not ask amiss.” In other words, our faith is increased *in proportion* as we feed on the *Lord’s Word and its principles* and obey. Then we would not boast as one who puts off the armor. “Have ye faith? Have it to yourself before God” (Rom. 14:22 paraphrase). Many think that they are well developed and that now they can put off the armor. Keep it on!

If we continue as humble, obedient servants, faith will develop, and we will understand the real meaning of Jesus’ remarks. If the puzzling things in Scripture are on our hearts and minds, we will get answers in due time (whether in days, weeks, or years). Then we are thrilled with the reward of an answer. If we hunger and thirst, we will appreciate the value of the instruction. It has been said, “Great truths are dearly bought, not wafted on the summer breeze.”

It is important to maintain an attitude of humility. We must be small in our own sight. No matter what opportunities of service come along, we should always feel we are not doing enough for the Lord.

The disciples asked for more faith in *this setting* because of Jesus’ words about the seriousness of offending (stumbling) a brother and how to handle a trespass against them by a brother. The instruction seemed difficult to obey. In other words, the disciples were asking to be strengthened in understanding and capability so that they could do the things Jesus commanded. Luke 15:1 through 17:10 is all *one series* of sermons on *repentance*, and the disciples were asking for help in understanding and obeying. This counsel seemed foreign to them.

Luke 17:11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

Luke 17:12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

In one village, Jesus was met by ten lepers, who stood afar off. According to the Law, lepers had to stay at a distance, cover their mouth, and cry, “Unclean! Unclean!” These stipulations indicated that lepers were unclean both spiritually and physically. Jesus’ reputation for healing had reached these lepers, and they greatly desired to be made whole.

Luke 17:13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

Luke 17:14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

When the ten lepers cried, “Jesus! Master! Have mercy on us!” he replied, “Go show yourselves to the priests.” Notice that Jesus was observing the Law. He did not say, “Come close” but “Go to the priests.” In the initial stages of leprosy, lepers were required to go to the priests for examination at certain time periods. Evidently, these ten had been lepers for some time. Now, “as they went, they were cleansed.” Imagine—decomposed body parts started to regenerate!

Luke 17:15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

Luke 17:16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

Luke 17:17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

Luke 17:18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

Luke 17:19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

The heart of *one* leper was filled with thanksgiving, and he returned to Jesus, glorifying God with a loud voice. The one leper’s *faith* had made him “whole”—he was cleansed not just physically but in spirit and mind as well. He “turned back”; that is, he retraced a distance back to Jesus. This took time and effort and showed a truly thankful heart. When he reached Jesus, he fell down at the Master’s feet and gave thanks, realizing God was operating through Jesus. Jesus then asked, “Were not ten lepers cleansed? Where are the other nine?”

The fact that the one thankful leper was a *Samaritan* was a rebuke to the other nine lepers, who were Israelites. Similar occasions where such faith was not found in Israel were the Syrian general Naaman and the Syrophenician woman (2 Kings 5:1-14; Mark 7:25-30). Jesus was sent to Israel, not to other nations, but circumstances sometimes arose whereby one of another nation received his attention. Probably 3 1/2 years later, when the gospel message went to the Gentiles, this Samaritan leper became a disciple. Why? Because of his *faith*.

Luke 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

Assuming a superior attitude, the Pharisees impatiently and arrogantly *demand*ed to know, “When will this Kingdom that you speak of come?” In other words, they wanted to know the time and manner of the Kingdom. Jesus answered, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation [not with outward show—KJV margin]”; that is, it does not come with outward pomp and ostentation.

Luke 17:21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is

within you.

“The kingdom of God is within you.” The Kingdom of God is “among you” (KJV margin) or “in your midst.” Surely the Kingdom of God was not in the midst of the *Pharisees’* hearts! Hence Jesus meant, “The Kingdom of God is right here within your presence, or midst.” Stated another way, “In your very presence, the Kingdom work is going on, and you are not aware of it. You are erroneously looking for an outward spectacular display that would be apparent to everyone.” The Kingdom was right there in the sense that the *King* of that Kingdom was present. One translation has, “His royal majesty is in your midst.”

Luke 17:22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

Jesus now turned to his disciples, saying, “The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man [in the sense of the actual Kingdom Age], and ye shall not see it.” The implication was that those particular disciples would not live unto Jesus’ Kingdom. It has taken almost 2,000 years to select the 144,000 who will deal with 30 billion to 40 billion people eventually. God knows exactly how much time is required. The “days of the Son of man” would be the days of Jesus’ Second Presence.

Luke 17:23 And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.

This verse is a second witness to Matthew 24:24-26. Jesus was warning, “If there is a seeming visual representation of me, *believe it not.*” “*See here*” and “*see there*” indicate a *geographic* location of something *visual*. In Matthew 24, Jesus admonished his followers not to look for him in a seance (“secret chambers”) or in the “desert.” There have been false Christs all down the age, but a *special* test will occur at the *end* of the age. Some will say, “Come here. We will show you Christ.” DO NOT FOLLOW THEM. Jesus warned us to be wary of a misdirection or a false representation. We should not be too hasty to follow what purports to be truth.

Comment: Based on the rest of the chapter, which mentions our day, this verse is a particular warning to us now, at the end of the age, and even an implication that the Great Company will be deceived.

Luke 17:24 For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

“Lightning” (Greek *astrape*) is the bright shiner, that is, the *sun*. Luke 11:36 mentions the “bright shining” (*astrape*) of a candle. A candle lightens—it is a bright shining in a dark room. Hence *astrape* is a bright shining whether referring to the sun or to a humble candle.

Where Luke 17:24 has from “one part under heaven ... unto the other part,” the companion text Matthew 24:27 has from “the east ... unto the west.” Matthew 24:27 reads, “For as the lightning [*astrape*] cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming [*parousia*, presence] of the Son of man be.” This text refers to the *light* of the sun rather than to the sun itself. At dawn, the sun *lightens* the whole world. In this future “light” of the Second Presence, no one will be able to point to the specific presence of the Son of man, for his presence will be everywhere, worldwide, universal in its influence.

Matthew 28:3 states, “His countenance was like lightning [*astrape*], and his raiment white as snow.” The angel’s countenance was not like jagged light. Rather, a *radiance*, or luminescence, beamed from his face. If the intended meaning were “literal lightning,” the woman could not have seen the angel’s facial features.

Revelation 11:19 is another pertinent text: “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen ... lightnings [*astrape*], and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.” However, not all lightning is jagged; for example, heat lightning is an exception. Thus the thought is of *bright light*, which represents *startling revelations*.

Luke 10:18 reads, “And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” As a bright shiner, Satan fell from heaven. Lucifer, a brilliant intellectual being, a companion of Jesus, one of the two morning stars, or first creations, descended like a bright light falling into the abyss. This is another instance where *astrape* does not mean jagged lightning. The angelic host would have been awestruck that such a brilliant one could fall. Satan’s wisdom was so great it went to his head—conceit, ambition, and pride entered in. Jesus’ disposition was the opposite.

Luke 17:25 But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

Before the Kingdom could come, Jesus had to be rejected and crucified.

Luke 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

Compare the “days” (plural) that Noah was *present* with the “day” (singular) that the Flood came. During the days Noah was present, he was building the Ark and preaching righteousness. Meanwhile, the world laughed. “So shall it be also in the days [of the *presence*] of the Son of man.”

Luke 17:27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

There was nothing wrong with eating, drinking, and marrying—these were *normal* activities—but the people were so involved in these activities that they were *ignorant* of the impending Flood. They were too absorbed in the things of this life right up until the *day* the Flood came. Note that a *period of time* is contrasted with a *moment of time*.

The contrast is not that Jesus would come suddenly, in one day. The point is that the TROUBLE, *God’s vengeance*, would come suddenly, in one day. The period of trouble before the Flood when the fallen angels and their offspring oppressed the earth and filled it with lust and violence was not *God’s wrath*. God’s vengeance was the *sudden* Flood.

Luke 17:28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

Luke 17:29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Lot’s introduction into the narrative is significant. The *days* (plural) of Lot are contrasted with the *day* (singular) that he went out of Sodom.

Luke 17:30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

“Thus shall it be ... when the Son of man is *revealed*.” When the antitypical Flood comes, when *God’s judgments* are abroad in the earth, the people will learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:9). The *judgments* will enlighten man that something different is happening.

During the 120 years that Noah was building the Ark, violence increased every day. The fallen

angels and their offspring brutalized and took whatever women they chose. Violence filled the earth. However, that violence was not *God's* trouble. And so, the trouble today is *man's* inhumanity to man, not God's trouble. The *Flood* was God's doing—He caused the ring of water to break as a divine judgment. The people did what they wanted until the *day* the Flood came. Even the collapse of the nominal Church will not be God's trouble. At that time, the people will be hungry and will curse *their* god (religious leaders) and *their* king (civil rulers). The seeds of civil anarchy are being sown today. Following the collapse of all governments, the people will look upward to God (Isa. 8:21).

The Son of man will be *revealed* to the world through *supernatural* trouble. Earlier the people will feel *they* are tearing down the religious and civil institutions, but God's trouble, the climax—that is, Jacob's Trouble, Israel's deliverance—will clearly be of *divine* origin.

Luke 17:31 In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

Luke 17:32 Remember Lot's wife.

Luke 17:33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

Luke 17:34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

Luke 17:35 Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Luke 17:36 Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Luke 17:37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

With Lot being brought into the picture, these verses can have a Great Company slant in the antitype. In fact, verse 32 is a warning to the Great Company to “remember Lot's wife,” who pictures Second Death. “In that day” of the Son of man—when he is revealed to the Great Company—let not the one on the rooftop come down for the stuff in his house or the one in the field turn back. Verses 33-36 are advice to the Great Company. Not only does Lot represent the Great Company, but Sodom pictures mystic Babylon (Christendom).

The “Lot's wife” class could have been of the Great Company, but they will fail and thus go into Second Death. Just as separate advice was directed to Lot and his family in the type, so the advice in this context applies to the Great Company and not to the Church. However, the similar language in Matthew 24 does fit the Little Flock. For a broad perspective, Matthew 24 and Luke 17 have to be compared.

The three examples where there are two and one is taken refer to the Great Company's salvation. The two in the bed, the field, or grinding together are *close*: husband and wife, two brothers, etc. Of the two, one is taken to where the *freshly* slain carcass is, that is, to where Jesus is. Job 39:30 says the young eaglets suck up the blood. Eagles are known for their keen eyesight and voracious appetites, and the two characteristics are related to each other.

Christ is pictured as the freshly slain Lamb who appeared before Jehovah's throne (Rev. 5:6,7). Those who recognize that Jesus paid the Ransom price for the human race are attracted to him.

His *death* means *life* to us. The crucified and risen Christ is the central hub of the truth, and we are the eagles. The hungrier we are for spiritual truth, the greater our spiritual eyesight of understanding will be.

“Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.” The Great Company will have to take a stand with their life just as the Little Flock makes such a decision earlier. Otherwise, the consecrated who are left behind when the feet members are taken will go into Second Death. In other words, *both* the Little Flock and the Great Company have to be overcomers.

The “night” of verse 34 is the great Time of Trouble. Jesus knew he was going into a deathtrap, and the last members of the Little Flock will have to make a similar decision. To get life, the Great Company will have to make the right decision later, when they get the oil (Matt. 25:8-10). Nominal Christendom will put the feet members to death *before* the great Time of Trouble. The world will put the Great Company to death *in* the great Time of Trouble.

In regard to verse 37, truth is the attraction but especially *being with Jesus* (see Matthew 24:28). We should be enamored with *Jesus personally*. Wherever he is, that is where the eagles want to go.

Luke 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

With no break in time from the previous chapter, Jesus now did something unusual: he stated *in advance* the purpose of the parable to follow; namely, “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” Why did Jesus do this? One reason is that he had just talked about the rapture—two were together when one was taken and the other was left. Thus there was a real need to pray and not faint, a real need to be sufficiently faithful to the end of one’s course.

Another reason for Jesus to give the purpose of the parable first is that if stated at the end, a wrong conclusion would be drawn; that is, it would seem that only in the circumstance of asking for the avenging, or the satisfaction of wrongs, should men always pray and not faint. By stating the lesson first, Jesus clearly meant that this was only *one* circumstance where men should pray and not faint.

Luke 18:2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

Luke 18:3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

Jesus started the parable by saying that a judge in a certain city neither feared God nor regarded man. A widow went to him with the request “Avenge me of my enemy.”

Luke 18:4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

Luke 18:5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

For a while, the judge ignored the widow, but he finally agreed to avenge her because of her persistence—she troubled and wearied him and was a nuisance.

Why was the parable stated this way? The judge was unjust—he did not have a good sense of right and wrong—and this is how conditions appear during the permission of evil. The saints

will be avenged but not until the due time. If the judge was unjust and did not fear God or regard men, then selfish reasons motivated him, not justice. He was not compassionate to the widow but helped her just to get rid of the “pest” when she would not give up. “Weary” in the *Diaglott* interlinear is “pester,” the thought being “lest she should continue to pester me.” Jesus characteristically used extreme cases to illustrate a point.

Luke 18:6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

Luke 18:7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

Luke 18:8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Notice the contrast between the unjust judge and the just God. The just and loving God will avenge injustice eventually. In fact, God “will avenge ... [the elect] *speedily*.” “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves ... for it is written, *Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord*” (Rom. 12:19). “Speedily” is the same Greek word translated “quickly” in Revelation 22:12. “And, behold, I come *quickly*; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (see also Rev. 22:7,20). From God’s standpoint, these events will occur speedily. The nightmare of earth’s sin is short from the standpoint of eternity, but to the one being wronged, the time seems long. There *will be* a requiting some day. With much faith, we, like Paul, can reason that the night is short, the day is far spent—the Kingdom is almost here (Rom. 13:12).

The implication of the parable is that an answer *will be given*, even if it is delayed. We are to have faith that if the answer is delayed, there is a reason. But meanwhile, we should continue to pray. “Men ought *always* to pray.” We are to use prayer as a means of living. “Prayer” is a beseeching, a request, and persistence in prayer is very important, especially when we know the prayer is proper.

When a prayer has not been answered after a time and we are not sure if it is proper, we might examine our motives. Also, God may have a reason for withholding the answer. For example, when Paul prayed for restored eyesight, he probably reasoned how much better he could serve the Lord, but the answer was no. God told Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in [your] weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9). Examples of proper prayers are asking for the establishment of the Kingdom, for more of God’s Holy Spirit, for the fruits of the Spirit, for wisdom, for correction, and for forgiveness. Prayer should be regular, tenacious, and with purpose.

“When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” Why did Jesus end the parable in this unusual way? His question was, “When I come, will I find faith on the earth *that there will be an avenging?*” The Greek word translated “cometh” is *erchomai* and thus does not refer to 1874. There was more faith in 1874 than there is today.

Will there be faith on the earth when the Son of man comes in connection with the avenging? The question assumes a dispensational aspect. At that time, the prayers of the elect will be answered both collectively and individually. The Little Flock will rejoice beyond the veil when Babylon is destroyed: “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her” (Rev. 18:20).

Luke 18:9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

Luke 18:10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a

publican.

Luke 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Luke 18:12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Luke 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Luke 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, which is still on the subject of prayer, was directed against the Pharisees, who trusted in themselves and felt superior. They had education, respect, and special clothing. Even their posture, walk, and look reflected their feeling of superiority. They “despised others,” and this attitude showed on their faces.

Two men went into the Temple to pray: a Pharisee, who stood in a prominent and conspicuous place, and a publican. Two extremes are shown. The Pharisees thought they were ultrareligious. Publicans were engaged in Gentile commercial activities.

In the parable, the Pharisee thanked God he was not “as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as *this publican*.” We know his prayer was dutiful and superficial because he was conscious of others who were present. Although it is true we should not be like the world, we should not feel self-righteous. Instead we should be grateful the Lord has opened our eyes to see the sinfulness of sin, and we should pray to stay unspotted and humble. We are still in need because our pattern, Jesus, is perfect and we are striving to develop as new creatures. By mentioning the publican, the Pharisee exposed his self-righteous attitude.

The Pharisee continued, “I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” There is nothing wrong with this type of sacrifice *as long as one is doing everything else that is proper*. With the right motivation, such sacrifice would be commendable, but not here. The Pharisee was listing various points of his righteousness.

“Twice in the week” sounds like a schedule, a routine, rather than according to the circumstance and with depth. The Pharisee’s fasting was perfunctory; it had lost its meaning. In contrast, Daniel’s praying three times a day was a proper sacrifice (Dan. 6:10). The Pharisee was merely living up to the standards expected of a Pharisee—his heart was not in the fasting.

And how did the publican pray? He stood afar off from the altar, ashamed to even lift his eyes toward heaven. He smote his breast, saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” The publican felt unworthy to approach too closely the most sacred position in the Court. However, it is commendable that, despite his feelings of shame, he did not fail to go to the Temple. (Some who are burdened with sin feel they cannot pray.) “Men ought always to pray” applied to the publican (Luke 18:1).

Ezra 9:5,6 is a beautiful cross-reference where Ezra prayed for forgiveness on behalf of the nation of Israel. “And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God, And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.”

In smiting his breast, the publican showed genuine emotion in his desire for repentance. The anguish of spirit emblemized his introspection of his own heart. Whereas the publican acknowledged he was a sinner, the Pharisee did not.

Jesus said that the publican was *more* justified than the Pharisee and that everyone who exalts himself shall be abased and vice versa. Being in the office, the Pharisee acted properly in going to the Temple to pray, but he prayed perfunctorily, whereas the publican prayed genuinely. Since the publican had strayed—he had disobeyed certain parts of the Law—it was only right that he should ask for forgiveness. Hence justification is relative, for obviously, one who was zealous and had not strayed would be still more justified.

Luke 18:15 And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

Luke 18:16 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Luke 18:17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

A crowd would have been present. Jesus had finished his lesson on prayer, and now the parents wanted their infants to get a blessing from him. “Touch” probably means reaching out to hug the infants. The parents were rightly concerned with the spiritual and moral upbringing of their children, even from infancy. Jesus told his disciples to let the little children come to him. This was a tender moment in his ministry.

Jesus then proceeded to give a lesson with the little children. (On certain occasions, it would not be proper for children to interrupt him, but here the parents respectfully waited until he was free.) Lesson: “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.” What are the characteristics of a little child? Openness, a trusting attitude, spontaneous joy, respect for parents (the Heavenly Father), no guile, etc. Jesus was contrasting simple childlike qualities with the pride of the Pharisees. A Christian should continually be in an attitude of prayer and have the desire for progress. No matter how long an individual is consecrated, he should always feel childlike, maintaining humility to the end of his course. The Heavenly Father should be viewed with the wide-eyed wonder of a child. Jesus would have gathered the nation of Israel as a mother hen gathers her chicks, but the nation did not permit him to do so. As the words of a hymn go:

I want to feel humble, more simple, more mild,
More like my blest Master and more like a child;
More trustful, more thankful, more lovely in mind,
More watchful, more prayerful, more loving and kind.

Luke 18:18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Luke 18:19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

A certain rich ruler asked Jesus, “Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus replied, “Do not call me good. Only God is good in the supreme sense.” This is an excellent proof text against the Trinity. Jesus’ intent was always to honor his Father.

Luke 18:20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

Luke 18:21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

The very fact the rich ruler came to Jesus shows some humility, for he realized he was lacking something. Jesus answered tactfully. Instead of immediately giving the commandment to love God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength, which the ruler was not doing, Jesus listed commandments the ruler was obeying. The ruler's remarkable testimony, "I have obeyed these from my youth up," showed he was an unusual person.

Luke 18:22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

Luke 18:23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

Jesus continued, "One thing you lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven. Then *come, follow me.*" The last requirement was essential for the right slant. Jesus was not justifying monks and mendicants who give up all their worldly goods and go into a cloister but was saying, "Come and follow my teachings and instruction." Jesus touched a tender spot for the ruler in regard to his goods. The ruler was now "very sorrowful: for he was very rich," and his heart was centered in his riches.

Luke 18:24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

Luke 18:25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Luke 18:26 And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved?

Luke 18:27 And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

Jesus said (paraphrased), "How difficult it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom."

The usual explanation is as follows. In those days, the city gate was closed at night, but for travelers who arrived at night, there was a small side gate. The gate was low, so for a camel to enter, it had to be relieved of its saddle and goods, and then come in on its knees. That is not the in-depth thought, however.

The disciples' comment in verse 26 proves Jesus' words had a different meaning. The question "Who then can be saved?" meant "It is *impossible* for any to be saved!" A camel could go through the small gate, but the disciples thought it was impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a literal needle. What was Jesus' reply? "The things which are *impossible* with men are possible with God."

Let us consider Jesus' words again: "It is easier for a [literal] camel to go through a [literal] needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." This can be done in a laboratory today by taking the microscopic seed of a camel and passing it through the eye of a needle. However, God can actually *reverse the growth process* back to the seed—something man cannot do! God can reduce the camel back to a seed.

The contrast is that God can more easily reverse the growth process of a camel than He can make a child of His, a new creature, because the latter requires the cooperation of the

individual, the cooperation of his free moral agency. The camel reduction can be done dictatorially, but the Little Flock are not made automatically. They must *participate* in the process, and TIME is required, although, of course, the making of a new creature is still a miracle.

If a rich man does not have the Spirit of God energizing his heart, he will not make the Little Flock. Therefore, if one with riches is *faithful*, it is to his credit, and he will get a higher station in the body of Christ. The salvation of those with riches is more miraculous than the salvation of the poor. “Riches” can be wealth, power, intellect, etc. Being faithful is harder for such individuals because they are special targets of the Adversary.

The disciples felt, “If entering the Kingdom of God is a problem for the rich man, what about us? How can we be saved?”

Luke 18:28 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

Luke 18:29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake,

Luke 18:30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

When Peter said, “We have left all to follow you,” Jesus replied, “Whoever leaves house or family for the sake of the Kingdom will receive a hundredfold more in the *present* life and life everlasting in the *next* life” (Mark 10:30). Peter and John were so enthralled with Jesus that they left a profitable fishing business to the care of others and followed him. (Later they returned to the fishing business, and still later they left the business entirely.) The apostles became fishers of men.

Notice that Jesus mentioned *social* things to leave: parents, wife, house, etc., but not money. Those who consecrate receive a bigger family in the Truth than they ever had before.

Luke 18:31 Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

Luke 18:32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

Luke 18:33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

Luke 18:34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

While they were en route to Jerusalem, Jesus took the twelve apostles aside to counsel them about his coming crucifixion. As the “Son of [the] man [Adam],” as a perfect human being, Jesus was the exact corresponding price for Adam. He spoke of *literal* things that would befall him, and he spoke in *plain* language, yet the apostles did not understand because their minds were *closed*. By the term “Gentiles,” he meant the Romans and Pontius Pilate.

Q: Of course the apostles had not yet been begotten by the Holy Spirit, but wouldn’t their lack of understanding indicate we, too, could be blind to certain dispensational truth if our hearts were not fully in tune with the Lord? Something could be explained, and it might not sink in.

A: Yes, no matter how persuasive the argument and the reasoning, if one is not in a receptive mood, truth will not be perceived.

Verse 34 states in three different ways that *none* of the Twelve understood. (1) “They understood none of these things,” (2) “this saying was hid from them,” and (3) “neither knew they the things which were spoken.” The apostles were looking for a Deliverer, not a Guilt-bearer. A *suffering* Messiah they did not expect.

Luke 18:35 And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

Still en route to Jerusalem, Jesus arrived in the Jericho area and saw a certain blind man begging by the wayside.

Luke 18:36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

Hearing the crowd and the commotion, the blind beggar inquired as to the reason.

Luke 18:37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

Luke 18:38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Being told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, and having previously heard of him, the blind man immediately called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Luke 18:39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

When others rebuked the blind man and told him to keep quiet, he cried out even more, “Have mercy on me!” It is interesting that the blind man replied, “Thou son of David,” to the previous answer, “Jesus of Nazareth.” He thus addressed Jesus more respectfully, for Nazareth was considered a mean town. The blind man’s response shows he had *faith*. He was Bartimaeus, who subsequently became a disciple (Mark 10:46).

Luke 18:40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,

Luke 18:41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

Luke 18:42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

Luke 18:43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

As Jesus got nearer, he stopped and commanded that the blind beggar be brought to him. Jesus then asked, “What should I do for you?” The blind man replied, “Lord, that I may receive my sight.” Jesus responded, “Receive your sight. Your faith has saved you.” Immediately Bartimaeus received his sight and glorified God, and all who witnessed the miracle praised God.

Luke 19:1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

Luke 19:2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

Luke 19:3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

Luke 19:4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

Luke 19:5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.

Luke 19:6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

Zacchaeus must have almost fallen out of the tree when Jesus said he would dine at his (a *publican's*) house!

Now Jesus had entered and passed through Jericho. The road from the north into Jericho is circuitous—it goes in a circle. This fact helps to harmonize details in the other Gospels.

Originally, Zacchaeus was fairly near Jesus but could not see him because of his short stature and all the people, so he ran ahead and climbed a tree. He was very wealthy and was chief among the publicans, yet in his enthusiasm, he had the humility to climb a tree like a kid. He did not want the opportunity to pass by without having a grandstand seat.

When Jesus got to the spot where Zacchaeus was, he looked up directly at him and said, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I *must* abide at your house.” The word “must” is significant. In other words, Jesus was saying, “Zacchaeus, what you have just seen and heard is not by chance—the invitation is providential. My coming here and seeing you was arranged by Providence. I have to stop at *your* house today!” What a shocker to Zacchaeus! He scrambled down in haste and received Jesus joyfully.

Luke 19:7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

Luke 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

Luke 19:9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Zacchaeus was known as a publican, an occupation that was looked down upon. “All murmured” when they heard Jesus would be the guest of a “sinner.” Zacchaeus knew that the Law required a fourfold restoration if something was taken by false accusation. Now his heart was overflowing for the Lord, and he promised to give *half* of his goods to the poor and to restore fourfold anything taken falsely. At our initial conversion, we, too, were flooded with similar feelings that we could not do enough for the Lord.

Jesus then gave a beautiful sermon, calling Zacchaeus “a son of Abraham,” that is, an Israelite indeed. “This day is salvation come to the house of Zacchaeus.” Jesus’ purpose was “to seek and to save that which was lost [of the lost sheep of the house of Israel].” Normally we would

not think that the heart of a publican would turn to the Lord because of the worldly environment, but on the other hand, a better environment can be a hindrance by developing pride.

Luke 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

Luke 19:12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

Jesus had especially addressed his remarks about Zacchaeus's being a son of Abraham to those who had a wrong attitude. Like the apostles, they thought the Kingdom would come immediately, and they expected the promised Messiah to take control. Lesson: We must think on the *whole* Word of God so that when we hear a true explanation, we are able to absorb it. Otherwise, our minds can fail to understand, even if the terms are along *natural* lines. We, too, could hear the truth expounded with great clarity but not be able to absorb it.

Note: For a fuller explanation of the Parable of the Pounds, see the discourse entitled "Comparison of Parable of the Talents and Parable of the Pounds," which is included with the Matthew study. For the study here in Luke, a few supplemental, isolated remarks have been inserted.

The "nobleman" is Jesus, and the "far country" is heaven. Jesus got the Kingdom and the title "King" when he ascended. God said, "Sit on my right hand—abide here—until I make your enemies your footstool." Therefore, to *receive* the Kingdom does NOT mean Jesus is reigning.

Luke 19:13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

Luke 19:14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

The "citizens" represent the commonwealth of Israel, particularly those who hated Jesus without cause. They were a class found chiefly amidst the religious leadership of Jewry during the First Advent of Christ (as well as some who were not necessarily Israelites down through the Gospel Age) who, though not Spirit-begotten, sinned against a sufficiency of light to incur the penalty of Second Death (see Matthew 23:33; 27:66; 28:11-15).

The citizens sent a message after Jesus, saying, "We will not have this man to *reign* over us." When Jesus was raised and went to heaven (the "far country"), the stigma against him continued among the Jewish people, and it has continued down through the Gospel Age. The fact that the Jews would not let Jesus "*reign*" over them proves that he does *reign over his Church*—and has done so ever since Pentecost. (In contradistinction, his *reign over the nations* is future, when the whole Church is with him.) Jesus has *reigned collectively* over his Church since Pentecost and *individually* as each one consecrates.

Luke 19:15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Luke 19:16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

Luke 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful

in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

Luke 19:18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

Luke 19:19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

Luke 19:20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

Luke 19:21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

Luke 19:22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

Luke 19:23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

Luke 19:24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

Luke 19:25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

Luke 19:26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Luke 19:27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

(With the completion of the Parable of the Pounds, the verse-by-verse study resumes.)

Luke 19:28 And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

Luke 19:29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

Luke 19:30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither.

Luke 19:31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

Luke 19:32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

Luke 19:33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

Luke 19:34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

Bethphage and Bethany are two villages near Jerusalem. Notice that Jesus and the disciples ascended “up to Jerusalem” from Jericho, showing a rise in elevation.

Jesus sent two disciples into the village to get a colt, tied and unbroken. They were to untie the colt and bring him to Jesus. If anyone asked why they were taking the colt, they were to say, "Because the Lord hath need of him." Evidently, the owner had been praying for something to do for Jesus, and this simple reply was enough. Because Jesus knew of the prayer, he could take the liberty of removing the colt. The colt was unbroken to show Jesus' perfect mastery as a perfect man—as Adam was.

Luke 19:35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

When the colt was brought to Jesus, the apostles "cast their garments upon the colt" and set Jesus on the animal. Why the clothes? They were a mark of respect for him as King. The disciples expected the Kingdom to be set up soon, and in fact, they thought Jesus was going to Jerusalem for that very reason. Hence his sitting on their clothes showed their deference and submission to him, and their faith in him as King.

Luke 19:36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

Luke 19:37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

Luke 19:38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

Luke 19:39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

Luke 19:40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

Jesus entered Jerusalem triumphantly. The people spread their clothes in the way and cried out, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!" If the people had not cried out, the very stones would have, for the message was due.

Luke 19:41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Luke 19:42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

Jesus beheld Jerusalem and wept over it. His emotions are touching. Although his crucifixion with shame and suffering was imminent, he wept over the trouble that would have to come on the people, some of whom would be instrumental in his own trials.

Because the Israelites did not recognize Jesus as Messiah, the "things" which belong to their peace would be "hid" from their eyes. Romans 11:25 states, "*Blindness* in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

Luke 19:43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

Luke 19:44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

These verses, plus others, are advice from Jesus that trouble was coming on Jerusalem—it would be besieged and leveled. Moreover, the Temple stones would be torn down to their foundation, or base level. (The foundation stones still exist today.) The Temple is especially referred to in verse 44.

Luke 19:45 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

In righteous indignation, Jesus cast out the money changers and the buyers. Another account says that he made a whip and chased, or beat, the people and the animals out of the Temple. Twice Jesus cast out the money changers—at the beginning and at the end of his ministry. John 2:13-15, which pertains to the first incident, mentions the “scourge,” or whip: “And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables.”

Luke 19:46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

The Temple was to be a “house of prayer” (and it will be in the Kingdom), but God had predicted that, first, it would be desecrated as a “den of thieves.” As the meeting place between God and man, the Temple should have been kept sanctified. “Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD” (Jer. 7:11). “Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people” (Isa. 56:7). The future Ezekiel’s (Third) Temple will be an *international* “house of prayer” for *all* nations. Hence Jesus took the principle from Isaiah 56:7. Psalm 69:9 prophesied of his reaction and zeal: “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” Divine Providence was (or will be) exercised over all three temples: Solomon’s, Zerubbabel’s (enlarged into Herod’s), and Ezekiel’s.

Luke 19:47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

Jesus taught daily in the Temple after his triumphant entry, but the religious leaders “sought to destroy him.” Being jealous that the people were following Jesus and fearing loss of esteem, they wanted to kill him.

Luke 19:48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

The people listened very intently to Jesus’ words.

Luke 20:1 And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders,

Luke 20:2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?

Luke 20:3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

Luke 20:4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

Luke 20:5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?

Luke 20:6 But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

Luke 20:7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was.

Luke 20:8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

The *chief* priests, scribes, and elders came to Jesus like a phalanx, as a group. Their very numbers were designed to overawe him as they questioned the source of his authority. Normally such a tactic would cause fear. Their manner of address was intended to put Jesus on the defensive, but notice how calm and collected he was. They came *suddenly*, and Jesus responded *suddenly*, putting *them* on the defensive instead. Jesus said, “I will also ask you one thing: Was John’s baptism of heaven (God) or of men?” They realized the answer “from heaven” would bring the response from the people “Then why didn’t you believe him?” for John had said Jesus was the Messiah. The answer “of men” would cause anger because the people believed John was a prophet. Therefore, either response would cause trouble for the religious leaders. Jesus’ quick thinking and words are amazing!

Luke 20:9 Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

Luke 20:10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.

Luke 20:11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

Luke 20:12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

Luke 20:13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him.

Luke 20:14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

Luke 20:15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

Luke 20:16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

Jesus began to speak to the people, but the priests, scribes, and elders (the “husbandmen”) got the gist of the Parable of the Vineyard. As a result, they were very resentful. The “vineyard” (Israel) was under the custodial care of the husbandmen—they were the teachers who were supposed to instruct the people—and God (the “certain man,” the “lord of the vineyard”) expected fruit. When He looked for fruitage at different seasons, there was none.

Each “servant” was a prophet, and of course the “son” was Jesus. The husbandmen reasoned,

“Let us kill the son,” and that is exactly what the priests, scribes, and elders did to Jesus.

Jesus ended the parable with the question “What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them [the husbandmen]?” Verse 16, which should be in black print, gives the reply of the *common people*: “He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others.” See parallel accounts in Matthew 21:33-46 and Mark 12:1-9. The use of black print in Matthew 21:41 proves that the people were speaking.

When the people said, “Destroy these husbandmen,” the reply of the priests, scribes, and elders was, “God forbid.” The parable shows the wrong heart condition of the religious leaders, for they manifested no repentance or sense of righteous indignation. In fact, they tried to deny they had such an attitude.

The three servants mentioned in verses 10-12 were not all who were sent. They were used representatively to show that *all the prophets* had been mistreated. The Mark 12 account shows *progressively* bad treatment of the prophets, which is probably a main lesson. The climax was the killing of the “son.”

John 7:20 reveals an evil heart condition in some of the hearers. “The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?” Jesus had just said that certain individuals planned to kill him, and some of the *perpetrators* had the nerve to say he had a devil for making such a statement when *they knew it was true*.

Luke 20:17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

Luke 20:18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Jesus addressed these words to the priests, scribes, and elders who had come to him in a group. These “builders” were purportedly structuring Israel in righteousness and the Law. (In principle, Jesus’ criticism also applies to religious leaders down through the Gospel Age who built sectarian systems and considered their particular denomination to be “*the way*,” “*the Church*.”)

Jesus’ use of this analogy suggests that the Great Pyramid was fairly well known in his day. The priests, scribes, and elders did not want “the stone ... [to] become the head of the corner.” They knew Jesus was quoting a Scripture and referring to the top stone as himself.

“Whosoever shall fall [stumble] upon that stone shall be broken.” Those who stumble are blind, but the next part of Jesus’ statement was much more severe: “On whomsoever it shall fall, it will *grind him to powder*.” The stone falls on the *willfully* wicked, the incorrigible, those who go into Second Death.

Some try to equate this stone with the stone that smites the image (Dan. 2:34), saying the latter stone is pyramid-shaped. However, the two cannot be equated because the stone that smites the image smites *nations*, and this stone in Luke 20 falls on *individuals*. Moreover, the image stone smites *early* in the Millennium, whereas the Luke 20 stone falls *throughout* the Millennium.

Luke 20:18 shows *degrees* of responsibility. Isaiah 8:14,15 shows that stumbling over the stone is unfavorable. “And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.” When one stumbles, there is the possibility of rescue, but some retribution (usually in the next

age, the Kingdom) is involved. For example, some who perpetrated unkind acts upon Christians were “stumbling” and will, therefore, get future retribution. 1 Peter 2:7,8 also shows that stumbling (falling) over the stone (Jesus) is unfavorable. “Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”

Luke 20:19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

Knowing Jesus had spoken this parable against them, the chief priests and scribes (the “builders”) sought ways to kill him that same hour, but fear of the common people, who did not have murderous intent, restrained them. The religious leaders had an evil attitude, for Jesus had given multiple opportunities to repent by pointing out the wicked heart condition of his detractors—just as he did subsequently with Judas at the Last Supper. However, because their hearts were so set in an evil direction, Jesus’ remarks only made them more determined.

Luke 20:20 And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

The chief priests and scribes watched Jesus and sent forth spies who pretended to be just men so that they could trap him in his words and thus deliver him to the governor (civil power). Down through the Gospel Age, the nominal Church has characteristically utilized civil authorities to do the punishing.

Luke 20:21 And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly:

Such hypocrisy! These are true words, but they were uttered falsely to try to trap Jesus. “Master, you speak and teach aright and are not intimidated by anyone, no matter how important or great the authority. You are very bold, you speak the truth forthrightly, and you teach the way of God truly. Therefore, answer our question forcibly.” They feigned being just men by using false flattery.

Luke 20:22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?

This was a trick question—the chief priests and scribes thought they would be able to report Jesus’ answer and cause him to be arrested, for an answer of “no” would make him guilty before Roman civil authorities. On the other hand, an answer of “yes” would bring the enmity of fellow Jews, who considered publicans (tax collectors) to be sinners.

Luke 20:23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

Luke 20:24 Show me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar’s.

Luke 20:25 And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s, and unto God the things which be God’s.

Luke 20:26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

“Whose superscription is on the penny?” Jesus asked. His question caught them completely off guard. No matter how the priests and scribes premeditated, Jesus could make their schemes backfire.

“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” Jesus’ very wise answer, which they did not anticipate, was halfway between the two extremes. By asking the chief priests and scribes to show him a penny, the coinage of the realm, Jesus reversed the tables and characteristically immediately put them on the defensive. He also cut right into their heart condition by asking, “Why do you tempt me?” He realized their craftiness.

The chief priests and scribes “marvelled at his answer” and kept quiet, for they knew they could not trap him this time. Incidentally, the feet members may well be questioned regarding their patriotism too.

Luke 20:27 Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,

Luke 20:28 Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man’s brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

Luke 20:29 There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children.

Luke 20:30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.

Luke 20:31 And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died.

Luke 20:32 Last of all the woman died also.

Luke 20:33 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

Now came another loaded question, a question that was considered unanswerable. The question came from the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection. Their motive was to show the foolishness of the resurrection and to minimize Jesus’ influence. Although the Pharisees did believe in the resurrection, they were in collusion with the Sadducees to try to discredit Jesus.

There were three parties at the time: (1) Sadducees, (2) Pharisees and scribes, and (3) Herodians. The Herodians had the thinking of Herod, an Edomite. He enlarged Zerubbabel’s Temple to gain the affection of the Jews, but he was a half-breed, half Jew and half Edomite.

The question Jesus was asked is as follows. A woman who was childless lost her husband. A brother married her to raise children in his dead brother’s name, but he, too, died and she was still childless. This happened seven times. Finally the woman herself died. Whose wife will she be in the resurrection? Only two or three cases would have been necessary for the premise, but like pompous frogs, the Sadducees were making the story more complex and relishing their embellishments.

Luke 20:34 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

Jesus began to answer the question: “Some of the children of this age will marry, and others are already given in marriage.” In other words, marriage is normal, or customary, at the present time. In the hypothetical situation, the seven men had already been successively given in marriage to the woman, and the Sadducees wanted to know which one would be considered married to her when they come forth from the grave—or would all seven?

Luke 20:35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

“They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain *that world* [the age beyond the Millennium or Kingdom], and the resurrection [Greek *anastasis*] from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage.” Not until the end of the Millennium and the Little Season is past will there be the full raising up of the obedient of mankind in a collective sense. The raising up will be a gradual process throughout the Kingdom.

Death ends the marriage contract: “till death us do part.” The fact that Jesus did not give that answer is surprising, for it would have closed the door right away to the Sadducees’ reasoning. Instead he had a lesson to teach, so he raised the answer to a higher level by intentionally avoiding the Kingdom Age (some Scriptures show there will be marriage in the Kingdom). Only those who prove worthy as “sheep” will live *beyond* the Kingdom Age, for the “goats” will go into destruction by the end of the Millennium (Matt. 25:31-46). Referring to *after* the Kingdom Age, Matthew 25:34 says, “Then shall the King [Jesus] say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the *kingdom* prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” That will be *God’s Kingdom*. After the goats are destroyed in the Little Season, God will be 100 percent in 100 percent of the people: “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28).

Marriage during the Kingdom will not be general—just in certain cases. Examples: (1) Husbands and wives who live into the Kingdom, who live through the Time of Trouble, will still be married. (2) The Book of Ezekiel shows that the Zadok priesthood will be permitted to marry but with stipulations.

Luke 20:36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

Not only will mankind not marry in the age beyond the Millennium, but they will not die anymore. Reason: The proved human race will be “equal unto [or like] the [holy] angels” who did not sin (and thus withstood a severe test at the time of the Flood). These are the worthy, *proven* angels. Great credit goes to the angels who passed that test. Mankind will be tested in the Little Season. Angels or men who pass a severe test will no longer die because they will not sin anymore. Millions will deflect in the Little Season when the test is on each individual, and the unworthy will be weeded out.

Although the number of angels who remained loyal at the time of the Flood exceeded the number who fell, there was still a great problem. Take New York City, for example. Of the, say, 10 million people, if 4 million were murderers and robbers, it would be difficult to govern the city. The criminal element would be heavily armed, making it impossible to have law and order. Hence the fallen angels were so numerous that the holy angels could not control the situation or uplift humanity. Violence in the earth—and lust—got increasingly worse when the fallen angels materialized. Neither angels nor men can pull themselves out of sin, out of the fall of Adam and its results.

Tried and *proven* humanity will be “the children of God.” Revelation 21:7 is a proof text: “He that *overcometh* shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be *my son*.” The Greek word *anastasis* signifies not just perfect human beings but perfect *loyal and tried* human beings.

These are “children of the resurrection [*anastasis*].” Second Death will always operate as a principle, but those who are tried and *prove loyal* will not disobey. There will be no more sin on the earth after the Little Season.

Angels and men who will not die anymore have mortal life, which is life sustained by food, drink, and sleep. Unlike those with divine nature, who will be able to give life to others (John 4:14), angels and men will not have life within themselves. Moreover, for those who get proven mortal life, death will always be a theoretical possibility.

Luke 20:37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Jesus stopped the Sadducees in their tracks, for they were not able to follow his reasoning. Now he changed the subject, for he knew that they did not believe in the resurrection and that they had asked the question to stumble him.

Why did Jesus say, “Now that the dead are raised, *even Moses showed*”? Jesus mentioned Moses because the Sadducees believed in the Pentateuch and the resurrection was taught there. The Sadducees thought the resurrection was a brand-new teaching introduced by Jesus, but *Moses* had recorded these words, so *he* believed in the resurrection and they accepted *him*.

Q: The beginning of verse 37 might seem to contradict the Scripture “no man hath ascended up to heaven.” How would we harmonize “Now that the dead *are raised*”?

A: The thought is, “With regard to our belief that there is *to be* a resurrection.”

Luke 20:38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

Jesus continued to teach the Sadducees that there was a resurrection. They were schooled in philosophy, but Jesus’ reasoning was far above them. They thought that God was alive but that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were permanently dead.

Jesus used the tactic “Does not reason tell you that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom God loved, will be raised? God said He would give them land. If we *reason* on the subject, the Pentateuch teaches the resurrection.”

Luke 20:39 Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said.

Why did some of the scribes say, “Master, thou hast well said”? Others were listening. The scribes and Pharisees believed in the resurrection, so in this matter, they were glad to see Jesus best the Sadducees.

Luke 20:40 And after that they durst not ask him any question at all.

Luke 20:41 And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David’s son?

Jesus now asked the question “How say they that Christ is David’s son?” Details of other Gospels show that Jesus had just been accused of blasphemy for saying he was the Son of God. Those hearing the question should have reasoned, “For the Messiah to be the son of David, he has to be *born as a human being* and not come out of the sky and suddenly appear as a flesh being. He has to be born of the lineage of David.” Incidentally, such a one *could not be God*. Jesus was a *human* Messiah.

Luke 20:42 And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit

thou on my right hand,

Luke 20:43 Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

In other words, a human being, born of David, would be David's Lord, David's superior. Jesus quoted Psalm 110:1, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Luke 20:44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?

Jesus asked an *excellent* question: "Since David called him 'Lord,' how can Christ be his *son*?" The religious leaders could not answer his complex question because they had not thought that deeply on the Scriptures.

Luke 20:45 Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,

Luke 20:46 Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

Luke 20:47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

Verse 45 shows that the common people had been listening to the exchange, and now Jesus specifically addressed his disciples. "Damnation" means judgment.

We must THINK, ANALYZE, AND WEIGH the Scriptures. For example, how could one receive *greater* condemnation if he is cast into hellfire, where individuals are theoretically roasted *eternally*?

Luke 21:1 And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

Luke 21:2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

Luke 21:3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:

Luke 21:4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

This incident sounds like the same occasion as the end of the previous chapter where Jesus criticized the scribes and Pharisees. As he was observing rich people casting their gifts into the Temple treasury, he saw a poor widow cast in two mites. "Casting" was done ostentatiously or quietly depending on the nature of the individual.

The comparison is that the rich gave of their abundance and the poor widow gave of her necessity. Jesus said her gift was more than all of theirs, for although the rich gave liberally, they gave to be *seen of men*. The poor widow cast in the two mites of her "living"; that is, she had to sacrifice some necessity of life in order to put the two mites in the treasury.

Note: Jesus did not say that the rich should not give but that they should give without show and as a sacrifice. The poor widow's offering was more appreciated.

Luke 21:5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

Luke 21:6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Luke 21:7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

Matthew 24:1-3 and Mark 13:1-4 are parallel accounts. As the disciples were admiring the Temple buildings, Mark tells us that one of them prompted the following discussion. Matthew shows that Jesus did not fully comment until he had reached the Mount of Olives and sat down. Then Peter, Andrew, James, and John came to him privately with questions. These four were the apostles Jesus favored most (until Paul came). The inclusion of Andrew proves that he has the fifth position of honor on the high priest's breastplate of judgment.

“There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Jesus was referring to the destruction of the Temple buildings and wall in AD 69-70. (However, the Western Wall was not completely leveled—its Herodian masonry still exists today.) The Temple consisted of buildings plural, including outbuildings.

Luke 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

Luke 21:9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

Luke 21:10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

Luke 21:11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

Verses 8-11 are similar to the Matthew 24:4-8 and Mark 13:5-8 accounts, serving as three witnesses. After enumerating earthquakes, wars, pestilences, etc., Jesus said that these are the beginning of sorrows. Hence he was not discussing the beginning of the Gospel Age but what would happen after his demise, resurrection, and ascension. Various world events would occur, affecting the Christian. False Christs would appear. The point was that *time* would elapse before the end of the age.

For the most part, Luke 21:8-24 goes up only until AD 73 in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem. Early Christians were given advance advice on what to do when armies would encircle Jerusalem. They were to flee to the mountains and not tarry when an opportunity arose to escape. When Vespasian subsequently encircled the city, the Jews could not get out. Then the emperor in Rome died and four generals, including Vespasian, returned to Rome, wanting to become emperor. Vespasian's son, Titus, was left in charge of the siege, but in the changing of the guard, the siege was momentarily relaxed, providing an opportunity to flee. Those who obeyed Jesus' advice in Luke escaped. Some fled to Petra in Jordan.

The first part of Luke 21 emphasizes the literal trouble that came on Jerusalem, the natural picture, whereas Matthew 24 and Mark 13 stress the spiritual aspect, speaking about the papal persecutions centuries later. The trouble in AD 70 was somewhat of a foretaste of the trouble at the end of Gospel Age with regard to the fall of Christendom when the consecrated are called to come out of Babylon. The warning to early Christians in literal Jerusalem was to flee lest they die or go into slavery (verse 24). The warning to Christians at the end of the Gospel Age is to flee Babylon lest they partake of the plagues or (eventually) lose their spiritual life.

Luke 21:12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

Luke 21:13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

Luke 21:14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

Luke 21:15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Luke 21:16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

Luke 21:17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

Luke 21:18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

Luke 21:19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

Luke 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

Luke 21:21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

Luke 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Luke 21:23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

Luke 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

“But *before* all these [events], they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you” (verse 12). Luke’s Gospel was concerned about the siege in AD 70. “[*Natural*] Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (verse 24). Luke was not saying that the Times of the Gentiles started in AD 70, for they began in 606 BC, but that from AD 70 on, the condition of Israel would be worse than earlier in their history. For example, under the Romans, the Jews had considerable liberty, and Jesus was able to preach. Luke meant that the lot of the Jew would be especially hard from AD 70 to 1914, the remainder of the 2,520 years of Gentile Times. And *Jerusalem* was trodden down.

Jesus’ discussion with the four apostles may have lasted four or five hours. Then Matthew, Mark (on behalf of Peter), and Luke (later for Paul) recorded, with the help of the Holy Spirit, what they thought was important.

Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 give world events that would affect the Christian, with the earlier part of Luke 21 concentrating on the *Jewish* Christian. We should not be surprised if we are imprisoned, tortured, and put to death, for Christians down through the age had this experience. This advance information is important lest faith crumble when such things happen.

All of the events lead up to the end, but the end is not yet. The Gospel Age is the “beginning(s) of sorrows” (Matt. 24:8; Mark 13:8), and some sorrows (such as the Inquisition) have been severe. The Time of Trouble, yet future, is the climax.

Thus far the three Gospels are bringing us up to the Harvest period. Matthew 24:14 reads, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end [of the age—the Harvest] come.” The “gospel of the kingdom [the Bible]” was preached to all nations before the Harvest. The printing of Bibles after the French Revolution and its translation into many languages laid the foundation for present truth.

Luke 21:25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

The parallel accounts for Luke 21:25-28 are Matthew 24:29-31 and Mark 13:24-27. The traditional explanation of verse 25 is that it refers to unusual *literal* phenomena happening in the heavens: the dark day in 1780 and a spectacular shooting-star exhibition in 1833, which occurred just before and after the Time of the End started. It is true that these were significant signs, but Matthew 24:29 and Mark 13:24 say, “*Immediately after the tribulation of those days,*” and the tribulation refers to the death of the feet members. Hence *after* the completion of the true Church, there will be a grander fulfillment when the nominal systems cease.

Luke 21:26 Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

Luke 21:27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

In the *Volumes*, the Pastor said this verse was fulfilled when Jesus returned in 1874, and then progressively from that date. But the second and third paragraphs of an article on page 420 in the *Sermon Book*, written shortly before his death, say that this verse is *future* and was not the *parousia*. The sign of the Son of man in heaven is related to the *epiphania*, or shining forth of judgment, which the *world* will recognize. God’s vengeance and righteous indignation will be the sign that indicates Jesus has taken his great power and begun his reign. The *epiphania* will be the revealing of Jesus’ presence to the world.

Luke 21:28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

We are *beginning* to see “these things” *start* to be fulfilled. Therefore, we can lift up our heads, for our deliverance draws near. We can see the beginning, but the *real signs* in the sun, moon, and stars are *future*, after the feet members die. A sign of Jesus’ presence *to the Church* was the faithful and wise servant. The sign of the Son of man *to the world* will be the flaming trouble and judgment yet future. Zephaniah 1:14,15 ties in with verses 25 and 26: “The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.”

Luke 21:29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

Luke 21:30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

Luke 21:31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

For verses 29-31, the parallel texts are Matthew 24:32-35 and Mark 13:28-31. Jesus spoke a parable: "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees. When they shoot forth, you will know that summer is near at hand." In regard to Israel, the budding of the fig tree occurred in 1878, when Jews were permitted to buy land in Palestine from Turkey and hence could start colonizing. The first colony, Petatikva, was established in 1878. Therefore, when 1878 came, the end-of-the-age Harvest had begun and "summer" (the Kingdom) was near. In other words, Jesus was saying that those who would begin to see these things would know that the Kingdom was near.

But why did Jesus add the words "and all the trees"? Not only did Israel, the "fig tree," come forth during the Harvest period from 1878 on, but other nations as well. Africa, for example, has been carved up into many nations. Therefore, the prophecy was that when the fig tree (Israel) and the other trees (nations) would begin to shoot forth, to put forth leaves, these signs would indicate the nearness of "summer" (the Kingdom).

Tel Aviv means "mound of beginning." "Aviv" is Abib, the first month of the Hebrew calendar. Petatikva, meaning "door of hope," was next to Tel Aviv.

Luke 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

With the Jewish nation beginning in 1878, the 120-year parallel to Noah's day ends in 1998. With the beginning of the Harvest in 1874 as the starting date, the 120 years end in 1994.

Luke 21:33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Jesus was saying, "I am declaring an *important prophecy*, and every jot and tittle will be fulfilled." "Heaven" is the ecclesiastical systems, and "earth" is society, governments. The *present* heavens and earth will pass away.

Q: How can we prove that a "generation" is 120 years?

A: As time goes by and dates come and go, we are left with only the 120 years. Other possibilities in the past were 33 1/2 years, 40 years, 70 years, 80 years, and 100 years.

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Luke 21:35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

The Gospels of Matthew and Mark do not contain this caution about hearts being overcharged. Luke's addition indicates there would be a tendency at the end of the age toward surfeiting, drunkenness, and too much attention to the cares of this life. The seeking of pleasure is a problem today. All of these dangers would creep in because of the length of the "generation." With the time being long, prophecies lose their vitality unless one is diligent.

Those who are "overcharged with surfeiting" are seeking pleasure, relaxing, and enjoying the so-called good things, whereas the Scriptures admonish us to do the opposite, particularly at the end of the age: TAKE HEED and WATCH (Mark 13:33). We should be alert as to what is

happening in the world and in the Church.

Those who are overcharged with spiritual “drunkenness” are intoxicated with worldly doctrines. Revelation 17:5 tells that the harlot got the *nations* drunk with the wine of her false doctrine, but in 2 Timothy 4:3,4, the Apostle Paul prophetically warned those consecrated *individuals* who are living at the end of the age of the danger of unsound doctrine and of having itching ears and teachers with itching ears. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” Paul was saying that the time would come when the hearers would prefer teachers of false doctrine (false love, for example). The relaxation of principle is the opposite of diligent watching.

Those who are overcharged with the “cares of this life” are devoting too much attention to the food we eat, the clothes we wear, our jobs, etc. We need food and clothing as necessities, but we should not spend a disproportionate amount of time and thought on these. We are to have no *anxious* care. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matt. 6:34). We are not to worry about things a week, a month, or a year from now. If we do, we are being overtaken by the cares of this life. Such worrying affects our spiritual life: our meditations, prayers, fellowship, and study.

The day will come “as a snare ... on all them that dwell on the face of the *whole earth*”; that is, worrying about the future will be an *international* condition. When the Christian sees these things happening, he should look up, for his deliverance draws nigh. We long for the reign of Christ and are to “pray always” that we “may be accounted worthy to escape” the trouble that is coming on the world (the passing away of “heaven” and “earth”) and to be with Jesus (“to stand before the Son of man”). The Great Company will be here as orthodox Christendom falls.

Matthew 24:20-22 gives more information on standing before the Son of man. Jesus said (paraphrased): “Pray that your flight is not in the winter of the antitypical Sabbath Day, for then shall be *great tribulation*. Unless those days are shortened, no flesh will survive, but through the elect, the days will be shortened.” In other words, if Jesus did not intervene, using his elect Church to stop the anarchy and trouble, no flesh would survive—*worldwide*.

In the parallel text Mark 13:35-37, Jesus said, “Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” In other words, if we do not watch, Jesus will come *suddenly* and find us sleeping (as in the Wise and Foolish Virgins Parable and in the Song of Solomon, where the little sister does not get out of bed in time). Jesus repeats the word “WATCH.”

“Morning,” the last watch, would be the predawn hours of 3 to 6 a.m. just before daylight, and “daylight” symbolizes Messiah’s Kingdom. Jesus came to his disciples on the raging Sea of Galilee in the beginning of the last watch while the boat was rocking in the tempest.

Q: Do the four periods, or watches, of Jesus’ expected coming tie in with the four dates of Elijah’s expected translation in 2 Kings 2?

A: Yes.

Surfeiting, drunkenness, and the cares of this life all produce sleepiness. The cares of this life drain our vitality and fatigue us. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8 is a warning not to be asleep or drunken. Admonition: Be sober and watch; be children of light, children of the day. 2 Peter 3:10-13 shows

world conditions will radically change in *great* trouble. Admonition: Walk in holiness and stay close to the Lord. Even the world is told to seek righteousness and meekness (Zeph. 2:3). Those of the unconsecrated who are not contentious and not too involved in worldly politics may be hidden.

Luke 21:37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

Luke 21:38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

All the people came to hear Jesus—he was very popular at this point. During his last week, he taught in the Temple during the day and stayed at the home of Lazarus at night. The last two nights, however, he stayed in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Luke 22:39 says his custom was to go to the Mount of Olives, and that is why Judas was sure he could give the betrayal kiss there.

Luke 22:1 Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is another name for the Feast of Passover.

Luke 22:2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

The chief priests and scribes wanted to kill Jesus but feared his popularity with the people. Hence they were clandestinely trying to devise a method or scheme whereby they could put him to death yet retain the esteem of the people.

Luke 22:3 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

This verse is sobering, for it shows that Satan will enter any one of us if we relax our guard. God's statement to Cain in Genesis 4:7 that "sin lieth at the door" indicates that we must firmly resist Satan, for his thinking can penetrate us. The test is whether or not we succumb.

Luke 22:4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

Luke 22:5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.

Luke 22:6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

To the chief priests and scribes, the coming of Judas seemed like a providential answer for accomplishing Jesus' death. Other Gospels show that Judas arranged the betrayal two days before the Crucifixion.

The Gospels of Matthew (26:1-13) and Mark (14:1-9) furnish details of another event that took place two days before the Passover, namely, the anointing of Jesus' head by a woman. Matthew tells that the anointing occurred in the house of Simon the leper (the father of Judas) in Bethany. The disciples were indignant about the "waste," saying the ointment could have been sold and the money given to the poor. Mark adds the detail that the worth of the precious ointment was 300 pence (a year's salary, a penny a day). In both accounts, Jesus said to leave the woman alone, for she had done a good work and the poor would always be with them,

whereas he would not. Following the anointing, Judas went to the chief priests.

Luke did not tell of the anointing of Jesus' head because Matthew and Mark already were the two witnesses. The omission is one proof that the Gospel of Luke was written after Matthew and Mark. The fact that only John mentions a slightly earlier anointing (six days before the Passover) of Jesus' feet, also in Bethany but in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, shows that the Gospel of John was written last, to fill in details missing in the other three Gospels (John 12:1-8).

John 11:2 refers to Mary as the one who wiped Jesus' feet with her hair and says her brother was Lazarus, yet the incident is not covered until John 12. John used the same technique in Revelation 11:7 by identifying the beast as the one that came out of the bottomless pit but then did not discuss the pit condition until Revelation 17:8.

The affection manifested in the anointing shows the women perceived more than the men regarding Jesus's coming death. He had said clearly that he would die and be betrayed, but the men were in a fog. The Master fully appreciated the heart devotion of the women. The anointing of both his head and his feet during the last week of his earthly ministry suggests an antitypical application at the end of the age with the feet members.

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, there was a third anointing when Mary Magdalene, a sinner, anointed Jesus' feet with her hair, tears, and ointment (Luke 7:36-50).

Luke 22:7 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

Luke 22:8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover lamb. They were the two most trusted and honored apostles (until Paul came along).

Luke 22:9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

“But where should we prepare the Passover lamb?” they asked.

Luke 22:10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

Jesus replied that when they entered the city, a man bearing a pitcher of water would meet them, and they were to follow the man into the house he would enter. It was unusual for a *man* to carry the water, for this task was normally handled by women or children. Not only did Jesus' instruction reveal his foreknowledge and capability as Messiah to know the prayers and heart condition of others, but also it inculcated FAITH, for obviously, the man who owned the house must have prayed for a way to help Jesus.

Luke 22:11 And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

Peter and John were to say to the “goodman of the house,” the householder, “The Master asks, ‘Where is the guest chamber for me to eat the Passover lamb with my disciples?’” Such a question would be very startling to the householder—like Jesus' statement to Zacchaeus in the tree earlier. Jesus did not say to ask *if* they could have the Passover there, but “Where is the guest chamber? Which room?” He was saying in effect, “I *will* keep the Passover at your house.”

The Day of Passover (or Unleavened Bread) is the 14th of Nisan. The Feast of Passover (or Unleavened Bread) begins on the 15th of Nisan.

Luke 22:12 And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

Jesus told Peter and John they would be shown “a large upper room furnished.” By *faith*, the householder had gone ahead and made the necessary preparations without any guarantee whatsoever that anyone would come. The table, utensils, bolster pillows, etc., were all furnished.

Luke 22:13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Peter and John “made ready the passover.” Since the room was already furnished and ready, this meant they killed the Passover lamb and flayed, prepared, and roasted it.

Luke 22:14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

Luke 22:15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

At the correct time (after 6 p.m.), Jesus and the Twelve reclined at the table. (They lay down on one elbow with feet extended out behind them.) Jesus then said, “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.” He *heartily* desired to eat with them, even though death was imminent.

The room had to be large in order to accommodate the low table (about 8 inches high) and the 13 with their legs extended. The table was horseshoe-shaped so that the one serving them could walk in the center and not trip on their legs.

Luke 22:16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Those with the divine nature do not have to eat, but they can do so for commemorative reasons, for example, as stated here. Jesus was referring to the *Passover*, so a *lamb*, a *meal*, will be involved. We can surmise that in this future eating, the meal will take some time, during which Jesus will talk on some events that happened in the past. He will speak much as he did the night he instituted the Memorial and no doubt give a historical review of certain things. Probably only the 144,000 will partake of this feast, whereas the Great Company will be present at the subsequent marriage supper.

Luke 22:17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

Judas was still present at this time—through the partaking of the emblems and even for the foot washing a little earlier (John 13:4-17).

The various Gospel accounts need to be compared. Matthew and Mark show that the bread was partaken of first, but Luke mentions (1) the cup, (2) the bread, and (3) again the cup. Therefore, verse 17 means that Jesus was merely telling the apostles that the cup would be divided among them *later*, after the bread. In other words, he gave an instruction and then set the cup aside until they had finished eating. The *one* cup was to be divided among them. Each one would take a drink from that cup, but for the time being, it was set aside.

Luke 22:18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

Jesus said, “I will not drink of the fruit of the vine [again], until the kingdom of God shall come.” His words prove there are corresponding trees, fruit, houses, grass, etc., in heaven—comparable for spirit beings. Spirit beings (even those with the divine nature) can eat for social purposes, fellowship, and conversing.

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Luke 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

The institution of the emblems was very dramatic. The bread was partaken of first. “And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:24-26). A little time elapsed after Jesus said he would not drink of the fruit of the vine again until the Kingdom (verse 18). One proof is that when the cup was passed, Jesus had to drink *first*, and that did not happen until verse 20.

Jesus broke the unleavened bread into pieces and said, “This *represents* my body.” (It could not be his actual body, for he had not yet died on the Cross.) The bread represents Jesus’ body, his flesh, his humanity, which was sacrificed for us (and for the world—1 John 2:2).

Jesus said, “This do in remembrance of *me*.” Thus the Memorial, a distinct new service, should be observed *annually* at Passover time, and it especially commemorates the sacrifice *of our Lord*, not the Church’s share in the sin offering, which we can reflect on the rest of the year.

Now came the partaking of the cup, which represents the new testament (the New Covenant) in Jesus’ shed blood. “After supper” means after Jesus had supped, after he had taken a drink (1 Cor. 11:25).

Note: Jesus did not eat of the bread, but he did drink of the cup, which is larger than just Jesus’ death. On the Memorial, the cup represents only his death, but on the other days of the year, it includes our participation, our partaking. It is a cup of ignominy, suffering, and shame.

There is a distinction in definitions. A “sip” is the tiniest amount, a taste. To “sup” is to take a mouthful and hence is a little larger than a sip. “Supper” means both eating and drinking, and is thus a meal with food and beverage—a greater quantity.

Let us consider again 1 Corinthians 11:26, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the *Lord’s death* till he come.” Every year Jesus’ death is to be memorialized. We are to do this *annually* “till he come”—until the day Jesus comes to take the feet members home, until the rapture. He will take the spirit, the life, and the soul of each of the feet members. How sad it will be for the consecrated who are left behind after the Church is complete. At Memorial season the next year, the ones left behind will still partake of the emblems but without the full significance of the cup. They will continue to receive the benefit of Jesus’ death but not have a share in the sin offering. They will still need the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28).

The feet members will escape the great tribulation coming on the world, but the Great

Company must wash their robes in the trouble (Rev. 7:14). The sequence of the various “times” of trouble are (1) on the feet members (the true Church); (2) on the nominal Church; (3) on the Great Company; (4) on the world, the nations; and (5) on Israel (Jacob’s Trouble).

Luke 22:21 But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

Luke 22:22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

Luke 22:23 And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

Jesus mentioned the betrayal in several ways, but this particular mention is in the proper sequence. Judas partook of both the bread and the wine and left afterwards (John 13:30).

According to custom, the gravy-soaked sop was given at the *end* of a meal to the most favored one (John 13:26,27). The fact that Judas was given the sop proves he was there for the bread and the cup. By being in sequence, Luke’s Gospel is also a proof, for after the bread and the cup, Jesus mentioned that one of those present would betray him.

Comment: Judas had to be present for the bread and the wine because of the antitype. The Judas class will feast with the truly consecrated.

Luke 22:24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

There had *previously* been a strife among the apostles as to who was greatest (see the *Diaglott*). Jesus now responded and gave a lesson (verses 24-30). For the chronological order of these remarks, see John 13:4-12 in regard to Jesus’ washing the disciples’ feet.

Jesus said that for the disciples to be wholly cleansed, it was sufficient for him to wash just their feet; that is, in regard to the Christian’s daily walk, if one is repentant and asks forgiveness on a *daily* basis, he is cleansed. Jesus said all were cleansed by the foot washing except one—his words infer that Judas was still present.

The Gospel of John does not mention the bread and wine symbols, which presumably occurred earlier. In John 13:25, Jesus was asked who the betrayer was. After Jesus washed their feet and returned to the table, he kept repeating that someone would betray him. He added that the betrayer was the one to whom he would give the sop.

Luke 22:25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

Jesus had just acted as a servant among the disciples by washing their feet. Then he said that Gentile kings exercise lordship over their subjects, but it should be different in the Church. There the greatest should consider himself the least. Jesus said that he was among them as a servant. In other words, verses 24-30 were spoken as an object lesson after he had washed their feet. The Luke sequence is correct, but it omits the foot washing incident, which occurred just before verse 25.

Luke 22:26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

Jesus said that the “greatest” one should be as the “younger”—how? The oldest, the firstborn,

had certain privileges, whereas the younger brother had a more menial position. Therefore, the greatest Christian should act as the humblest. From another standpoint, the most mature and experienced Christian should be as one who is inexperienced. For example, the Pastor did not go around giving out tracts, generally speaking, because his time was used for a higher service. He was of more benefit to the brethren by giving discourses, etc., but he could hand out tracts as a lesson. For Jesus to have washed the disciples' feet is startling because he was *far more important* than the Pastor. The apostles were astonished.

Luke 22:27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

The one who is served is greater than the servant, all things being equal, but Jesus was the one *doing* the serving in washing the disciples' feet. Since he performed miracles without them—he healed the sick, the blind, the possessed, etc.—he could have said, "I do not need the disciples." Instead he took the time to teach them over and over again, even when fatigued, and this was especially true with the twelve apostles, a *little* group. The apostles were his chief concern, so he served and instructed them. Verses 25-30 refer particularly to the foot-washing lesson, but Jesus had been doing servile things all along for the Twelve in regard to the time and attention he gave them. Why? Because it was the Father's will to have twelve apostles.

Luke 22:28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

The (eleven) apostles had been loyal to Jesus throughout his ministry. As far as they knew, they would suffer any consequences he would have. They followed him for 3 1/2 years, up until his betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before he died.

Luke 22:29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

Jesus' words sound like Revelation 3:21, where he promised that the Little Flock will sit down in his throne as he sat down in the Father's throne.

Luke 22:30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

In glory, the Little Flock will be able to eat and drink for pleasure, fellowship, and discussion. The twelve tribes of Israel will become the twelve divisions of mankind.

Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

Why did Jesus address Peter as Simon, and why did he use the name twice? Jesus was trying to alert Peter. Peter's former name was used, for this incident took place prior to his conversion with the Holy Spirit when he would become a piece of "rock." For Jesus to use "Simon" was formal and like a little withdrawal or an admonition. The purpose of the first "Simon" was to get the ear of Peter, who was with the group of eleven others. It attracted his attention for the solemn warning to follow. The second "Simon" was for emphasis.

How would Satan sift a Christian "as wheat"? Normally a Christian is likened to wheat in a favorable sense, but this was a reverse twist. Satan wanted Peter to be sifted *through* the sieve like a kernel of wheat and *be lost* as one of the Lord's.

Luke 22:32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Jesus countered with “But *I* have prayed for you, so that your faith will not fail.” Jesus *foreknew* the testing to come and had *already* prayed for Peter. Satan wanted to attack the leadership. He had already gotten Judas, who had the highest position, and now he was after Peter. (Jesus’ words are proof that it is very dangerous to be a teacher in the Church, for Satan especially wants to sift the teachers. If he got Peter, the next target would be John, then James.) Jesus knew Judas would be the betrayer. Otherwise, he would have brought Judas more into his confidence (as he did with Peter, James, and John), for Judas had the number one position on the high priest’s breastplate. Jesus probably also knew about Paul being the replacement because before his crucifixion, he gave an outline of the whole Gospel Age (Matthew 24). He probably even knew the year of the completion of the Church but not the day and hour. If John knew Judas had his hand in the bag, Jesus certainly knew too (John 12:6). In short, Peter had leadership qualities, and Satan wanted to sift him.

It is comforting to know that Jesus prayed for Peter. Peter’s two epistles are proof that he matured. In 1 Peter 5:8, he said, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” Peter was speaking from personal experience.

Jesus prayed that Peter’s *faith* would not fail, but notice Jesus’ confidence: “When thou art converted, *strengthen thy brethren.*” Peter’s denials put him right on the edge of the cliff, but Jesus’ prayer was effectual. This shows that Satan can only go as far as permitted. The barrier that would hinder him would have a lot to do with the individual and whether or not his character was remiss. The Great Company will purposely be turned over to Satan with the hope that their spirit will be saved. Jesus’ words in verse 32 show that Peter was a leader who could help the brethren.

Luke 22:33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

Peter’s heart was right—he had good intentions—but he spoke too hastily. James 1:19 tells us to be swift to hear and slow to speak. Peter should have qualified his words: “Lord, I *want* to be ready.”

Luke 22:34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Jesus replied, “I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day before you have denied three times that you know me.” When Peter did deny Jesus, he would review all these sayings in his mind, especially the words addressed to him personally.

Luke 22:35 And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

Earlier Jesus sent the disciples out without purse, scrip, and shoes. He now asked, “Did you lack anything at that time?” They replied, “No.”

Luke 22:36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

At this point, Jesus gave the opposite advice: “Take a purse, a small suitcase, and a sword. If you do not have a sword, sell your extra garment and use the money to buy a sword.”

Luke 22:37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

Luke 22:38 And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

Jesus was giving a far-reaching lesson. In Israel, which was “local,” his disciples did not need purse, scrip, or sword, for they were among fellow Jews. But the opposite advice, the advice to take these items, would apply after his death when they went into other nations, including hostile territory with bandits and robbers who waylaid travelers. Consider how much territory Paul covered. He worked in one place, accumulated a little savings, and then went on to another city where he repeated the cycle. He needed the “purse” (money), the satchel for a change of clothes and any writings, and a sword.

Jesus said it was enough that two disciples had swords. In other words, two swords were enough for Jesus’ purpose that night, which was to prove he could have fought the soldiers but willingly submitted to arrest instead.

The wisdom of taking a sword was not to use it but to carry it. If the disciples had no sword when they traveled, they would be inviting attack from robbers. (This was a literal sword, not the figurative sword of truth.) Therefore, to carry a literal sword should not bother their conscience. Swords were also used to fend off wild beasts and to kill and prepare animals for food. Even if they caught a fish, they had to use a sword to kill it. The lesson for us is that for a Christian to say, “I would *never* have a gun,” is foolish, is not Scriptural, and can be self-righteous. There were Christians in pioneer days. Didn’t they need guns out in the wilderness? Jesus was giving literal and practical temporal advice.

Jesus said, “The Scripture ‘And he was reckoned among the transgressors’ must be fulfilled.” This Scripture, Isaiah 53:12, may have puzzled Jesus. For a time, he may have thought the fulfillment occurred when Peter cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant and the “transgressors” were trying to apprehend him. Also, he did not know in advance that he would feel forsaken on the Cross, that the cord of fellowship with his Father would be broken momentarily, that he had to experience the guilt Adam had felt. Isaiah 53:12 was fulfilled when Jesus was crucified between two thieves (“transgressors”).

Luke 22:39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

Jesus went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives. The apostles minus Judas followed him.

Luke 22:40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

Luke 22:41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

At Gethsemane, at the Mount of Olives, he said to the apostles, “Pray that ye enter not into temptation.” This was a timely instruction because Jesus knew temptation would follow shortly.

Other Gospels show that a separation occurred among the apostles. Three were closer and eight were more distant from where he prayed. At Jesus’ instruction, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, went farther so that they were only “a stone’s cast” away.

Jesus “kneeled down, and prayed.” The Gospel of Matthew expresses more emotion. First, Jesus kneeled down. Then, as he agonized, he prostrated himself on the ground.

Luke 22:42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

Jesus was willing to die on the Cross, so the “cup” he prayed to have removed was not death *per se* but death *as a blasphemer* of the Father. He knew he had to suffer the ignominious death of crucifixion. Therefore, the *shame* of his being called a blasphemer was the condition he asked to have removed. Jesus knew the Scripture “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Deut. 21:22,23; Gal. 3:13). Not only would it be a curse to die in that manner, but it would be a blatant contradiction of his being the Messiah, the Sent One of God. However, if the cup was not removed, Jesus was fully submissive: “Not my will, but thine, be done!”

We know Jesus did not ask to be spared death, for he had taught that to save one’s life under such a circumstance meant he would lose it and, therefore, was not fit for the Kingdom of God. Jesus merely expressed a wish or desire. We, too, might ask for something not in our best interest as a new creature, but by praying, “Thy will be done,” the request is softened. The added words also show that our will is to do the *Father’s* will.

Luke 22:43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

Luke 22:44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Verses 43 and 44 are spurious in most (and the three most ancient) manuscripts. See the *Diaglott* footnote for these verses. No other Gospel mentions this incident either. Nevertheless, after the prayer circumstance, Jesus was fearless, calm, assured, and at peace, so he did get an answer to his prayer. Although he had to experience the cup, he was strengthened for what lay ahead (Heb. 5:7).

Luke 22:45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

Luke 22:46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

Other Gospels show that Jesus prayed three times. Again Jesus cautioned, “Pray [and do not sleep], lest ye enter into temptation.”

Of the eleven apostles, only Peter, James, and John could have heard Jesus praying. Although Matthew was there in the Garden, Peter is probably the one who told him what had transpired. Also, Mark was written through Peter—Mark copied and followed Matthew, being briefer and directing his Gospel to the Romans. (Very little in Mark is different from Matthew.) Luke got his information from Paul, and Paul got his information from Peter and James, the Lord’s brother.

Peter, James, and John were in a stupor with sorrow. The three were conscious but sort of in a trance. To see Jesus falling down was very startling.

Jesus rebuked the apostles for not staying awake. But when he said in Matthew, “Sleep on now,” it was a reassurance of his affection for them lest their drowsiness later overshadow their memory of the event with guilt.

Picture the future experience of the feet members. As the hour of trial approaches, prayer and alertness will be necessary regarding the severe temptation to come. There will be a test prior to the actual death of the feet members, as pictured by Jesus. The sleeping apostles represent

the Great Company. Hence the temporary failure of some of the consecrated to act will separate the faithful feet members from the Great Company (also shown by the separation of Elijah from Elisha and the wise from the foolish virgins). Jesus' instruction is to **PRAY THAT YOU ENTER NOT INTO TEMPTATION.**

At least Peter and John were brave enough to follow Jesus to the scene of the trial. However, that does not mean the Little Flock will be so brave that they will not have any fears, anxieties, or discouraging moments, for Jesus' soul was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" and he feared he had not done the Father's will perfectly (Matt. 26:38). True courage is overcoming fear—as faith conquers, it is taking one step forward and not drawing back.

Luke 22:47 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

Jesus heard and beheld the multitude. Judas, who "went before them," drew near and kissed Jesus. He would have kissed Jesus twice, once on each cheek, putting his hands on the Master's shoulders.

Luke 22:48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

Jesus had warned the apostles shortly before—in fact, twice—to pray lest they enter into temptation. It was especially important for them to be alert in regard to the significance of events. In the antitype, if brethren are not alert, they will miss the responsibilities of the hour. The study of prophecy is **NECESSARY**, and prayer must accompany that study as the time draws near.

The kiss of Judas was the highest form of hypocrisy. He was under the guise of a *friend* doing the kissing, yet he knew he was there to *betray* Jesus. By means of the kiss, Judas identified Jesus so that the multitude could apprehend him. This suggests that the Judas class will be with the feet members right up to the end of their freedom. Judas was even at the Memorial for most of the time. Now he reappeared for Jesus' incarceration—and in the guise of a friend.

Luke 22:49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

The apostles—probably the two who had swords (Peter and either James or John)—asked, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" The other eight apostles probably fled earlier than these three. John's Gospel states that when Jesus said, "I am he," the multitude fell backward. Then he answered, "Jesus of Nazareth," and submitted (John 18:6,7). Peter's using the sword and Jesus' causing the crowd to fall backward prove that Jesus' death was *voluntary* and that had he wanted, his disciples would have protected him like an army.

Luke 22:50 And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

Peter did not wait for an answer. He impulsively used the sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant. This incident shows Peter's zeal—and that Jesus had servants who were willing to die for him, as Peter had boasted earlier: "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." Then the account adds, "Likewise also said all the disciples" (Matt. 26:35). No doubt Peter was trying to cut off the head of Malchus, but the blow was deflected (perhaps by an angel).

This incident reveals that a part of Peter's character needed strengthening. Ostracism and being looked down on go in deeply on those individuals who are approbative by nature (influenced by what others think). By God's grace and strength, that trait has to be overcome. A person

can be very courageous and yet fearful. Peter was willing to die earlier yet could not properly answer the verbal questions later regarding his being a disciple of Jesus.

Luke 22:51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

Jesus told Peter, “Stop! That is enough. Put down your sword.” Then he healed the ear. What would Malchus have thought when Jesus “healed” the ear to the place where it had been, restoring a *new* ear?

Luke 22:52 Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

A rabble crowd had come out to apprehend Jesus. Hence Jesus asked the chief priests, captains, and elders, “Are you coming after a *thief* with your swords and staves?” The crowd included servants of the priests and elders.

Luke 22:53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

Jesus said, “When I was daily with you in the Temple, you did not stretch forth a hand against me [openly], but this is [now] *your* hour, and the power of darkness is operating.” Previously they had tried to trip him up verbally, and they had connived for his betrayal. Now they were acting under cloak of darkness.

Peter showed his intent to *defend* the Master. Judas showed his intent to *betray* the Master, and he finalized his intent, sealing his doom by the betrayal kiss. Later he was sorrowful and returned the money, but it was too late. Peter *did not premeditate* the denials. Judas *did premeditate* the betrayal. Peter’s trauma came on him unexpectedly and suddenly, but the experience strengthened him for his ministry—he became a “rock.” Before that, he was courageous but not stable.

Luke 22:54 Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest’s house. And Peter followed afar off.

Luke 22:55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

Luke 22:56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

Luke 22:57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

Verses 54-57 give the circumstances of Peter’s first denial. The fire “in the midst of the hall” was actually in the midst of the *courtyard* of the palace of Annas, the older high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas. The courtyard, which had columns and a roof, was a walkway (like a corridor). Servants of the high priest’s household were there, and Peter was among them.

It took courage for Peter and John to follow Jesus—and shows Peter did not premeditate the denials. He just did not realize how under certain peculiar unforeseen circumstances, even the bravest can quiver. The incident revealed a trait that needed strengthening in Peter’s character. Also, Peter did not yet have the Holy Spirit. His experience is a lesson for the consecrated here at the end of the age. The feet members must watch and pray for strength.

Luke 22:58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

Luke 22:59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen.

Luke 22:60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

Luke 22:61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Luke 22:62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Peter denied questions asked by (1) a woman, (2) a man, and (3) a man. About an hour would have elapsed between the second and third denials. Not until the third denial did he realize what he had done. Immediately the “cock crew,” which was a signal at 3 a.m. marking the beginning of the fourth watch. Sometimes temptations come at our weakest moment. The apostles were sorrowful and exhausted.

What an all-knowing look Jesus would have given Peter! In telling of Jesus’ character attributes, Revelation 1:14 mentions that his eyes were “as a flame of fire.” In other words, a powerful transmission of thought occurred with Peter. His response was proper and *immediate*—he went out and wept *bitterly*. He was a crushed man. We can see why Jesus, after his resurrection, had to reassure Peter.

Luke 22:63 And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.

Luke 22:64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?

Luke 22:65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

Imagine the sneering, mocking voices! Jesus was mocked as a seer, as one who prophesies of the future. (Just shortly before this, he had given the great prophecy of Matthew 24.) He was repeatedly abused with *many* blasphemous things being spoken against him. It took a little time for all this abuse.

Luke 22:66 And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,

Luke 22:67 Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:

Luke 22:68 And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go.

Luke 22:69 Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

Luke 22:70 Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

Luke 22:71 And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

Verses 66-71 occurred “as soon as it was day,” that is, at sunrise, about 6 a.m. Jesus was led to the council chamber where the “elders” (the Sanhedrin) met. (Not all 70 members of the Sanhedrin had to be present, however.) Trials at the houses of Annas and Caiaphas had preceded this trial. This current trial was a short one.

Jesus was asked if he was “the Christ.” Why did he reply, “Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God”? He knew the time for his death was drawing very near, so he intentionally said something that would be held against him. The elders, chief priests, and scribes became incensed. The clock was ticking, and Jesus wanted to die at the appointed time. The death sentence was to be pronounced at 9 a.m., and they were not even at Pilate’s yet. Moreover, he still had to go to Herod and then back to Pilate.

The Sanhedrin, priests, and scribes next asked, “Art thou then the Son of God?” Jesus answered, “Ye say that I am.” In other words, “What you say, that I am.” They felt his words were sufficient blasphemy to put him to death. Notice, Jesus was not silent but deliberately said just enough to incite them. He answered *briefly*, but he answered. The feet members will be mocked too regarding their interest in prophecy and/or their declarations. “You expect to be a king with Jesus?”

Luke 23:1 And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

Luke 23:2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

Luke 23:3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.

Luke 23:4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

A multitude led Jesus to the Hall of Judgment and Pilate. Probably they made noise and commotion so that Pilate would come to see what was happening. A false witness was given, for Jesus had taught to render unto Caesar the things that were Caesar’s, and unto God the things that were God’s. On another occasion, he paid taxes with a coin in a fish. Pilate saw through the charges, realizing they were false. Otherwise, he would have “found fault.” The false charges were mixed with a truth (he says he is Christ, a King); that is, “If he says he is a King and does not pay taxes, he is an insurrectionist and a potential threat to Rome.” Pilate knew the religious leaders were up to mischief because they hated tax collectors, and yet now they pretended to be solicitous for taxes. When he said, “I find no fault in this man,” normally the man would be released.

The term “Son of man” is used in Daniel 7:13. While the term represents The Christ, it can also represent Jesus personally as the Head. He frequently called himself the “Son of man”; that is, “I am the one of whom Daniel spoke.”

Luke 23:5 And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

Luke 23:6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean.

Luke 23:7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

Now the chief priests were even “more fierce.” They accused Jesus of stirring up all Jewry, from Galilee to Jerusalem. Upon hearing Jesus was from Galilee (Nazareth), Pilate turned him

over to Herod, who had jurisdiction over that area. This was Herod Antipas, the same Herod who had put John the Baptist to death and was married to Herodias. He also built Tiberias, which was named for a Caesar.

Pilate did not like Herod, but he sent Jesus to him in an effort to shift the responsibility, thinking that any reports delivered to Caesar would be about Herod, not himself. Also, Pilate had massacred several Galileans in a bloody purge while they were sacrificing in the Temple in Jerusalem. There had been an insurrection, and Pilate ordered a slaughter in the Temple precincts. Since the Galileans came from Herod's jurisdiction, Herod probably felt Pilate was wrong to inflict punishment without consulting him. Herod was in Jerusalem now for the Passover, so he was probably in Jerusalem at the time of the slaughter too and thought he should have been consulted.

Luke 23:8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

Luke 23:9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

Luke 23:10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

Luke 23:11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

Herod was glad Jesus was sent to him because for a long time, he had wanted to see Jesus perform a startling miracle. In other words, he wanted to be entertained. The fact that he also thought John the Baptist might have risen from the dead proves he was tricked by Herodias into beheading John. Herod's attitude suggests that at the end of the age, the civil authorities in some nations will be *forced* to execute the feet members.

Again Jesus did not want to delay matters. The clock was ticking toward the time of his death, so he remained silent.

Herod was angry and insulted by Jesus' refusal to answer. Therefore, he was instrumental in Jesus' being mocked and abused. He and his "men of war" arrayed Jesus in a "gorgeous robe" and returned him to Pilate. (Jesus was robed twice, once in purple, once in scarlet.) The account shows that Herod was not given to execution with either Jesus or John the Baptist. He would have reasoned, "If Jesus is quiet, he is not much of a threat."

Herod questioned Jesus with "many words," goading him to do something. Meanwhile, the chief priests and scribes vehemently accused him, wanting him DEAD—and quickly because the Passover feast was coming. Also, they did not want interference from the people.

The chief priests kept agitating for Jesus' death. Jesus was completely submissive to the Father's will, not wanting to use his power, influence, or oratory to dissuade the authorities from executing him. And he kept the time element in mind. It will be the same at the end of the age for the feet members. They, too, will be conscious of a time element and not want to delay the experience that awaits them.

Luke 23:12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

Luke 23:13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,

Luke 23:14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

Luke 23:15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

Luke 23:16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

Pilate said to the chief priests and rulers, "I ... have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: ... [and neither did] Herod." Herod did not have to say much to Pilate, for the very act of returning Jesus indicated that he had found no fault. Pilate continued to speak to the chief priests: "Neither of us has found fault in Jesus, so I will chastise and release him."

Pilate would have released Jesus completely, but when he saw the hatred of the chief priests, he thought he could pacify them by turning Jesus over for flogging. Jesus had been charged primarily with being an insurrectionist.

Luke 23:17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

Luke 23:18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:

Luke 23:19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

Luke 23:20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

Luke 23:21 But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

The custom was to release a prisoner at the Passover feast. Pilate reminded the multitude of this custom and suggested Jesus, but the chief priests and rulers cried out simultaneously, "Not Jesus but Barabbas." Now Barabbas truly was a seditionist, whereas Jesus was falsely accused. Barabbas was a murderer too—one of the *worst* prisoners. Pilate tried again to release Jesus, but the chief priests and rulers cried in a chorus: "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Pilate got retribution shortly afterwards, however, at the end of his life, for his part in the Crucifixion. He cannot be wholly excused, for a proper magistrate would not have given in. A magistrate was supposed to dispense justice.

No doubt his wife's dream was another reason Pilate wanted to release Jesus. Her dream added to his responsibility. Also, he could see the wrong motives of the chief priests.

It is impressive how the Lord, in advance, arranged the name Barabbas, which means "the father's son" or "son of the father." He was a substitute for the real Son of the (Heavenly) Father. (*Bar* means "son"; *abbas* means "father.")

Luke 23:22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

Luke 23:23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

Luke 23:24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

Luke 23:25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Pilate tried a third time to release Jesus, but the chief priests and rulers were “*instant with loud voices,*” insisting on crucifixion.

Luke 23:26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

Luke 23:27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

Luke 23:28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

Luke 23:29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

Luke 23:30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

Luke 23:31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

Simon of Cyrene is named as the one who helped Jesus with the Cross. With his assistance being recorded for posterity, he will be in the drama for the everlasting future. The implication is that Simon was handpicked and that he later became a disciple. His name means “hearing,” which also indicates that he became a disciple.

Jesus fell down under the Cross, being weakened, especially from the flogging. Imagine his carrying a heavy and rough cross on lacerated, torn, bleeding shoulders! The Cross must have been down *against the bone*.

Jesus exited at the Damascus Gate, where those from “the country” entered. From the Damascus Gate, the walk was all uphill. This was where Jesus’ strength gave out and Simon had to help.

Isaac (picturing Jesus) carried the wood on his back and shoulders that was to be instrumental in his own death, or sacrifice. And the site of the “sacrifice” was this *same* Mount Moriah.

In verses 28-31, Jesus prophesied of the coming trouble in AD 69-70. What did he mean when he said, “Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck”? During the coming siege, it would be harder for mothers who had children in their infancy and suckling years. Their own personal grief was one thing, but to see their baby being starved to death would increase their grief tenfold. In the trouble, it would be better not to have children of such a tender age.

Comment: Matthew 24:19 contains almost the same wording: “And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!” The similarity proves that the Luke account has an antitype with regard to the “daughters” of Christendom. Just as Jesus thought of the terrible trouble to come on Israel, so the feet members will think of the terrible trouble to come on Christendom—and on the Great Company and the world.

Reply: Yes, and with the Great Company, for example, there will be a different type of suffering, namely, mental anguish. The Little Flock will know that they are dying for Christ, that they are being persecuted for righteousness' sake, so there will be a sense of joy in their experiences. But suffering will be harder for those who have a doubt as to where they stand with the Lord and whether they did that which was right. True, the feet members will suffer, but they will not have the heart anguish and remorse.

Comment: Spiritually speaking, those who have "children" are the teachers in the nominal Church, for example, Sunday school teachers.

"Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." In other words, "Protect us." Jesus was prophesying that those going through the trouble of AD 69-70 would wish they had heeded his earlier advice and fled to the mountains for refuge and to caves where they could hide. Those who obeyed fled to Petra and Pela.

In the future antitype of Babylon's fall, the populace will make distinctions between nominal Christians and the Great Company, for the Great Company must be spared at that time to have their experience and development before leaving the earthly scene. Hence these words will be primarily the sentiments of nominal Christians (the tares).

Depending on where the feet members will be, some civil authorities will want to put them to death, and some will be tricked into it. For instance, Revelation 12:17 shows the dragon going after the woman: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Jesus continued, "For if they do these things in a green tree [in the time of favor], what shall be done in the dry [in the time of disfavor when destruction is near]?" The allusion is to a fig tree, which pictures the nation of Israel. Antitype: "If they do these things while the feet members [the salt] are still here, what will be done when they [the salt] are gone?"

Luke 23:32 And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

Two malefactors were led with Jesus. The commas are necessary for the correct meaning. If not released, Barabbas would have been taken for crucifixion too.

Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Jesus and the two malefactors were crucified on Calvary (Golgotha). Calvary is the Greek name, and Golgotha is the Hebrew name, both meaning the "place of a skull." Incidentally, the pharmaceutical sign for poison is two elongated bones crossed and a skull. The skull pictures Skull Hill; the crossed bones represent Christ, for "X" in the Greek means "Christ."

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

The first part of this verse, "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," is spurious.

The same Roman soldiers who escorted Jesus and nailed him to the Cross also parted (divided) his raiment and cast lots for his seamless robe. This was done while Jesus was hanging on the Cross and could see them. How sadistic! The seamless robe was a symbol of Jesus' robe of righteousness. Because of his death, the Christian has a covering for sin.

Luke 23:35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

The people “stood beholding”; that is, they *stared* at him. Psalm 22 shows the Father’s foreknowledge. He knew, long in advance, how the people and His own Son would react. He *thoroughly understands everything* in His universe—all matter, animate and inanimate—for He is omniscient.

The rulers mocked, “Let him save himself, if he be Christ.” Many would react impetuously if baited, but Jesus retained his composure. By not giving in to impulse, he showed that he had perfect control over his mental faculties. To give in to this taunting would have destroyed the Ransom offering.

Luke 23:36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

Luke 23:37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

The Roman soldiers also mocked Jesus, offering him vinegar. The others goaded him verbally; in addition, the soldiers used vinegar. Since crucifixion brings dehydration, the vinegar would cruelly increase Jesus’ thirst.

The soldiers verbally mocked, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself.” This taunting was comparable to slapping Jesus when he was blindfolded and saying, “Prophecy who hit you.”

The mockers included the chief priests, the elders, the scribes, the people, and the Roman soldiers. All strata of society mocked Jesus.

Luke 23:38 And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

A superscription was written over Jesus in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin: “THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” Greek was the language of learning in the schools. The people had to know Greek to conduct business. They also had to know Latin because the Romans published their decrees in that language. And Hebrew was the everyday language used by the Jews.

Luke 23:39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

Luke 23:40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

Luke 23:41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

One of the malefactors was a measure of encouragement to Jesus. He said Jesus was an innocent man, whereas he and the other malefactor had gotten a sentence of death for committing an actual crime. They were being justly punished, but Jesus was not. And then he mentioned God to the other malefactor: “Do you not fear God?” It would be interesting to know his background before he committed the crime, for a hardened criminal would not say such a thing. His rationalizing under such circumstances was unusual. He told the other malefactor, “You should not rail on him. Do you not fear God? Jesus has enough agony without your adding to it.”

Luke 23:42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

It is likely that the hands and feet of the malefactors were not pierced with nails as Jesus' were. In this instance, Jesus was made a particular spectacle. Moreover, the nails were necessary to fulfill prophecy. The malefactors could see the superscription above the Cross in large letters saying Jesus was King of the Jews. Then the same one said, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom." The words suggest that he knew something about Jesus.

Comment: The fact his own apostles were so disconsolate that they said, "We trusted it had been he," shows they lost faith temporarily that Jesus was the Christ. But here was a *dying* individual who still believed Jesus was the Messiah. How remarkable!

Reply: It is very strange how in moments of crisis certain things happen. The malefactor's statements were very unusual—his saying, "Fear God"; his recognizing the justice of his and the other malefactor's condemnation; and his wanting to be remembered in the Kingdom.

Q: Were these two malefactors crucified earlier rather than with Jesus? The other accounts say the two who were crucified with him both railed on him.

A: That could well be.

Comment: If so, the repentant one would have had more time to reflect on the fact he was receiving a just retribution.

Reply: Also, the Greek word for "malefactor" in the other Gospels is a slightly different word, indicating a different type of punishment was involved.

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

"Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with me in paradise." Since the original Greek manuscript had no punctuation, it is permissible to move the comma. Also, the Greek allows the subject and the verb to be transposed. In other words, Jesus was saying, "I am telling you now, even though everything looks bleak as regards my claim to be the Messiah, that I am indeed he. When I establish my Kingdom, you will be remembered."

The thief could not have been with Jesus in paradise that day, for Jesus was in the tomb parts of three days and nights. And even those who think, according to orthodox theology, that Jesus did not die but went to visit the spirits in prison would have a contradiction with his going to paradise that very day.

Luke 23:44 And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

In Luke's Gospel, the numbering of hours started at sunrise. Therefore, the sixth hour was noon, and darkness lasted until the ninth hour, or 3 p.m., which was the time of the second daily lamb burnt offering. Jesus died at 3 p.m.

"There was a darkness over [the central point, or navel, of] all the earth." In other words, darkness covered "all the earth" *in that area*, not the entire globe. Palestine is the land bridge of three continents and was the center of civilization at that time. With the darkness being sufficiently delineated to be seen as a period of three hours, it was tied into Jesus' death.

At 9 a.m. (the third hour), the first daily lamb burnt offering was made. Jesus was led to Pilate shortly after 6 a.m. Pilate saw Jesus several times, Jesus went to Herod (in Jerusalem), he was flogged, etc. All of these events took time, so not until 9 a.m. was he condemned to be crucified. His being led to Golgotha was accredited as part of the Crucifixion, but the darkness did not start until he was actually put on the Cross and raised aloft—at noon.

Luke 23:45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

The darkness was unusual—it was not just an overcast day, and it was not caused by an eclipse. Both before and after the three hours of darkness, the sun would have been conspicuous and bright. Probably volcanic ash is what miraculously caused the sunlight to suddenly diminish over that very area for just three hours. So startling was the darkness that it helped the centurion conclude that Jesus was the Son of God (verse 47).

The veil of the Temple was rent from top to bottom by an earthquake, signifying a divine judgment as well as Jesus' opening up a new and living way. The veil was heavy like a rug and several inches thick. Even though the veil between the Holy and the Most Holy was rent, the Temple was not destroyed. Thus it was a very *selective* earthquake!

The veil screened the Most Holy even from the underpriests (but not, of course, from the high priest). When the veil is rent antotypically, it will mean the Church, the “Ark of the Covenant,” is complete. Just as there were probably some priests in the Holy when the earthquake struck, enabling them to see into the Most Holy, so in antitype, when The Christ is complete, those still in the “Holy” (that is, the consecrated left behind, the Great Company) will realize that fact first.

At the time of Jesus' death, the priests kept quiet about the Temple veil being rent, but it took some time to replace the veil and word spread. Proof that the earthquake did tear the veil is the fact that those living back there did not contradict the reports.

Q: Did something happen in the Pyramid at the time of Jesus' death?

A: The last ramp stone, the one leading to the Well, could have blown out at that time, for an earthquake would have caused the “explosion.” Thus the removal of the Pyramid ramp stone and the tearing of the Temple veil were a double testimony in Egypt and Israel, respectively.

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

Jesus cried with a *triumphant* voice. These words would have preceded the rending of the Temple veil. “Commend” means “deposit.” Jesus deposited his life-rights in the Father's hands by willingly laying down his life. Being perfect, he was entitled to everlasting life under the Law. Jesus' words are similar to Stephen's in Acts 7:59. At the time Stephen was stoned to death, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Jesus' “spirit,” or breath, was deposited for parts of three days and nights, whereas Stephen's was deposited until 1878. The Greek word translated “ghost” is *ekpneo*, meaning “breath.”

Luke 23:47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

When the centurion “saw what was done, he glorified God” and said, “Certainly this was a righteous man.” What things convinced him? The events of nature: the earthquake and the darkening of the sun. Also, Jesus' conduct on the Cross was a factor—his dying remarks. The centurion realized Jesus had been unjustly condemned, and the signs in nature proved he was

unusual. It was as if the God of nature frowned on the injustice.

This centurion probably became a believer, but we do not know for sure. A centurion whose servant was healed is mentioned. And Cornelius was a centurion—he and his household were converted when Peter went to him. Cornelius had been sincerely searching for truth and praying. He did not know the true or full role of Jesus until Peter told him, but he would have known something. Hence Cornelius could be the centurion here.

Luke 23:48 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.

Luke 23:49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

The events caused a psychological effect. Being conscience-stricken, all those “beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts” and then left. The disciples and the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee stood afar off, also beholding the events. The women stood at a little distance out of respect and decorum because Jesus would have been naked as part of the Ransom to offset the penalty on Adam. However, because of the darkness, they had to be in the vicinity of the Cross so that they could see—perhaps 150 yards away. John may have taken Mary away from the scene lest she behold the last rigors of Jesus’ death.

The mockers who were still there at 3 p.m., plus spectators, were smitten by their consciences. Some had taunted, some had viewed with amusement, and some were curious, but now they felt remorseful. Jesus’ crying out with STRONG voice must have been *very dramatic*. Almost immediately there might even have been a tremendous peal of thunder and lightning. Now the people were frightened and wanted to leave quickly.

The women beholding afar off were more emotional and tender afterwards than the male disciples. They were more responsive (except for Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus) in getting to the tomb early, as soon as the sabbath was over, with spices to anoint Jesus’ body.

Luke 23:50 And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just:

Luke 23:51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.

Luke 23:52 This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

Luke 23:53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

Luke 23:54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

Luke 23:55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

Luke 23:56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments: and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

Joseph of Arimathea will forever be remembered (like Mary) for a kind deed done to the Master. All four Gospels commemorate his good act, and throughout the universe, it will be known perpetually. His residence was in Arimathea. Simon, who carried the Cross, was from

Cyrene in Libya, Africa. And Thomas came from Didymas, a town in Asia Minor.

Joseph was good, just, and rich, and he had an honorable position as a counsellor in the Sanhedrin. He did not consent to either the evil counsel of the Sanhedrin or the evil deed. Hence the meeting the night before was not a formal one. The others seized upon Jesus' confession that he was the Messiah and said, "What more do we need? We do not need a formal meeting." That way they could ignore Joseph (and possibly Nicodemus too if he was a member of the Sanhedrin).

Joseph, Mary's husband, was also described as a "just" man. He did not know in advance the details of the virgin birth any more than this Joseph knew in advance (or even when he begged Jesus' body) that Jesus had to suffer and die as the Messiah.

Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and "*begged* the body of Jesus." Getting permission, he took the body down from the Cross. Since the Cross was fairly high, this was hard work. He was a respected member of the Sanhedrin, yet he climbed up on the Cross and removed the nails and body like a carpenter. (We are reminded of Zacchaeus, a rich man who humbled himself to climb a tree to see Jesus.) Joseph may have used a nearby ladder to climb up and remove the nails. A crowbar would have been needed to get those nails out.

Joseph was a spectacle to those who were watching. The Cross was prominent, and he would have been seen climbing up to remove the body. What courage and humility! He did not care what people thought. John's Gospel shows that Nicodemus was there too, assisting as Joseph extracted the nails.

They wanted to cover the naked body, so they wrapped it in linen and then laid it in a stone sepulcher not used previously. The hewn sepulcher was a private family tomb that had only one entrance (and exit). It was hastily elongated to accommodate Jesus' body, which was a little taller than the average man's height. Meanwhile, the body was laid on a niche, or shelf, in the side chamber.

Because the sabbath was drawing on, Joseph and Nicodemus did not finish. Between 3 and 6 p.m., Joseph had to get permission from Pilate, remove and wrap Jesus' body, and put it on the shelf, so time was running out. The women, not knowing all that had been done, went to the tomb to help and then returned early Sunday morning to finish the preparation.

Jesus' body may have remained on the shelf until he was resurrected. Thus when John looked into the tomb, he looked directly toward the empty cocoon-like grave wrappings. Of course if the body was put in the tomb bed, John would have seen the wrappings there too.

A stone was rolled across the tomb and Pilate's seal put on it. Therefore, Jesus' body could not have been stolen. All this (through verse 56) took place on Friday.

On the day of "preparation," the Passover lamb was killed and prepared. The people were more concerned with the feast than with the killing of the lamb. In other words, the slaying of the lamb that preceded the feast was the "preparation."

Luke 24:1 Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

The "first day of the week" was Sunday. Very early in the morning, women came to the tomb with spices to anoint Jesus' body. Their doing this proves there had not been time on Friday to prepare his body in the customary way.

Luke 24:2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

The stone had been put in position with Pilate's seal on it, yet the women had come with the intention of having the stone removed, which would break the seal and bring punishment. Their willingness shows they had *faith*, for they did not know the stone had already been removed by angelic assistance. The women are to be commended for not letting the sealed stone deter their buying and preparing spices for Jesus' body.

Luke 24:3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

The women entered the tomb, but the body was gone.

Luke 24:4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

As they stood there perplexed, two "men" in shining garments attracted their attention. The "shining garments" indicate they were angels.

Luke 24:5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

The women were afraid, and as they "bowed down their faces to the earth," the angels asked, "Why do you seek among the dead for the One who lives?" The question, which was like a gentle reproach to their faith, accentuated the thought that he who was dead is *now alive* (Rev. 1:18).

Luke 24:6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

Luke 24:7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

The angels continued, "Jesus is not here. He is risen as he told you in Galilee. He said that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men [the Roman soldiers] and be crucified and that the third day he will rise."

Luke 24:8 And they remembered his words,

The women remembered Jesus' words.

Luke 24:9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

They left the tomb and told the eleven, as well as others, what had happened. The eleven were probably all in one house.

Luke 24:10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

Other Gospels, plus this verse, identify specific women as Mary Magdalene; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; Mary, the mother of James and John Zebedee; and Salome. Several Marys are named in the New Testament. "Miriam" (the sister of Moses) becomes "Mary" in the Greek-English translation. Seven Marys are as follows:

1. Mary, the mother of Jesus

2. Mary, the half sister of the first Mary
3. Mary Magdalene
4. Mary Zebedee
5. Mary, the sister of Martha
6. Mary, the mother of John Mark
7. Mary, a female believer in Rome who helped Paul (Rom. 16:6).

“Mary the mother of James” was Mary Zebedee, not the mother of Jesus, for at least two reasons. (1) Jesus’ mother was traumatized at seeing Jesus crucified—almost like suffering a heart attack. As prophesied in Luke 2:35, a “sword,” a dagger or stiletto blade, would figuratively pierce her heart. (2) John had taken her home, and she probably stayed there.

Why was Peter the only one singled out by name when the angel told the women to go and tell the disciples that Jesus had risen (Mark 16:7)? Being a natural leader and impulsive, Peter would go to the tomb, and the others would follow him. Also—and the more important reason—Peter was so disconsolate because of his denial of the Master that he needed special encouragement.

Luke 24:11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

Luke 24:12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

To the men, the women’s words seemed to be idle tales, but Peter arose (and John) and ran to the tomb where they beheld the empty grave clothes. John got there first, but Peter entered the tomb first (John 20:3-8). When the women were at the tomb previously, they did not observe the linen grave clothes because of their emotions. And perhaps the angels’ conversation helped to distract them. Even Peter did not properly assess the grave clothes, but he did see them. Only John realized they were proof Jesus had risen from death—they were still folded (or wrapped) and had just collapsed.

Angels are described in different postures in the various Gospel accounts because *time* was involved: two angels inside the tomb, one angel sitting inside, another angel sitting outside on the rolled-away stone.

Matthew 28:2-4 says that when the angels came to roll away the stone, the soldiers guarding the tomb became as dead men, being momentarily immobilized, or paralyzed. This reaction occurred a number of times when humans were in the presence of superior angelic beings. In fact, this even happens in some of the churches when faith healings take place through the power of fallen demons. The recipient falls backward and has to be caught lest he crack his skull. The alien power operating through the faith healer is like electricity, like a paralyzing shock. Thus the power is similar whether it is used for evil or for good purposes.

Luke 24:13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.

Luke 24:14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

Luke 24:15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

Luke 24:16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

Luke 24:17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

The same day, Sunday, two were walking to Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were discussing events related to the Crucifixion when Jesus, materialized as a stranger, joined them. They did not recognize him. He asked, "Why are you so sad? What has happened?"

Luke 24:18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

Luke 24:19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

Luke 24:20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

Luke 24:21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.

Luke 24:22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;

One of the two was Cleopas (not Peter because verse 33 says that Cleopas and the other individual went to Jerusalem and found the eleven). In the *old* Persian manuscript of this account, Luke is listed as the companion of Cleopas. This is reasonable because both were disciples, not apostles, and also because Luke wrote this Gospel. There was wisdom in having two witnesses outside of the eleven apostles.

Jesus used a good technique in asking, "What things have come to pass?" for he allowed the two to do the talking. (It takes self-control and patience to use such a technique.) They answered that Jesus "was a *prophet* mighty in deed"; that is, because he did not redeem Israel and was ignominiously crucified, they had relegated him to the role of prophet, not Messiah. Then they added, "Beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done [since his crucifixion]." Possibly they realized he had said he would rise the third day.

We know Jesus did not have the divine nature yet because he had not ascended to his Father and because they could still look upon him. He had spirit nature—he was put to death flesh and raised spirit (1 Pet. 3:18). Also, for one with the divine nature to condescend to appear as a human would be demeaning. A confirmation that Jesus had just spirit nature when first raised is that his experience pictures what happened to the sleeping saints in 1878. They are in earth's atmosphere as spirit beings and will not get the divine nature until the Church is complete and appears in the Father's presence. Another proof that Jesus had spirit nature at this time is the way he appeared to the disciples during the 40 days prior to his ascension versus how he later appeared to Paul when he did have the divine nature.

Harmonizing the Gospel genealogies is a complicated subject. In the genealogy listings and elsewhere in the Gospels, words are supplied such as "the son of," "the mother of," and "the father of." These conjectures are sometimes valid and sometimes not. They must be examined carefully, for at times, prejudices of the translators were inserted into the text. For example, with a male, the person could be the brother, father, or son "of." And "brother" could even be brother-in-law. The genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke cannot be harmonized as translated, so some of the supplied words must be changed. Also, since there are no words in

the ancient Greek for “aunt” and “uncle,” this relationship was indicated in longhand only. First-century Christians knew what relationship was meant by “of _____,” but today we have difficulty tracing the relationship. Still another problem is that “of _____” sometimes refers to *place*, as in “Joseph of Arimathea,” meaning “that particular Joseph who was of the district of Arimathea.” For instance, was “Alphaeus” a relative or a town (Matt. 10:3)? The answer makes a big difference. Alphaeus may be a place.

And consider Thomas Didymas. There was a place called Didymas in Asia Minor, but in addition, both “Thomas” and “Didymas” mean “twin” in two different languages. The duality of signification points out a typical problem. Another example is Simon Zelotes, who was Simon the Zealot. In other words, his last name was not Zelotes. The designation distinguished him from other Simons.

Luke 24:23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

The two did not believe the women, calling their testimony about the angels a “*vision*.” This verse shows we have to be sympathetic toward those who cannot see things we think are so clear. Growing up in a culture that teaches certain views can not only indoctrinate but also saturate an individual with teachings that hinder him from seeing an alternate view.

Luke 24:24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

Luke 24:25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

Luke 24:26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

Luke 24:29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

After this relatively short journey, the day was “far spent,” so the disciples would have started for Emmaus in the afternoon. Jesus may have expanded on the Scriptures for an hour or so. The two would have slowed their pace to concentrate.

Jesus’ words “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken” remind us of his saying “O ye of little faith” when the storm occurred on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 8:26). He addressed them in a superior and authoritative manner. In their downcast mood and bewildered state, the words may not have sunk in—until later. One does not rise immediately from a despondent mood just because of one statement.

What a blessing the two disciples would have missed if they had not constrained Jesus to tarry! This was another trait of Jesus; namely, he made the individual take the initiative to hear the words of life. One who does not hunger for more is not fed. Paul used the same method (for example, with Lydia of Thyatira). One must hunger and thirst in order to be fed and get understanding from the Scriptures along any line—moral instruction, doctrine, chronology, prophecy, etc.

Luke 24:30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

Luke 24:31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

As Jesus “sat at meat with them” and took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave some to the two disciples, “their eyes were opened, and they knew him.” Then he vanished from their sight. They recognized him probably because of the customary way he blessed the bread, similar to what he had done during his ministry (see verse 35).

Luke 24:32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

Luke 24:33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

Luke 24:34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

Luke 24:35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

The two disciples returned to Jerusalem, probably running. Either during the interim or earlier, Jesus appeared to Simon Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5). The two “found the eleven gathered together” and saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.” Evidently, when Peter was convinced of Jesus’ resurrection, he helped convince the others. (Luke condenses many events into a few words.)

Luke 24:36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

Luke 24:37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

Luke 24:38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

Luke 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

Luke 24:40 And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet.

Luke 24:41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

Luke 24:42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

Luke 24:43 And he took it, and did eat before them.

Verse 41 says, “They yet believed not for joy, and wondered.” How do we harmonize this statement with verse 34, where the eleven said, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.” (They believed—and yet they “believed not for joy.”) Other accounts tell us that at this appearance (verses 36-51), the doors were closed, so Jesus entered the way the angels did. While the disciples previously believed he had risen, this manner of appearing was so

different—he appeared through locked doors and then looked solid—that they thought they might be seeing a deception. They thought perhaps an angel had assumed a likeness of Jesus and they were seeing an apparition or a vision. For this reason, Jesus wanted to confirm that he was of solid material. He had to appeal to their natural minds, which were not yet begotten of the Holy Spirit. (In contrast, we, at the end of the age, believe the accounts based on the Holy Spirit’s informing us.)

In verse 42, “and of an honeycomb” is spurious. Honeycomb does not mix with fish as a meal.

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Luke 24:45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

Luke 24:46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luke 24:48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

Jesus reminded them of his previous testimony and the prophecies of his death and resurrection in the Law, the prophets, and the Psalms. Then he opened their understanding of the Scriptures to fully assure them he had risen. Even so, they only *partially* understood at this time because they were not yet Spirit-begotten.

Verses 27 and 44 prove that we need to concentrate on the *whole* Word of God, not just the New Testament. The Old Testament is three times larger than the New Testament.

Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached to all nations in Jesus’ name beginning (first) at Jerusalem, and then in Judea and on to Samaria (Acts 1:8).

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Luke 24:50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

Luke 24:51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

Jesus told the disciples to stay in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit descended on them. (Compare these verses with Acts 1:1-11.) This incident occurred just before Jesus rose to heaven for a ten-day reunion with the Father. In other words, Jesus had been with them on and off for 40 days. Then he ascended to heaven, and the apostles waited ten days. On Pentecost, the fiftieth day, the Holy Spirit came on those who waited there in Jerusalem.

What patience it must have taken to wait ten days! This was a test on the apostles as they waited in one location. Imagine the excitement! Initially they would not want to leave, even to get food, for fear of missing whatever would happen.

Let us consider Jesus’ ascension in more detail. He led the disciples to the Mount of Olives in

Bethany, and from there, he ascended to the Father. “While they looked stedfastly toward heaven, ... behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:10,11). Only the *few* faithful ones saw him go. He returned in like manner at the Second Advent with only the *few* discerning his presence.

Jesus’ being parted from them is a reminder of Elijah’s departure from Elisha. Jesus was parted by a phenomenon, and they could see him being carried up into heaven—probably slowly enough for them to be awestruck and impressed. They must have continued to gaze with an open mouth because two angels remarked, “Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?” (Acts 1:11).

Comment: The Harvest message helps us to realize that coming “in like manner” means that as the apostles, his *followers*, saw Jesus go, so the sincere Christian with present truth would perceive him returning at the Second Advent.

Reply: The “ye” should be emphasized: “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as *YE* have seen him go into heaven.” Jesus would come at the Second Advent in a manner known only to the brotherhood. Just as he *privately* took the apostles to the Mount of Olives and instructed them personally—with *no* nonbelievers present—so he would be seen when he came again (and not with the literal eye, based on other Scriptures). The main point is that the apostles saw him go, not the world. It was a *private* audience. Therefore, Jesus would inform his followers when he returned.

Verse 49 and Acts 1:4 call the Holy Spirit “the promise”—certainly not a term that would be used for a personality. Ephesians 1:14 calls the Holy Spirit “the earnest of our inheritance.”

Luke 24:52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

Luke 24:53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

The disciples got down on their knees and worshipped and praised God for the privilege of seeing Jesus go and getting his benediction. They returned to Jerusalem with *great joy*. And they continually witnessed and praised and blessed God in the Temple.

All four Gospels end with “Amen.” Although the word is not in the *Diaglott*, it was appropriately added because when John, Paul, and Peter later wrote, they gave doctrinal instruction and little on the history of Jesus’ life.